ALASKA NATIVE MEN'S VOICES: TRACKING MASCULINITIES THROUGH INDIGENOUS GENDER CONSTRUCTS

By

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Abstract

Alaska Native Men's Voices, an exploratory project, begins to make visible experiences of what it means to identify as an Indigenous male. Indigenous sovereignty includes practice of Indigenous gender knowledge systems. Self-determination of health and wellness by honoring relationships necessitates the affirmation of Alaska Native Men's voices. The complexity and diversity of Indigenous masculinity cannot be homogenized or made into one definition; these are not the goals of the research. This project aimed to articulate how Alaska Native men self-identify, what meaningful intersections of lived experiences can be drawn, and how do these inform healthy gender relations for future generations. The approach in research methods, *how* the project was done, articulates values of Indigenous led research and scholarship. Findings from shared stories, 18 individual semi-structured interviews, describe notions of Indigenous masculinities rooted in cultural foundations, knowing one's self, having a sense of belonging, and honor relationships from individual, to family and community. Expansive understandings of holistic wellness include narrative of emotional and spiritual healing. Illustrations of ancestral connection and continuance are put forward by participants as expressions of love for future generations of Alaska Native men.

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Finally, and most of all, I give gratitude to my Son Son, Evan Lukluan. I have learned most from your patient, wise, and sheerly joyful soul. Your being inspires this work for you and our future generations.

Kiña iliviñ? Who are you? Sumiuguviñ? Where are you from?

Uvaŋa Charlene Apok. Iñupiaqsisga Aqpik. Chiŋikmiuguruŋa suli, Natchirsvigmiuguruŋa. Aakaga Sandra 'Baby Lu' Apok. Aanaga-lu Lorraine Hammond- lu suli Agnes Amarok-lu. Iġñiga Evan Lukluan. Iñuuruŋa savaktuŋalu Dena'ina-t nunaŋanni Kisaġvigmun. I am Charlene Apok, my Iñupiaq name is Aqpik (Salmonberry/Cloudberry/ to be confident). My family is from Golovin and White Mountain, Alaska. My mother is Sandra 'Baby Lu' Apok. My grandmothers are Lorraine Hammond and Agnes Amarok. My Son Son is Evan Lukluan. I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina in Anchorage.

It is important I share who I am and where I am from, as my family and community has supported my entering of academia. As an Indigenous person, I have been taught to know who I am, and to present my relations. My identity as an Iñupiaq woman and my positionality informs the ways I engage across spaces- academically, professionally, and in our community. The interconnections of these spaces have given me a unique platform to utilize my skills as an Indigenous scholar to serve our Alaska Native community. As an Iñupiaq woman doing a project with Alaska Native men, this was especially important. My effort here in sharing who I am creates a lens of positionality and subjectivity that through an Indigenous worldview is necessary when sharing knowledge such as follows.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In way of self-determining the health and wellbeing of our communities, this project offers that we look to Indigenous frameworks of epistemology, ontology, and axioms as a way to restore and empower gender relations among our people. This project will document Alaska Native men’s narratives of lived experiences, highlighting the strengths and positive ways men contribute to our healthy communities. Utilizing cultural rootedness to identify what healthy masculine identities looks like, Indigenous relations can heal and build a healthy people. Through an Indigenous lens, better understanding of Alaska Native men has the potential to improve health for men, women, all genders, children and families.

This chapter will describe the impacts on gender identity from three Indigenous locations: North America (continental United States and Canada), Polynesia (Hawai’i and Aotearoa [New Zealand]), and the Arctic, through colonization. After deconstructing the colonial influences on gender, the same three location worldviews will be presented specifically on how they inform Indigenous gender constructs. The hope is that critical analyses can move our communities from confining binary gender constructs to our cultural, sacred constructs of gender to restore harmony and balance. This project has three aims: 1) Describe how individual Alaska Native men self-identify and how identity relates to health and wellbeing, 2) Analyze meaningful intersections of lived experience, synthesizing cross cutting themes across participants, and 3) Demonstrate this narrative as within an Indigenous gendered lens.

To begin, it should be noted that presenting the concept of Indigenous gender constructs, and here specifically masculinities through English writing, does not fully express the lived experiences that contribute to these identities and cannot encapsulate the memory of Indigenous males. In effort to distinguish Indigenous ways of knowing in this work the term *alterNative*[1] will be used. Specifically, alterNative gender constructs are presented here that represent circular ways of knowing derived from Indigenous values and relationships. Here *alterNative* is utilized instead of 'alternative,' which in English sets up a binary of, and at best a limited view of options. In effort to describe the diverse, complex, and fluid gender notions from multiple Indigenous worldviews, alterNative will be used throughout this paper *sans* italics. This usage is important to articulate in Indigenous scholarship and particularly in gendered meanings so that expansive worldviews are visible and terms such as 'Indigenous Feminisms' and 'Indigenous Masculinities' are not set up to be perceived with a Western binary lens. With the intention of centering Indigenous worldviews, this dissertation deliberately capitalizes 'I' in words such as Indigenous and does not italicize words from Alaska Native languages. These deliberate editorial moves that support expressions of Indigeneity and others are described in Younging's principles for writing by and about Indigenous peoples (2018). Oral expression, especially in use of mother tongue, storytelling, dance, song and ceremony are all methods which would better convey these ideas (Archibald, 2008, Chilisa, 2012, Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2013). Additionally, my own intersected place of identity makes interpretation subjective. Because of this, any misrepresentations or mistakes are mine to own. Despite the limitations noted, it is my hope this research contributes to Indigenous scholarship and determination.

Initiating research into this topic to make visible what it may mean to be an Indigenous male requires a working definition of both Indigenous and masculinity. Cajete (1994) explains using place that *Indigenous* people:

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[1] AlterNative is also a title of an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples launched by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, New Zealand's Māori Centre of Research Excellence. While this term here is not specific to this journal, the efforts in Indigenous scholarship and academic discourse align.

> …understood themselves literally as born of the Earth of their Place. That children are bestowed to a mother and her community through the participation of earth spirits, and that children came from springs, lakes, mountains, or caves embedded in the Earth where they existed as spirits before birth" and Indigenous people "traditionally understood the human psyche and the roots of human meaning as grounded in the same order that they perceived in Nature. They experienced Nature as part of themselves and themselves as part of it. (p. 83)

One understanding of what is meant by *masculinity* is offered by McKegney (2014) as "a tool for describing the qualities, actions, characteristics, and behaviours that accrue meaning within a given historical context and social milieu through their association with maleness, as maleness is normalized, idealized and even demonized within a web of power-laden interpenetrating discourses" (p. 2). The use of these terms themselves is confined within an English language space, whereas this paper will present alterNative Indigenous worldviews that shed light on gender construction.

Indigenous Masculinities, Health and Gender Relations

Although much needed progress and continued work for women's health has grown and is deserving in its own right, a growing interest in public health has also been on men's wellness. It is noted that on various levels men's health falls behind women's; men carry a heavier burden of illness and shorter life expectancy (Courtenay, 2000; Xu et al., 2016). Integrating theory on gender, not just sex, into health research has much to offer and is a growing body of study globally (Connell, 2012). Specifically, these efforts stand out when approaching gender relations in health such as; gender-based violence, intimate partner violence and areas where high disproportions between men and women are found, as in the case for suicide rates. Furthermore, the intersection of Alaska Native and American Indian (ANAI) health disparities exacerbate the need for further insight on gender and health. The prevalence of gender-based violence (Echo-Hawk, 2018) and suicide among ANAI communities (Allen et al., 2018) stand out and demand a fresh approach. It is not within this dissertation to dwell on the statistics and deficient-centered research. Instead, offering how deeper understanding in gender relations can illuminate both an alternative understanding to these matters and possible solutions and direction to take. For these health issues, it is not enough to only use quantitative and physical sciences. Bringing social sciences and theoretical models of gender can shed light on how to prevent and respond to these health concerns. This project aim is that illuminating these lived experiences of Alaska Native men can improve our approach and understanding of health, education, political, economic and social needs.

A strong sense of identity and culture, places of belonging have shown to have direct positive influences on the health of Indigenous peoples. Recent Alaska Native scholarship has shown connectedness as a framework of Indigenous wellbeing (Ullrich, 2019). Opposingly, shaken identity and culture loss have shown to be negative. Gender based violence and suicide are not traditional to Indigenous cultures. Many attempts of top-down approaches from outside sources have failed to improve these issues in our communities. The Western intersections of identity do not culturally match the worldviews of Indigenous people, including those formed around gender and identity. The narrative of female empowerment has gained visibility but leaves unclarity about the masculine and any fluid genders. In an Indigenous perspective, striving for balance calls for a healthy male empowerment dialogue.

The influence of Western feminism has provided plentiful study on women in gender studies. The Western framework of analyzing gender relations has often countered the white/male/hetero patriarchal construction as seen through the three waves of feminism. This work has been helpful to unpack Western systemic power imbalances. However, for people of color, the Western waves of feminism led by white American women has not always resonated. Third world women have begun to critique and offer their narrative (Anzaldúa 2007; Mohanty, Russo, Torres 1991; Mohanty 2003; Kirk-Okazawa-Rey, 2007). Available scholarship by authors such as Alfred (2005), McKeagney (2014), Ball (2010) and Lee (2013) are all leading edge. Masculinity studies especially intersected with Indigeneity has yet to be developed. Deeper understandings of Indigenous identity directly improve our ability to create responses within ourselves through empowerment. A healthy people include healthy gender relations. Empowered gender relations within Indigenous worldviews is interdisciplinary and has much to offer beyond the sphere of public health. Moreover, the benefit of studying gender relations is strongly desired to serve our future generations. It is time to integrate an Indigenous perspective on gender relations in order to restore balance and harmony. Original instruction and guidance through ceremony contributed to harmonious and egalitarian relations across genders in Indigenous communities since time immemorial. Although these have undergone drastic change very rapidly, the knowledge and the resources we need to restore our relations is within ourselves, our communities, in our Indigenous worldviews and values.

This paper starts by confronting the common context of struggle of the shift of Indigenous masculinity through colonization and influences of the Euro-colonial settler. This common context of struggle described here is shared from Indigenous voices in scholarship from the locations: North America, (continental United States and Canada), Polynesia (Hawai'i and Aotearoa [New Zealand]) and the Arctic. Following the cross comparison of colonization impacts on Indigenous masculinity, the paper will look to pre-colonial Indigenous worldviews in effort to connect how they inform alterNative gender constructs. Finally, proposed project narrative will be described to demonstrate how Indigenous worldviews connect to how Indigenous masculinities is experienced and lived today. It is the hope of studying these original epistemologies, ontologies and axioms that we find tools, resources and guidance in restoring healthy gender relations.

North America—United States and Canada— 'Inventing the Savage'[2]

The common context of colonization resonates among Indigenous people throughout and despite the various eras and locale. Colonization as a time marker is often used because the drastic changes underwent by communities. The severing of cultural rootedness is a shared, painful reality for Indigenous peoples. Alfred (2005) describes that:

> …true conquest becomes inevitable when the Settlers' imperial claims to legitimacy are accepted and normalized by [Indigenous people]. Legitimization (acceptance and support for colonial institutions) is the fundamental battlefield…This is why, for the colonizers, the most important and immediate imperative is to assimilate indigenous peoples culturally; without an indigenous foundation or root there is no memory store or intellectual base upon which to build a challenge to the empire" (p. 56).

Indigenous gender construction that largely displayed egalitarian relations became a threat to the colonizers. The matriarchal and matrilineal social structures meant positions of power and decision making were held as often by women as men. For the colonizer, the authority of women would need to be undermined. Further, they didn't want Indigenous men to replace those roles under patriarchy. Instead, "American rhetoric simultaneously has asserted the ideology of colonial masculinity and misrepresented indigenous masculinity to inflate and then emasculate the images of manhood...to justify American colonialism and inflate the manhood of those creating the rhetoric (Kemper, 2014, p. 41). The breakdown of cultural foundation, including the constructions around gender, would contribute to both the justification of colonization and the ability of Indigenous people to counter them. The resulting stereotypes objectified both females and males, many which are still internalized today.

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[2] Though this is the title to Luana Ross's book (1998), the words appropriately chronicle the disruption described in this section.

Stereotypes created by the colonizer are very pervasive. Hegemony works to normalize and reinforce the representations to society. For North American Indigenous males, figures such as the 'noble savage,' 'lone warrior,' 'red skin,' 'lazy/drunken Indian,' were all created in opposition of the white/male/protestant colonizer (Bataille, 2001; Coward, 1999; Deloria, 1988). 'Savagery' has been used to make cultures look uncivilized and backwards as if they need to be developed, taken over. It also de-humanizes the people which aims to give reason to treating them as sub-human. The 'warrior' image as processed through the white lens becomes very complex; however, for the colonizer to function through violence while taking land, an enemy, a fighter was needed to battle against. The 'red skin' image was rooted in religious frameworks, showing an 'angry Indian' similar to a red devil portrayal. The 'lazy/drunken Indian' has been used most contemporarily since the Indian termination policy and has contributed to veiling systemic racism in government. While all have been used and perpetuated in various ways, the ultimate re-presentation of the Indigenous male as these images worked to build the image of the colonizers' masculinity. Unfortunately, these stereotypes are just a short list of the damaging colonial images on North American Indigenous men. Although being a short version of pervasive stereotypes, the impacts and legacies continue to influence Indigenous males in measureless ways.

Islands of Hawai'i and Aotearoa (New Zealand)

For Hawai'i and Aotearoa (New Zealand), colonial masculinity created a hyper masculine image of local Indigenous men. The historical timeframe across the colonization of Hawai'i and Aotearoa differs from each other and from that of the contiguous United States and Canada but has nonetheless been damaging to gender conceptualizations. Colonization of Polynesia characterized a lone super-chief; one of primitiveness, working off raw-like instinct. Tengan (2002) describes, "Early ethnographic descriptions were heavily Euro- and andro-centric, commonly portraying Polynesian men as strong, active, sexually dominating, kapu or 'sacred', and holding titles of chieftainship that were usually passed down patrilineally" (p. 241). The women were set in stark contrast, hyper-feminized, erotic with an aura of virginity. These traits have also been applied to the island lands which in being feminized has been 'prostituted' through tourism (Trask, 1999, p. 140). For the colonizer, portraits of the masculine as dominating with physical brute built in "'an example of the untamed masculine brutality that they supposedly do not share' (532), thereby reaffirming their superiority and dominance" (Tengan, 2002, p. 245). Though colonial stereotypes produced multiple hegemonic masculine characteristics, the foundation has been rooted in the belief that the white 'race' and culture is 'naturally' superior. Wall (1998) explains, "For the uncritical viewer, this image of the…Maori man is accepted as "normal" precisely because of the fact that violence is in their *nature*". Gendering the local Indigenous people by patriarchal ideologies has worked to put the often-dichotomized roles at friction with one another. By doing so, their cultural rootedness is stripped, colonization is justified, and the ability of the Indigenous people to retaliate is weakened.

One method of further dividing Indigenous people through gender was by creating an 'elite' class among the men. Hokowhitu describes:

> New Zealand government tried to figure out, well, if Maori culture is not going to go away, how are we going to work with it? And what they ended up doing was working with Maori masculine elite, basically the heads of various tribes…this elite masculinity cuts a lot of other people out. The state envisions Indigenous leadership to be male. (McKegney, 2014, p. 100)

Similarly, Trask (1999) explains the sovereignty movement division on genders, "the reason for this is simply colonialism: men are rewarded, including Native men, for collaboration. Women's role, if they are collaborators, is not to wield political power but to serve as an adjunct to men who do" (p. 94). The role of subordinate elite is a characteristic of colonization that is often ascribed to males. The power dynamics of this builds power hierarchy; the elites help maintain hegemony. Here, colonization has used constructions of gender to assimilate Native peoples by allowing select males access to privilege and power.

Arctic

There is limited scholarship on the gendered identity impacts of colonization in the Arctic, specifically from an Indigenous scholar perspective. There have been ethnographic works where observations of Arctic societies are filtered through western gender constructs (Guemple, 1995). There are anthropologic works that look at Alaska Native gendered leadership, education, and migration (Fogel-Chance, 1993; Fogel-Chance, 1994; Frink, 2009; Hamilton & Seyfrit 1994a; Hamilton & Seyfrit, 1994b) that provide a look at women's lives but a gap continues on men's livelihoods. Currently, climate change has drawn a growing body of work that looks at Arctic gendered health impacts in the face of climate change (Natalia, 2011; Preet et al., 2010). However, these remain from southern academic perspectives. A distinctive work from

Greenlandic Inuit is Jessen-Williamson (2011) whose book rejects the Western gender binary being applied to the Arctic context in cases such as described above. Whereas the author situates the discussion in an Indigenist framework, putting forth a ‘genderless’ concept. Since this work does not speak to internalized or re-presentations of identity from colonization as the other above locations (North America and islands of Hawai’i and Aotearoa respectively) have, Jessen-Williamson’s work will be described later where alterNative worldviews of gender constructs are presented to learn from. Along with Jessen-Williamson’s work from an Inuit perspective, a place-based model of qargi will also be presented as a way to ‘look back’ and bring forward Indigenous gender constructs from the Arctic.

This section has highlighted the ways in which the identity of Indigenous males has been re-presented under colonial Euro-settler context. The reformations created deeply embedded stereotypes that have marginalized Native males and contributed to unhealthy gender relationships. Social attitudes towards Indigenous males are reflected in these pervasive stereotypes. The internalization of a colonized Indigenous masculinity has been very damaging. However, the point is not to just make apparent the negative impacts that colonization has on the way we think about gender in our Indigenous communities but to critically assess them in order to decolonize and reconstruct healthy, balanced gender relations. Moving towards an Indigenist understanding of genders requires removing the Western framework and worldview. The following aims to present alterNative frameworks that guide realities of Indigenous masculinities.

AlterNative Axioms in Viewing Gender

In tracking towards conceptions of Indigenous masculinities, the standpoint must be from an Indigenous lens. As stated earlier, this is not an attempt to standardize either Indigenous masculinities or Indigenous cultures whatsoever. There are often shared values among Indigenous people that can translate into making meaningful insights. This section will transition from critical analyses of colonization influences on gender to each of the three location's Indigenous worldviews of gender that offer direction for restoring harmony to our relationships today.

North America—United States and Canada

Using language and pantheism to present notions of gender, Highway shares a Cree perspective:

> If the universe in a monotheistic system is divided into genders-that which is male and that which is female-the universe in a pantheistic system is divided into animate and inanimate…there's that which has a soul and that which has not soul…There is no gender difference and one does not have power over the other…Basically in Cree all of these living creatures have equal status, as do all of these non-living creatures" In the animate circle, "there's room for the male and the female, as well as all of these other shades of gender. (McKegney, 2014, pp. 24-25)

This understanding of gender is only part of a larger circle of organization that is centered on the soul. Highway explained this worldview in contrast to monotheism which he associates as phallic, and polytheism as an incomplete semicircle. This ideology that centers beings based on soul gives space for gender fluidity. The constructed sphere is echoed:

> …in the Native languages of North America, so far as I know-certainly Cree, Ojibway, and Dene-there is no 'he' and there is no 'she'" And to illustrate beautifully how this is lived, "Imagine a world without music, without dance, without theatre, without colour, just a black-and-white world of he and she. And who adds the colour? All the colours?

> The other genders. And you have to have that, or else you just die. Life wouldn't be worth living. (McKegney, 2014, pp. 24, 29)

This perspective uses non-linear conceptions where genders do not carry value over one another. In fact, the fluidity of gender is welcomed in the circles. What this means for masculinities is that it is equal to any other concepts of gender whether being feminine or otherwise.

Lee (2013) presents a Diné way of thought noting that, "Prior to colonization, Diné communities did not distinguish between male and female through a gender order or power relations between groups of people. Male and female essences are thought to be part of all living entities in the universe" (p. 8). Further, Diné educator H.J Benally explains (as cited in Lee, 2013, p. 50) the epistemological base of the Diné matrix:

> The sacred words Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón represent a combination of separate male and female concepts. The first concept, Sa'ah Naagháí, is defined as "indestructible and eternal being." It is male and exhibits male-like qualities. The second concept, Bik'eh Hózhóón is defined as "the director and cause of all that is good." It is female and exhibits female-like qualities. The two concepts do not operate apart but are complements to and halves of each other.

The complex matrices and zones are full of symmetry though pairs. The pairs are absolutely necessary to each other and never operate by themselves, they are not able to. There is an inherent balance built into this perception; Lee (2013) writes that for a Diné person then, "…understanding of his/her identity is based on a matrix whose foundation is balance, wellness, cooperation, and individuality within a communal setting" (p. 16). Pairs have different qualities which are necessary to the other's existence; Diné masculinity is only complete with its counterpart.

Islands of Hawai'i and Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Tracking towards conceptualizations of Indigenous masculinity requires being adjusted to alterNative epistemologies, ontologies, axioms that may include notions of gender but are not prevailing ways of understanding being or identity. Tengan (2002) notes the challenges:

> The central problem here is the extent to which we can read gender into different cultural and historical systems. In many Polynesian societies, gender cannot be easily separated out and left to stand on its own as a meaningful construct for understanding social life…Pre-colonial gender practices of masculinity and femininity should more appropriately be understood as always articulated and deeply interpolated with other social organizational principles such as rank, place, kinship and birth order. (p. 242)

In the Western framework, gender construction is linked to the body. However, Smith (1999) points to a differentiation that removes the derivative from the physical "It must be remembered, however, that concepts such as the mind or the intellect, the soul, reason, virtue and morality are not in themselves 'real' or biological parts of the human body" (p. 48). Smith also calls out how Western time and space are used to distant the individual from land, spirituality and compartmentalizes society in ways such as gender and gender roles (pp. 50-51). Whereas, it is the relationships, the connectedness of these within Indigenous worldviews which are important, not their separateness.

The very language speaks to conflict between Western and Māori views, Smith shares an example from participation in the Waitangi Tribunal:

> …the Crown has ignored the *rangatiratanga*, or chiefly and sovereign status, of Maori women. To argue this, the claimants are compelled to prove that Maori women were as much *rangaria* (chiefs) as Maori men. At a very simple level the 'problem' is a problem

> of translation. *Rangatiratanga* has generally been interpreted in English as meaning chieftainship and sovereignty, which in colonialism was a 'male thing.' (p. 46)

Here the worldview of the Māori struggles to be forced to fit within the Western view, it cannot. It does not even translate. Taking these Indigenous knowledge bases and applying it to gender lends the idea that relational aspects provide continuity instead of division, division being seen in Western constructs of gender.

Arctic

A final alterNative worldview will be presented in an attempt to understand pre-and de-colonized Indigenous masculinities. A *Kalaallit Nunaat*, Greenlandic example and a place-based qargi model will be presented here as Arctic worldview examples that can help inform decolonizing gender. The limited resources on gender relations in the Arctic may in itself begin to inform this topic. In fact, Karla Jessen Williamson (2011) uses a pan-Inuit framework to assert a notion of genderlessness in her book, *Inherit My Heaven: Kalaallit Gender Relations*. She uses three examples from Inuit ways of being: intellect/life force, naming ceremonies, and language to express a genderlessness philosophy. She prefaces her definition of genderlessness as "…to mean that each person's humanity is seen as more significant than their characteristics of sex" (p. 8).

Organization of all life is understood through *sila*, "…force that gives all the living beings air to breathe, and intelligence. With every breath people and animals take, air becomes transformed into energy to be used for intelligence because as much as there is not life without air, without it there is not intelligence either" (Jessen Williamson, 1992, p. 24). Furthermore:

> …life-giving energy gained from *sila* is pervasive, all encompassing, and distributed widely to all organisms and non-organisms on earth…there is not division into animate

> and inanimate objects…any object can be imbued with *sila*" and finally, "Inuit see that the *sila* of the *tuttu* (caribou) is distinct from the *sila* of the *puisit* (seals), no more or less, but obviously dissimilar. But within each soul/being, there is no reference to *sila* in terms of gender...Such a notion is truly foreign to Inuit thinking. (Jessen Williamson, 2011, p. 47)

Here, a lively existence is built upon everything having a spirit/soul and even within that realm they are not divided in genders.

Next, the author points to the namesake practice of the Inuit to support a genderless worldview. Moving from the importance of the soul, "For the Inuit, a name is a soul and a soul is a name. This life-giving entity comes directly from the universe…So it is that each name represents a soul and the bearer is a namesake of someone who has passed away" (p. 52). Namesakes are passed regardless of sex. To be explained using western construct- names are neither masculine nor feminine and are given regardless of sex because they are valued by the concept of soul. There were no 'boy' names or 'girl' names. Namesake practices have been expressed to illustrate this similar worldview in various arctic communities (Craig, 1996; Kawagley, 2006; Fienup-Riordan, 1990; Lowenstein, 2008; Rearden, A., Jacobson, A. (Eds.), 2009). None have found that gender is relevant in the namesake practice.

Third, Jessen Williamson (2011) provides the Inuktitut language as an example of genderlessness in the Inuit worldview:

> A listener cannot determine in Inuit sentence structure whether the suffix of the word refers to a man, a woman, or other than a human being, as pronominal-verbal endings…indicate no gender" (54). As found in earlier discussions of worldview,

> relationships are emphasized. Iñupiaq scholar MacLean (1990) writes, "The concept of interdependence stands out in the structure of the Inupiaq and Yupik languages" (p. 164).

How does this 'genderlessness' within a worldview help in understanding masculinity then? It informs us that masculinity and femininity are not forms of socially demarcating relations in an Indigenous perspective. Souls, in the context of land and relations with ancestors, were used in place of being marked through sex and gender. As the *sila* of beings are equal but not the same, associated roles were formed by different characteristics which were not valued more than one another. This translates into egalitarian roles based on equally valued characteristics from having *sila*. Therefore, 'masculinity' is inherently empowered the same as anything 'feminine' despite the lack of these gender markings in life force, naming or language for the Inuit.

Lastly, this Arctic section looks to the qasgi/ qargi (men's house) as a place-based model that served to pass down storytelling in Indigenous knowledge systems among Inuit. 'Looking back' to stories to better understand Indigenous gender constructs as a way to move past colonial narratives has potential to impact healthy identity and wellbeing. Recent efforts to revitalize the qargi are also examined from cultural foundations of the qargi to inform Indigenous gender constructs in a meaningful way moving forward.

Among circumpolar north Inuit, the qasgi or qargi was a men's house, a ceremonial house, and educational institution (MacLean, 1986). The sod structure is no longer used today but land-based teachings and practices continue on in many forms including intergenerational passing of stories. This section connects specific lessons and teachings from qargi (term used in this chapter[3]) to Indigenous gender constructs.

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[3] I recognize the diverse languages not only within Alaska but also Inuit languages of the circumpolar North. There are likely grammatical errors in these languages or misspelling regarding plurality; these are my own mistakes. The use of *qargi* is from my own Iñupiaq language and is chosen for use to make reading easier throughout.

The effort to understand the teachings and values from the qargi must first be contextualized as a way of knowing that originates from the land. Although information found for this paper was done with use of other written sources, the origins of this way of knowing is place-based and exists through the practice of storytelling. For Inuit and many Indigenous people, "Our connection to the land has to be the foundation of our society. For untold generations, we evolved from the land and we learned to come to an understanding that this is the basis of teachings. Again, these teachings were passed down orally from generation to generation" (Nelson, 2008, p. 40). This way of knowing is as ancient as the land and the people who interact in that place. As the quote also indicates, knowledge has been carried through generations, largely though oral tradition and only relatively recent times in writing.

In some regions like Alaska, Yup'ik communities have utilized anthropology to document local knowledge, where places and structures like the qargi would be studied. Projects have been designed to bring Elders and youth together to describe local place names of land and to map the old sites. The objective to explore place names extended to expressing the spiritual connection to the land by local people (Fienup-Riordan 2014) and that knowing through stories and experience were emphasized for learning (Cusack-McVeigh, 2008). Attempts to understand the structure and significance of qargi teachings then are intrinsically a part of land, stories, and intergenerational teachings (Fienup-Riordan 2014). The qargi functioned as a structure for the young to be instructed from Elders. In this space, the young ones learned not just content from lessons, but were instructed *how* to learn as they developed and grew. Recent generations of Elders are the last era of those who were raised in this fashion from the qargi. One Yup'ik Elder recalled, "When I was old enough to go to the *qasgi* my mother would say, okay, go over to the *qasgi* and try to steal something. She apparently meant that when I listened to men teaching, though the instructor wasn't talking directly to me, if I learned something it would be something that would help me for the rest of my life" (Fienup-Riordan, 2014, p. 66). Young people were instructed and taught in this way, such as indirect storytelling, often in the gathering place of the qargi. In addition to being a place where young were taught and instructed, as an educational institution, the qargi served as a place to hold ceremony.

Ceremony by definition holds certain ritual observances where procedures are practiced, often to celebrate or honor aspects of spirituality. For Inuit, the *qargi* was an important space to perform ritual that honored and upheld relations with animal world. Hunting success includes a continuous balance of honorable practice of ceremony and following traditions. Particularly for coastal Inuit, the gift of the whale includes men's and women's rituals where the proper adherence to duties are kept in balance to ensure the whale giving itself to the people. In this way, the qargi contributed to both cultural identity and survival through ceremonial whaling practices. Crowell (2009) describes for example, a rite of passage that was specific to the whale harpooner, as indicated by a headdress found from an old qargi dwelling (pp.108-109). Dancing as a form of storytelling and connecting with the spirit world was a form of gathering as well as celebration that took place in the qargi. The importance of drumming and dancing have been described in detail for both Yupiit and Iñupiat among Alaska (Barker, Fienup-Riordan & John 2010; Ikuta, 2011; John, 2010; Riccio, n.d). Dancing formerly took place in the qargi, another example of persistent teachings and practice passed down through generations and practiced today.

Thus far the place-based knowledge in which we understand qargi has been also illustrated as a way of knowing passed through generations largely through oral tradition. The use and function of the qargi have been presented as a gathering place for teaching but also as an important space that held ceremony including rituals around whaling, rites of passage, and drumming and dancing. As these teachings persist today in various forms, the continuity of being and knowing as applicable to wellbeing and way of life today is clear. This serves as the foundation for entering other ways of knowing in which this structure metaphorically continues to hold space for in understanding Indigenous knowledge systems. The following works from this foundation to build a scaffold of teachings on Indigenous gender constructs. The examination through a place-based and story foundation are used to bring Indigenous gender constructs forward.

Practices from within the qargi space are related to wellbeing and spirituality, which a better understanding can contribute to working towards healthy gender relations today. It is essential to recognize the influences of colonization; specifically, the imposition of binary gendered constructs which perpetuate power imbalances of domination and control. Indigenous people have experienced multi levels of trauma as a result of colonial ways and impacts. The effort here is to move beyond unpacking the harms of Western patriarchy and draw from Indigenous knowledge systems to inform alternative gender notions to heal and restore healthy relationships. One such way to decolonize gender concepts is to stop carrying forth colonial binaries and replace them with Indigenous teachings. The following examples will 'look back' to cultural teachings on gender and what can be drawn from these to move us forward.

Nelson (2008) and chapter author Gonzales (Part 7) both describe the centrality of language to Indigenous peoples' knowledge base. In understanding social structure of genders then it is notable that Inuit languages do not have gender pronouns (e.g., Yup'ik/Yugtun, Iñupiaq/Iñupiatun, Greenlandic/Kalaallisut). Indeed, the self-determined terms of Yup'ik, Iñupiaq, and Inuit all similarly mean 'real person or real people,' expressing personhood and human being. Particularly, this notable concept of language without gendered pronouns (Jessen Williamson, 2011) has been connected to a ‘genderless’ worldview among Inuit. Which is also supported by the belief and practices of Inuit namesakes, which puts forward the spirit and characteristics of a person, not being subject to gender. Using this example to understand Indigenous gender concepts then, the absence of gender notation within languages speak to the worldview and values surrounding personhood within these cultures first and foremost than gender.

As a foundation to Indigenous knowledge and practices from within the qargi, the following will look at creation stories to examine what can be gleaned on gender from these sources of knowledge. The instruction that would take place in the qargi would include creation stories to teach ways of knowing. The format of storytelling as teaching allows learners to draw many lessons from the stories throughout their life, as was described earlier in the quote from an Elder. The purpose here is to look at the stories with a gendered lens so we can use the teachings to articulate Indigenous gender constructs we can use today, replacing unhealthy binary colonial constructs.

Walley (2018) shares the creation story from Canadian Inuit that the first woman created originated from an intimate relationship of two men. The one male who became pregnant underwent bodily transformation where the penis split to become a vulva, turning him into a woman (Walley, 2018, pp.31-32). This example not only shows acceptance of sexuality outside of heterosexuality but the also the idea of transformation between sex- a rigid concept in Western sex and gender culture. Creation stories of Inuit babies are also indicative of fluid gender constructs and bodily fluidity. In one story, first humans were adults and didn’t humanly birth babies. The sentient land later gifted babies to the first humans on the land; one version noting that male babies were harder to find and one had to go further out to find them (Qitsualik-Tinsley, 2015). Though the sex of babies is noted, the story expresses the first ancestor as being the land. Ancestor connection to land as a relation among the new generation is primary to their sex or gender, or even their parents. This illustrates the orientation of new life to this world in a much different way than a sex and gender assignment at birth which is the case in Western birth rituals. Related, an Inuit birth teaching is that babies are not a certain sex until they pass through to from spirit world to Earth world and that difficult births indicate they changed their sex midway.

Further, Walley (2018) also describes that although born a biological sex, a baby would grow into becoming a gender later on. Supporting this are practices of raising children opposite gender of their sex until coming of age, this being attributed to sometimes protecting them from evil spirits by tricking the spirit through appeared gender and gender 'role swapping,' sometimes to balance out gender ratios and household skill sets (Holm, 1914, p. 67; Robert-Lamblin, 1981; Stewart, 2002, p.19). There is existing terminology for recognition of those who embody masculine and feminine traits (Rydström, 2010). Some cases included (but was not limited to) shamans, as people who often crossed and moved between different spirit worlds, in which crossing boundaries was well within their role. From St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, there are stories of shamans who go between multiple non-physical realms and embody multiple gender characteristics. Also, occurrences of shaman helping spirits that were gender fluid were found to again, work as go-betweens (Saladin d'Anglure, 2005, p.134). In these described accounts of gender fluidity, it is notable that in each way it was advantageous to the individual and their role in the community to have gender fluidity. Another important part of 'gender swapping' that should be considered is the temporal part of this that was marked with coming of age, where a rite of passage may be a time that this might be changed. Skill sets as contributing to the larger community is also a consideration that comes into play for when these practices occurred. People were suited to their skills and best use of those skills to the collective. As described with shamans and other spirit helpers, this could include gender fluidity to serve in that role, which was highly valued.

The conceptual framework of the qargi with foundational teachings from the land and through storytelling have offered a scaffold in 'looking back' to analyze stories with a gendered lens. Both sex and gender fluidity are present in many forms of story presented, all positive to the characteristics and roles of the individuals in relation to their community. The following part of the paper will bring us to present movements and utilization of the conceptual model of qargi. The space which is offered through qargi continues to be meaningful to Inuit and is being 'revitalized' in various regions because it offers the original idea of being a place for learning and ceremony. A digital qargi, through the video game *Never Alone* is presented, followed by the *Qunaqsivik/Toolbox*, a strength-based intervention model to promote wellness that utilizes a 'Qasgiq (Communal House) Model,' and finally, the *Qargizine*, an online magazine.

Kisima Inŋitchuŋa, Never Alone is a globally available video game that was released in 2014. Made with contributions of over forty Alaska Native Elders and cultural ambassadors, the video game challenges users to work through an Iñupiaq cultural experience (neveralone.com). The central structure in a community, the qargi was a place of games. Engaging in games were used to bring people together and make good relationships. Good relations among community members could mean good hunting and provide for the wellbeing of everyone. The qargi would provide a space for the labor and preparations of both work and play. In the game Never Alone the player is challenged to develop their isuma- awareness by exercising good judgement, reason, collaboration, selflessness, and by knowing the ways of nuna- land (Meloche, 2017). Living well, learning to develop intellect, exercising, having healthy relationships are all built into navigating through the game (Meloche, 2017, p.3-4). Meloche (2017) puts forth a larger discussion of how the video game invites competition to a digital qargi where this is an exercise of self-determination in that Inuit ask global persons to play and compete, but it of course is with their rules and adherence to Iñupiaq value constructs only which they can move through. This is notable because the effort to disentangle competition from domination is a subtle yet important variation that speaks to the worldview which is being utilized here to better understand gender notions. What is the connection? The video game has many interesting ways that Iñupiaq values, culture and structure are applied in a modern digital world. As a 'modern qasgi' example, the teachings express the development of a strong character for an individual that are intrinsically related to a sentient land and mindset beyond self and in service to people and even animals. Much like the example of language given earlier in the paper, it's the *absence* of gender stratification that really highlights the lessons. Personhood and becoming a 'real person' through character development as described are what determine a path for someone, not their sex or gender being prescriptive.

Qungasvik, meaning *Toolbox* in the Central Yup'ik dialect is a community developed health intervention that focuses on cultural strengths as protective factors (Rasmus et al., 2014). In this toolbox for communities a Qasgiq model is employed. In this model, it serves as an organizational structure for community leadership to gather, as well as a place to teach and instruct the community prevention services and activities to ultimately share knowledge and build strength and protective factors for local youth (Qunagsvik). The available online qargi resource is directly connected to contributing to the health and wellbeing of its people—an objective of better understanding Indigenous gender constructs. The different activities bring together Elders and youth to work and track activities towards wellness. Some of the modules presented include 'The Land Provides for Us,' 'Surviving Your Feelings,' 'Strong and Sober,' and 'Relationships for a Good Life' (Center for Alaska Native Health Research). The set of tools are designed to work at multiple levels in a community to promote the wellbeing of strengths that protect youth from risk to suicide and self-harm. Here, the community driven model is a health movement that revitalizes the qargi as a center place for gathering and promoting wellness in the community. The same foundations of place-based teachings and storytelling continue on as cultural teachings that get passed on to the current generation. The connection to gender may not be explicit here. However, these models of wellbeing can be used when we think about gender fluidity in the face of Western impositions and where these notions of identity fit within our Indigenous worldviews. Using that approach we can see the qualities and aspects of character which are taught have less to do with gender than they have to do with cultural values of wellbeing.

The final example from recent efforts to revitalize the qargi can be seen in an online magazine called *Qargi Zine*. Started in 2015 by Jacqui Lambert, the first issue says, "A qargi is community building; a place where the town gathers for stories, ceremonial occasions, and public business. People learned oral history, songs, and chants at the qargi," And that, "I wanted to produce the Qargi Zine to accommodate work created by local artists, writers, activists, photographers and more" (Lambert, 2015). In addition to the editor using the aspect of gathering and community through the title and intention to bring together community to share knowledge, issue #8 included an article titled, 'A case for the Qasgiq' by Warren Jones (2017). In this article Jones focuses on the aspect of qargi as a men's house specifically. Jones draws upon Harold

Napoleon and Oscar Kawagley's teachings early on to situate the knowledge base and case he presents for the *qargi* as an institution, a governance structure that taught young people how to develop into a real human being. Jones calls out what he observes from men in his community today and what their roles would be from qargi teachings. It was the institution of qargi practices which taught boys the values of their place in the community, and how to develop into respectful men. Jones visions the revitalization of the qargi including a ceremonial, community centered gathering place, "The men's house will be the catalyst for men to reclaim their rightful place in our society and to do our part in returning our communities to balance" (Jones, 2017, p. 13). In this example, the author directly applies the teachings from the qargi institution into a gendered lens that improves the wellbeing of Indigenous people. The teachings of yuuyaraq are used with a gender lens of what that means for men today. It is this kind of application in which deepening our Indigenous knowledge by 'looking back' can create meaningful contributions to gendered spaces that grow our community beyond colonial constructs.

The initial approach of this topic was the idea that learning about qargi teachings would highlight gender-specific teachings and lessons for Indigenous men particularly. This was assumed from the common definition of being a men's house. However, the research quickly presented teachings, values and practices that developed Inuit personhood first and foremost. The chapter section worked off the foundation of place-based knowledge and the existence of this knowledge only made possible through storytelling practices that eventually got to writing relatively recently. This provided a conceptual qargi model to then 'look back' at the stories and glean gender constructs from the worldview and knowledge encompassed in the stories. The story analysis with a gendered lens supported a very fluid concept of gender and even bodily fluidity. Gender fluidity in the many examples all presented a positive association of being flexible in these ways.

Moving forward to more recent conceptual models of qargi revitalization, three examples were presented in how teachings of the qargi are being made applicable to today among Inuit through a video game, community health interventions, and an online magazine. These models of qargi today, *Never Alone* and *Qungasivik*, didn't have explicit gender connection but instead reinforced the values of a human being in Inuit communities and what it meant to develop characteristics and personhood as an individual who is part of a community. These models are still relevant and helpful for thinking about Indigenous gender because the importance on these human aspects counter much of the colonial gender narrative that leads to unhealthy ways of being in relation with one another. The third recent example, *Qargi Zine*, brought together the iterations of personhood to manhood in Jones' article. This piece worked together the aspects of how Indigenous gender constructs means being a full human of good character as first and center to developing a people in contrast to conformity to rigid gender roles as seen in Western society. These teachings are meaningful in contributing to a cultural worldview of wellbeing through identity.

The development of my own approach within this work and the shaping of articulating Indigenous gender constructs is testament to the possibility of transformation we can undertake when seeking better understanding to serve our community. It is hoped that this work is just one beginning to a transformative process as taught in our stories, that Indigenous people can replace the imposition of colonial gender constructs with our own Indigenous gender ways of knowing, improving our wellbeing and relations.

The four perspectives from Cree, Diné, Hawai'i and Māori, and Inuit worldviews provide rich spaces of guidance for understanding relationships and ways of being. Interestingly, the great diversity between them does not create opposing values. For example, the Cree worldview was illustrated as having two circles—inanimate and animate, then the animate was fluid in genders. Then, explicitly noted by the Inuit perspective was that there was no differentiation of inanimate and animate. Instead, all things were living, and sex and gender were not formative of being. However, in these two comparisons there are similar values of equally honoring all living things irrespective of the characteristics they carry. In fact, through the alterNative views when different characteristics and attributes were presented, they were understood as complementary if not necessary to the other for existence.

Polynesian outlooks spoke of not hardly being able to conceptualize gender the Western way because it simply does not work within their model of relationships. It does not translate, literally. Relationships are defined through kinship, birth order, and place. This makes an important point that Western frameworks cannot be used to fully grasp Indigenous perceptions on facets of identity, including that of gender. A shift in lens must be used. Using spatial and dynamics of time are two key ways to begin this shift for a Polynesian perspective.

Last, the Arctic region shared worldviews based on everything having a soul which makes all things animate. Though this varied from other worldviews, it nonetheless supported egalitarian constructs among all living beings, embracing variations in characteristics. Jessen Williamson puts forth a very intriguing argument of a genderlessness culture. This model is completely divergent from a Western worldview. In being so polarizing opposite and complex, it is hard to draw parallels that contribute to conceptualizing a gender-free framework. Though being a recent publication, it has already worked into academia studies of gender and the Arctic, drawing review (Bodenhorn, 2013). From outside of Inuit culture, the work to imagine genderlessness is compelling and the framework truly cannot be understood with English and Western tools. The qargi offers a place-based learning model on foundations of persons as whole beings, which in various forms are informing Arctic narrative today.

Putting forth alterNative worldviews has served this chapter in two ways. First, they critique western colonial ideology both as a whole but especially in the formation of stereotypes of Indigenous males and use of gender in colonization. Second, the posing of alterNative worldviews opens avenues to decolonize dominant perceptions of gender and move towards Indigenizing relationships. Honoring Indigenous knowledge is very powerful in finding deeper understanding on ways of being. Moving ahead, the last way alterNative worldviews will function is through connection with narrative on Indigenous masculinities. How do these worldviews connect to lived experience on what it means to identify with Indigenous masculinities? How do these worldviews inform lives in practice, what does that look like?

Affirming Indigenous Masculinities- *Alaska Native Men's Voices project*

Topics on intersections of identity require personal voice. Narratives, experience, and voice support the theories, give truth to them; it is not, nor should not be the other way around. Complementarily, Indigenous feminists works have also used narrative-based theories which acknowledge the emotional knowledge of 'Felt Theory' carried through in these works (Million, 2009). The project contributes to building on understandings of Indigenous masculinities based on their realities. Shared reflections of Indigenous manhood give life to theories which can often seem abstract. This project will highlight the strengths in which Alaska Native men are contributing to communities, so we can continue to work towards healthy relationships for future generations.

Tracking Indigenous masculinities is a long journey with many complexities. In the face of colonization, Indigenous peoples worldwide have undergone tremendous change. However, it is in the storm where the fortitude of resistance is found. Further, recognizing the value and presence of change is not new to Indigenous peoples. Although this essay looks to pre-colonial worldviews for guidance and Original Instruction, it is recognized that Indigenous cultures were never static nor are they today. Indigenous peoples have mastered adaptation and resilience. It is within the myriad worldviews that provide a foundation for this persistence.

In the interlocking crossings of identity, Indigenous masculinities studies offer valuable insight to understanding gender relations. In a way of self-determination we look to Indigenous frameworks of epistemology, ontology, and axioms as a way to restore and empower gender relations among our people. Using Indigenous worldviews and values to identify what healthy masculine identity looks like, Indigenous relations can heal and build a healthy people. The quality of being introspective nurtures self-determination. The great diversity among Indigenous worldviews is not discouraging, as there is much to learn from one another.

Tracking towards healthy relations is not an easy path, but the value in doing so is immense. Cajete (1994) writes:

> Indigenous tracking presents a simple yet profound way to understand the connection between direct experience with Nature and the development of the spiritual traditions of Tribal people…tracking is intimately involved in the process of seeking wisdom, vision, and coming to the source of spirit…the hunter of good heart is a metaphoric ideal that reveals the nature of journeying toward completeness. (pp. 56-57)

Becoming intimately involved in commitment to healthy gender relationships brings us to ‘the source of spirit.’ Further, in development of balanced and harmonious relations we will find ‘completeness.’ Cajete’s words seem to embody the potential of tracking of Indigenous masculinities.

Chapter 2: A Review of Masculinities: Contextualizing Alaska Native Men's Voices (Literature and Social Media Review)

The following is a unique synopsis of combined literature and social media on the topic of masculinities. The review of this literature is to contextualize the 'Alaska Native Men's Voices' project. The review inherently includes some framing in feminist and women's studies, which the scholarship in masculinities and men's studies has worked to contribute to. The scope of work and future directions has called for more intersectional and transnational perspectives. At the same time, Indigenous communities have worked in various capacities to decolonize and revitalize ways of being and knowing through cultural practices. Within this is a strengthening of identity through Indigenous worldviews and values—including notions of gender. It is important to note that although there are analogous concepts within Western scholarship in gender studies, the growth of Indigenous scholarship and revitalization of cultural identity has been rooted in distinct historical, political and place-based experiences of Indigenous peoples. This distinction does not limit the ability to synthesize the body of works but ensures a critical stance on preventing misaligned analysis across works and what can be gained from shifting perspective.

This multi-media review includes literature on masculinities and men's studies, social media postings from Facebook, and Instagram.

Literature Review

Masculinities and Men's Studies

Masculinity studies from the late '80s and early '90s emerged as a contribution to waves of Western feminism. For reference, the first wave of feminism refers to the women's suffrage movement in the late 19th century (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006; Moynagh & Forestell, 2012). The second wave of feminism, highly influenced by civil rights movement, starting in the '60s is characterized by working on issues of discrimination and inequality (Moynagh & Forestell, 2012). The third wave of feminism refers to the body of work starting around the ‘90s which saw the second wave as specific to white middle-class women (Moynagh & Forestell, 2012). The third wave expanded feminism in creating discourse on intersectionality where race, class, sex, gender, ethnicity and nationality are taken into account. The waves of feminism worked to give voice and light to women’s experiences in a historical context which has been largely invisible in society, calling attention to social norms around sex and gender that have gone uncriticized, largely in part to systems of power.

Within this frontline exposure of women’s lives and experiences, the place of men and masculine identity moved to the background. Initial academic works of masculinity included efforts to define masculine identity. In “Theorizing Masculinity,” the authors put forth ways of thinking about masculinity, “…to join in the wider feminist project of making masculinities visible—even, at times, to men themselves” (Brod & Kaufman, 1994, p. viii). An important acknowledgment made early on in this work is the need for diverse perspectives in lines of inquiry. In that recognition, the sensitive positionality in power dynamics of doing this work questions, “How does one really go about placing men and their institutions at the center of an analysis without replicating the patriarchal biases of previous studies of men? (Brod & Kaufman, 1994, p. 4).

A useful platform that has been worked from is the early terminology on ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Donaldson, 1993; Wedgwood, 2009). Hegemonic masculinity as a systemic form of oppression specific to sex and gender utilizes the process of naming power that social norms reinforce as ‘natural’ or ‘ordinary,’ integrating the concept of hegemony terminology of course being influenced by works of Gramsci and Marxism. In parallel to the critiques of second wave feminism as limited to a white middle-class expression, men’s studies have begun to deconstruct the scholarship as largely being white and heteronormative (Nelson, 2000).

With these leading objectives, later work continued along a social justice line by making clear that although feminist movements centered on women's lives, the work for gender equality is not just a 'women's issue.' The need to create change includes approaches that work on the relationships between genders, through delineation between bodies, sex, sex roles, gender categories, as not biologically determined but constructed in historical context (Connell & Connell, 2005). Similarly, in the relational framework, Campbell and Bell (2000) examine masculine gender constructs as built off from one another and examine the layer of spatiality from a rural placement of social dynamics and power. Ferber's *Racial warriors and weekend warriors: The construction of masculinity in mythopoetic and white supremacist discourse* (2000) questions seemingly oppositional ideals that may actually reinforce the notions of 'right to power' among men. Although Ferber does not offer direction on meaningful solutions, the critique demonstrates interlocking systems of racism and sexism. Another study that builds off of concepts of hegemonic masculinity towards justice is Fernández-Álvarez (2014), with applications to gender-based violence. Fernández-Álvarez takes time to reinforce the dynamic multiplicity of masculinities and inequalities among genders while arriving at the need to reconstruct masculinities that move away from hegemonic masculinity.

The common goal to expand diverse concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality within historical and systemic contexts introduces both intersectional and transnational discourses. Black feminism specifically has contributed to intersectional scholarship on positionality with sexism, racism, and class oppression (Collins, 2002; hooks, 1989, 2004; Lorde, 2003, 2012). In this way, Third World feminist led scholarship not only describes experiences as women of color from various nationalist perspectives, offering a multicultural lens, but pushes back on global privileges such as north and south narratives (Anzaldúa, 1987; Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, 2007; Mohanty, Russo, & Lourdes Torres, 1991; Mohanty, 2003). Patil (2013) has provided a helpful review of the attempts of unpacking of patriarchy to the expansion of transnational work. The author puts forth the need for more perspectives by describing the global scale of colonization and attached hierarchies that ignore cross-border dynamics and relationships that many populations live but are not represented. Additionally, the author utilizes examples of spatiality and mapping as well as General Assembly of the United Nations documentation to make case examples. This approach and call for intersectional, transnational work on gender constructs sets up the growing area of Indigenous masculinities. Indigenous scholarship collaborations have worked to articulate gender constructs, particularly masculinities in non-patriarchal societies (Cariou et al., 2015). Similarly, Indigenous scholars who have exercised sovereign ways of being including gender expression through many practices including ceremony have written through Indigenous feminist frames to restore the sacred feminine (Barker, 2017; Green, 2007; Maracle, 1996). Relational healing from state violence for Indigenous peoples, particularly across genders has been articulated as necessary in processes of self-determination (Million, 2013). The following will look at areas of Indigenous masculinities.

Indigenous Masculinities

The following works of Indigenous masculinities will be regionally grouped. Though the development of men's studies and masculinities described so far have been in an effort to contribute to feminist studies, a close examination of where Indigenous masculinities is being developed is needed in so that the work is not misplaced as a subcategory in deconstructing Western binary gender constructs. Instead, much of this work is in fact forms of exercising self-determination and sovereignty, which include notions of identity and narrative of decolonization. Additionally, as certainly clear from literature presented so far, the complexity cannot be attached to a single mode of thought. The caution here is to avoid simplification by erroneously applying pathways of thought discussed so far to this emergence of Indigenous knowledge systems and scholarship articulating alternative gender constructs. Indeed, there may be overlap and the value of diverse experiences and perspectives stands so connections can be made in a meaningful way.

In North America, national Canadian studies have approached the topic of fatherhood that necessitates a grounding of not only the diverse meaning of the term itself but relation of fatherhood to masculinities and matters of identity. Ball and Daly (2012) open with presenting the wide range of what it can mean to be a father:

> …biological paternity in the context of heterosexual marriage, adoption of a child with one's same-sex partner, sperm donation, step-parenting, lone parenting, co-parenting with an ex-partner, and myriad other ways. A father's contribution to his child may be primarily financial. He may have little or no contact with some or all of his children, whether by choice or by circumstance. Or he may be directly involved in every aspect of his child's care. (p. 1)

This illustrative example sets up some of the possible notions of nuanced identity around masculinity, the fourth unifying theme across the authors' work. Gendered social constructions of caregiving can influence fatherhood roles and expectations. The authors write, "…father involvement research aims to reveal disparities between public and private experiences of fathering" (Ball & Daly, 2013, p. 16). To do this, the authors suggest deconstructing gender binaries and challenging heteronormative thinking. Further, the authors specifically acknowledge the need for diversity and social inclusion, with a specific example from First Nations men and Indigenous masculinities; the effort to have initiatives creating visibility with imagery may actually end up appearing exclusive against the very diverse population in Canada.

It should be prefaced that there are 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States (Saenz, 2020) and that the following work from American Indian scholars are contributing pieces of a very diverse region of Indigenous peoples. This note is not to imply limitation in their work, but to exemplify the gap in literature on this topic and where the current work is situated. Lee's (2013) work articulates the complexities of a Diné worldview and the impacts from colonization on Diné peoples. Lee particularly writes about the perspectives of what it means to be a Diné man sharing selections from contributing community members. A valuable insight is a full description on the existence of complementary genders in so much that they actually cannot exist without one another. In this, it is not a reinforcement of binaries, but an expression for the worldview by Diné. Other work from North America also describes colonial impacts on identity. Kemper (2014) calls out colonization's representations of American Indians as enemies, terrorists in the titled work, *Geronimo! The Ideologies of Colonial and Indigenous Masculinities in Historical and Contemporary Representations*. This work links historical Indian policy and governmental relations to militarized and warlike ideologies. Here, representations of American Indians have negatively impacted internalized and external perceptions of Indigenous men. Sam McKegney's (2014) book, "Masculindians: Conversations about Indigenous Manhood" has a wide range of perspectives from authors with many backgrounds. McKegeny writes,

> It is offered in a spirit of generating dialogue in the hopes that these voices will be joined by those youth, adults, and elders from throughout Indian Country committed to seeking pathways to balanced and empowered gender relations that will shed the

> heteropatriarchal impositions of colonialism and invigorate myriad forms of healthy masculinity that honor Indigenous cosmologies of gender while strengthening and nurturing the terrain of Indigenous continuance. (Boyden et al., 2014, p. 11)

Revisiting the call for more diverse and transnational perspectives including colonialism in gender studies, including men's studies and masculinities, this work adds significantly. Though this can fit within that real need in scholarship, it is worth considering this stated intention and axiology of this work and how we conceptualize Indigenous masculinities in their own right. With that thought, Polynesian scholars have put forth perspectives on Indigenous manhood and masculinities.

Indigenous scholar Hokowhitu has worked on Indigenous and Māori masculinities. The author's earlier work included a close examination of the expectations and stereotypes of participating in sports among Māori men (Hokowhitu, 2003, 2004). In this way, the author articulates the colonial historical ways sport has been a form of stereotyping savagery in a very visceral way. The physical embodiment and notions of identity around sports are imposed upon Māori men and influence concepts of masculinity (Hokowhitu, 2003, 2004). Hokowhitu has also taken a critical look at Māori tribal organizations which have been designed to interface with Western/Eurocentric systems, which in doing so have replicated the colonial ones. Within these systems a position of Indigenous masculine elite has been created in part to do with gender assumptions. The author claims this space as problematic between colonization and decolonization because the Indigenous masculine goes unnoticed under a presumed place 'traditional' whereas they are functioning and serving the colonial ways (Hokowhitu, 2012). From Hawai'i, local community revitalization of cultural practices has put forth scholarship on identity among Indigenous Hawaiian men. Tengan (2008) writes about colonial legacies on

Native Hawaiians and gender identities. In response to this, Native men on the island of Maui came together in a group called Hale Mua to reassert Hawaiian cultural practices, ceremonies, including roles of men. The author writes to this revitalization with a lens of gender, “I analyze the gendered formation of Hawaiian identity and masculinity in the Mua and in the larger context of the Hawaiian cultural nationalist movement” (Tengan, 2008, p. 5). Reclaiming ceremony and practices is a notable theme in Indigenous gender studies worth revisiting specifically (Baldy, 2018).

Regionally, the Arctic is a third area which has developing works on Indigenous gender constructs. Inuit scholar Jessen Williamson’s (2011) book “Inherit My Heaven: Kalaallit Gender Relations” puts forth a worldview which created a ‘genderless society’ for Inuit. She uses three examples from Inuit ways of being; intellect/life force, naming ceremonies, and language to express a genderlessness philosophy. She prefaces her definition of genderlessness as “…to mean that each person’s humanity is seen as more significant than their characteristics of sex” (p. 8). Her assertion from Western academia is possibly beyond their conceptualization as ‘expert’ review (Bodenhorn, 2013) challenges the concept. There are other works to support Indigenous worldviews as frameworks to better understand gender relations. Perea (2017) pushes against settler colonial ideas of identity through the arts- drumming and audio visuals. The work reasserts who Inuit are through relationships while breaking apart traditional and modern dichotomies. Here, the idea of complementarity gender constructs in creating cultural expressions of identity are put forth for Iñupiaq men and masculinities. The need to understand Indigenous worldviews in gender constructs speaks to the alternative ways these communities organized themselves socially with values that may not have been centered on gender categories as possibly assumed using Western lens. Works in the Arctic done by outsiders (Collings, 2014;

Frink, Shephard & Reinhardt, 2002; Frink, 2009) seem to fall short in attempts to analyze Indigenous gender relations by using a Western lens. Later, by inclusion worldview frameworks, alternative ideas can be seen in works such as Rearden (2009) where although there are specific gender teachings for rearing young ones, it has less to do with prescribed gender roles but more to do with rearing children with certain characteristics and values to develop personhood that contributes to their place in relation to their community. In practice this functioned by having men's houses, qazgi /qargi, and gendered spaces but understanding this distinct space with gender divisions foremost would miss the deeper cultural values of constructing personhood. Qargi theoretical models today are valuable for learning about Inuit Indigenous masculinities (John-Shields, 2018; Jones, 2017; MacLean, 1986). Indeed, there are several works specifically on Inuit fluid gender constructs and their contemporary implications (Saladin d'Anglure, 2005; Stewart, 2002; Walley, 2018). These works put forth long cultural histories of gender fluidity that can provide thought on alternatives to patriarchal gender binaries.

Masculinities Studies and Applied Research; Implications for Health and Education

Application of scholarship on gender identity is being connected to important issues such as health (MacDonald, 2016) and education, specifically for Indigenous men. The growing interest in public health of men's wellness is especially prominent in health disparities among American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) peoples. Brave Heart, Elkins, Tafoya, Bird and Salvador (2012) reported:

> According to the Indian Health Service, American Indians in the 12 Indian Health Service areas have higher rates of death from tuberculosis (500% higher), alcohol (514%), diabetes (177%), unintentional injuries (140%), homicide (92%), and suicide (82%) than all other US ethnic and racial groups. (p. S177)

Which illustrates the overall health disparities experienced by AIAN peoples. The authors go on to examine men's health in this subset:

> Death rates of male American Indians have exceeded those for their female counterparts for every age group up to age 75 years and for six of the eight leading causes of death.[9] These disparities in men's health disorders (i.e., cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes) have been compounded by high rates of suicide,[9,10] substance use,[11,12] and psychiatric disorders, which have had a disproportionate impact on American Indian boys and men. Although research examining the health of American Indian boys and men is scarce,[9,13,14] researchers have found that five of the top 10 leading causes of death have been related to voluntary risky behaviors that might be preventable with appropriate public health interventions. (p. S177)

The sharp health indicators are extremely concerning for AIAN men. The author's effort to highlight these statistics are to put forth trauma-informed multilevel interventions in health serving this population. Reeves and Stewart (2017) have approached one dimension of trauma in their work with Indigenous men on healing the spirit from sexualized trauma. Similarly, Phillips (2012) looks at conversations on gender-based violence, though this is not specific with AIAN men. Rhoades (2003) also considers multi-dimensions of health with a social determinants of health approach with AIAN men. Other specific dimensions of health for Indigenous men which have been examined are climate change and health (Natalia, 2011; Vinyeta et al.,2016) and cultural health (Singer et al., 2016).

Education is another area where gender studies have been utilized to assess the conditions of participation and achievement. Nationally, the gender gap in higher education is already persistent (Duffin, 2019). In Alaska, Hirshberg et al. (2019) call out inequity and the historical context of education and colonization. Although there are national patterns in higher education between genders, the gender gap enrollment for the University of Alaska ranks third among all fifty United States; with a total of 313 American Indian Alaska Native men enrolled in 2017-2018 out of 15,733 total students, making them a mere .02 of the student body; a severe gender gap of any minority group in the United States. Doyle et al. (2009) has done work with high school Alaska Native students with a gender analysis, looking at contributing factors to higher education aspirations. The demonstrated usefulness of having gender studies, particularly the need for men's studies and masculinities, can have many applications with health and education as just two meaningful examples.

Social Media on Masculinities and Men

In academia, traditional literature reviews aim to synthesize scholarly work on a particular topic. The chapter thus far has worked to assess academic and scientific literature on masculinities and the variety of approaches as well as alternative worldviews including Indigenous masculinities and implications of gender studies. Knowledge translation is a constant challenge for academia, with the average lag of 17 years from research to practice (Morris, Wooding, & Grant, 2011). However, in assessing available and current information, the reality of society is that many people gain information from social media feeds, particularly Facebook and Instagram. Inversely, there have been studies to situate this way of sharing knowledge (Eid & Al-Jabari, 2016; Daniels & Feagin, 2019; Panahi, Watson, & Partridge, 2012). For this growing body of work related to masculinities, nonetheless Indigenous masculinities, it is likely that any lay familiarity is from social media outlets instead of academic articles. This is noted for two purposes. One, that knowledge generation on this specific topic is emerging not only from academia but from societal cultural conversations. Two, application and use of how knowledge produced on this topic though situated here in academia is driven by community and lay expression is critical to the usefulness and purpose of translating knowledge to practice.

Facebook

Algorithms are used to manage Facebook's 2.45 billion users (Clement, 2019). However, without searching, the following articles have come through my personal feed in the last few years. These listed articles were all Facebook posts 'saved' in my account because of interest on the topic. In discussion with Professor Hum (personal communication, April 24, 2019), integrating this way in which people are exposed to and process information was a point of agreeance. The following section will give a high-level review of common themes, referencing as appropriate.

There has been gained visibility of thinking critically about what it means to be a man or what masculinity means. A majority of articles were efforts to define or explore this facet of identity (Baldoni, 2017; Diavlo, 2017; Fortin, 2019; Kastner, 2018; Moye', 2019; Pittman, 2015; Soul Pancake, 2015; Schaefer, 2014 UN Women, 2018). These references include podcasts, TED Talks, portraits, and even New York Times, "Traditional Masculinity Hurts Boys" (Fortin, 2019). Likewise, beyond consideration of exploring manhood and masculine identities, recognizing problematic aspects of patriarchy, and masculinity are coming through. A common way that this has been framed is with the term, 'toxic masculinity' (Anthony, 2018; Fedhahn, 2019; Pfeiffer, 2019; Stephens, 2017). The Gillette commercial gained quite a bit of attention, likely succeeding in both advertising goals and effort to start conversations (Pfeiffer, 2019). Some social media posts specifically connected masculine genders with conversations of abuse and sexual assault (Althouse, 2013; Hickey, 2018; Katz, 2013) and one post about fatherhood (Facebook, 2020). An article that does not specifically name masculinity, but very relevant is one on bell hook's teachings, where the scholarship of Black feminisms includes masculinities, is being taught in prisons (Nonko, 2019).

The next grouping of social media posts is about manhood, masculinity and are specific to Indigenous men and gender constructs. Much like the larger conversations, many are attempts to define and explore what it means to be an Indigenous man (DeWitt, 2018; Educate, Inspire, Change, 2017; Monkman, 2016; Piapot, 2019; Robinson, 2015; Sterritt, 2016; Tootoosis, 2020). These postings use videos, rapping, pictures, and language to approach the concepts of masculinity and Indigeneity. However, unlike the above larger groupings, only one article from an Indigenous masculinity perspective used the terminology of 'toxic' (For the Wild, 2018). An interesting group of postings are specific to community gatherings and events (Davis-Young, 2019; Kitikmeot Inuit Association Social and Cultural Development, 2018; Native American Longhouse Eena Haws—Oregon State University, 2019), one being a powwow (Davis-Young, 2019). The powwow overlaps with the four postings which are specific to being 'Two-Spirited' (CBC, 2017; Davis-Young, 2019; Hilleary, 2018; Parker, 2018), a term that is growing with revitalized efforts to acknowledge gender fluidity among Indigenous cultures. A significant amount of the articles here for Indigenous men are on fatherhood, (ABC, 2016; Facebook, 2020; Hooks, 2016, White Wolf Pack, n.d., a; White Wolf Pack, n.d., b) versus the single one in above grouping (Facebook, 2020). There are two posts that connect issues of trauma and addressing abuse and assault (McCue, 2015; Rose, 2018).

Though gender and masculinity are not the subject line, articles on leadership highlight three Indigenous men (Rivas, 2019) and uplift a role of hunting/providing (Stone, 2018) and are worth noting as imagery and representation in identity constructs matter.

This brief analysis could easily become a project in itself. However, organization and assessment of what information comes through at a high level of media feeds without specifically searching may be telling of society's readiness and level of engagement on these topics. The two groupings and where certain subjects had coverage is interesting as well. Both had exploratory notions to critically think about and define manhood and masculinity. While one post was about fluid concepts like 'transmasculine portraits' (Goodman & Zaman, 2019), several Indigenous gender posts (CBC, 2017; Davis-Young, 2019; Hilleary, 2018; Parker, 2018) expressed this in reclamation being Two-Spirited. There was larger (Anthony, 2018; Feldhahn, 2019; Pfeiffer, 2019; Stephens, 2017) presence on discussion of toxic masculinity in the first group than in the Indigenous specific group (For the Wild, 2018), and more on fatherhood (ABC, 2016; Hooks, 2016; Facebook, 2020; White Wolf Pack, n.d., a; White Wolf Pack, n.d., b) in the Indigenous specific posts than non-Indigenous postings (Facebook, 2020). It is worth thinking about the information pathways people engage with to form their thoughts, ideas, and knowledge about one another with a gendered lens. Further, how do pathways of information shape individual identities and concepts of relationship to others? Finally, another social media source, Instagram, is an image-based network presented below.

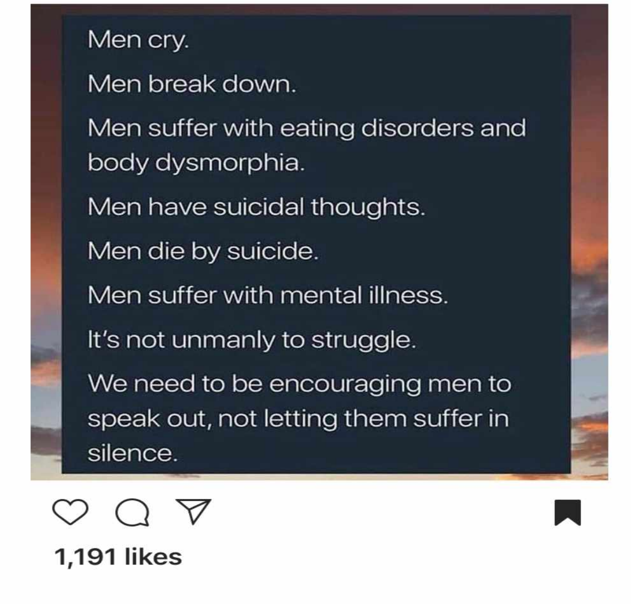
Instagram

Instagram is a photo and video social media feed with one billion users (Clement, 2019). The method of gathering this was the same as Facebook; naturally occurring algorithms and who I personally follow brought these images to my feed. I did not search the subject. I saved them in my 'collections' and compiled screenshots here, Figures 1-27.

Thematic analysis of the images, which included text of memes and poems brought up the following categories. One theme was redefining manhood and masculinity, especially in regard to emotions and similar characteristics not associated with western, hegemonic masculinity (Figures 1, 2, 3, 4).

Figure 1

Instagram Screenshot



Men cry.

Men break down.

Men suffer with eating disorders and body dysmorphia.

Men have suicidal thoughts.

Men die by suicide.

Men suffer with mental illness.

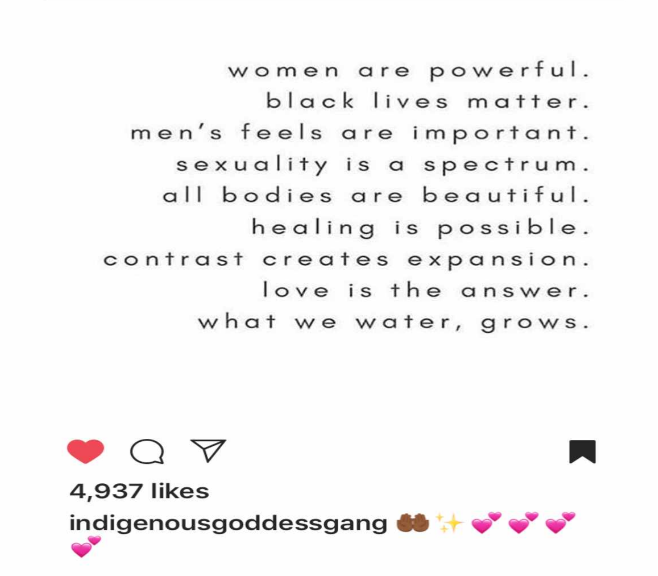
It's not unmanly to struggle.

We need to be encouraging men to speak out, not letting them suffer in silence.

1,191 likes

Figure 2

Instagram Screenshot



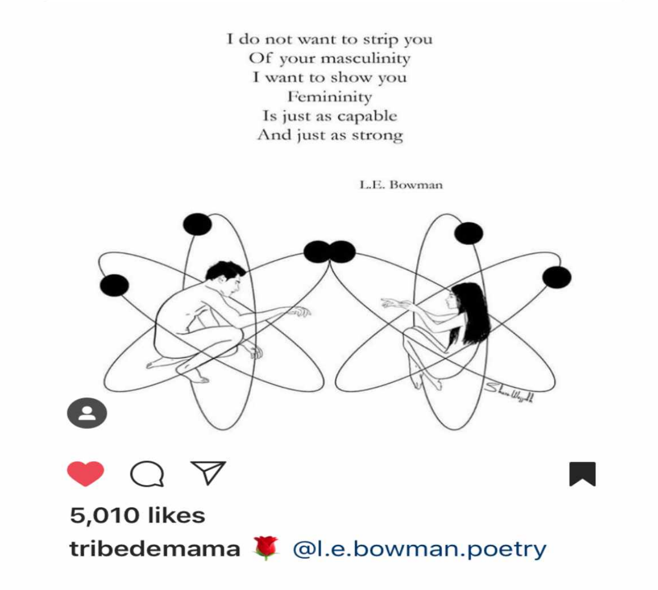
women are powerful.
black lives matter.
men's feels are important.
sexuality is a spectrum.
all bodies are beautiful.
healing is possible.
contrast creates expansion.
love is the answer.
what we water, grows.

4,937 likes

indigenousgoddessgang 👐🏾✨💕💕💕💕

Figure 3

Instagram Screenshot



I do not want to strip you
Of your masculinity
I want to show you
Femininity
Is just as capable
And just as strong

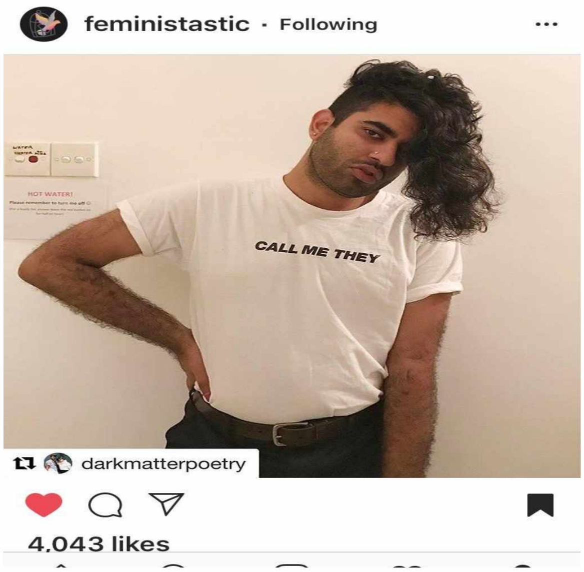
L.E. Bowman

5,010 likes

tribedemama 🌹 @l.e.bowman.poetry

Figure 4

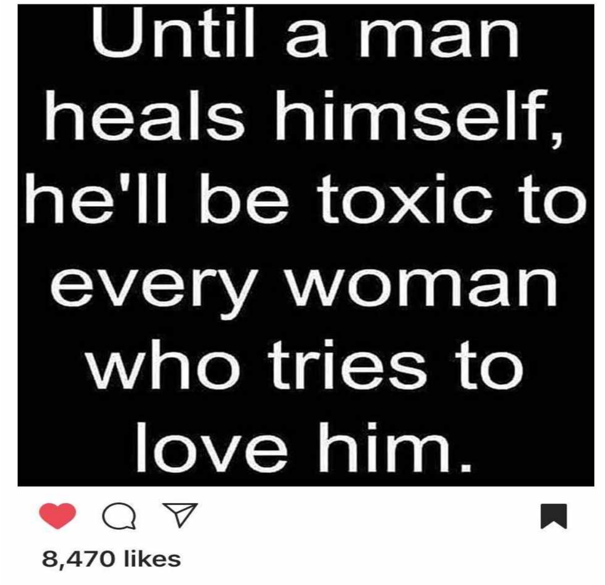
Instagram Screenshot


feministastic · Following
CALL ME THEY
darkmatterpoetry
4,043 likes

These included ‘men’s feels matter’ and ‘call me they’ (Figures 2, 4). Love concepts, both not necessarily intimate, and also if implied, heteronormative was another theme (Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

Figure 5

Instagram Screenshot

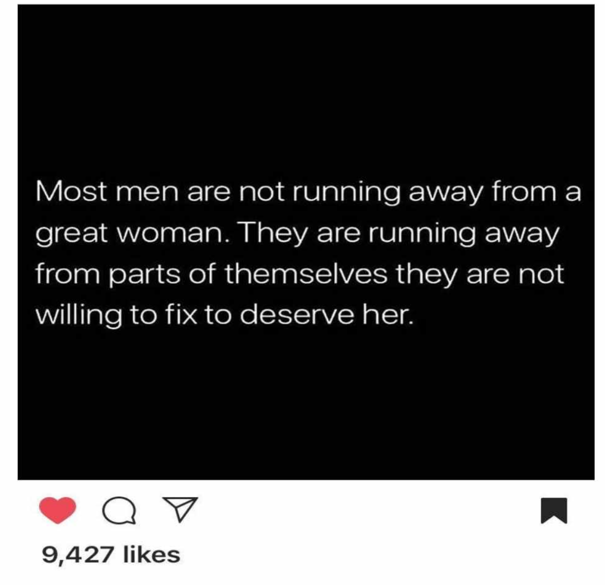


Until a man heals himself, he'll be toxic to every woman who tries to love him.

8,470 likes

Figure 6

Instagram Screenshot

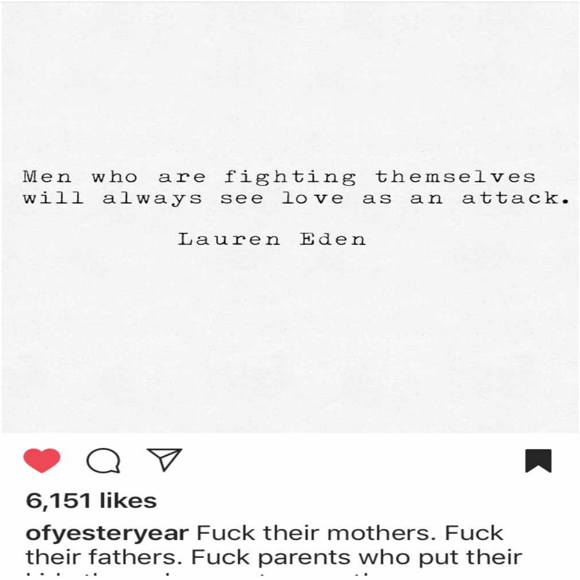


Most men are not running away from a great woman. They are running away from parts of themselves they are not willing to fix to deserve her.

9,427 likes

Figure 7

Instagram Screenshot



Men who are fighting themselves
will always see love as an attack.

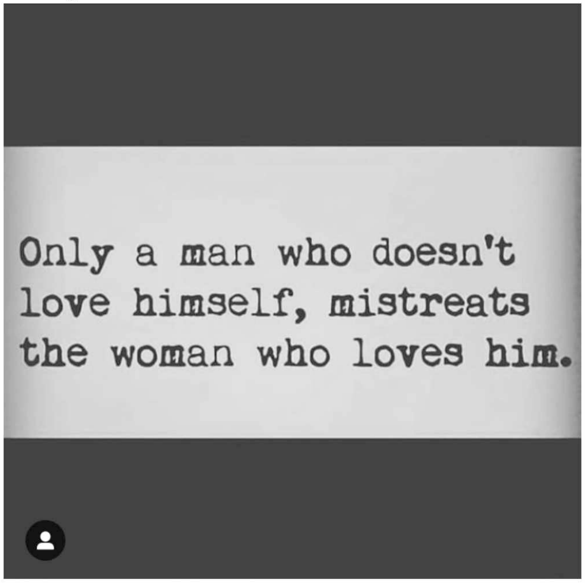
Lauren Eden

6,151 likes

ofyesteryear Fuck their mothers. Fuck their fathers. Fuck parents who put their

Figure 8

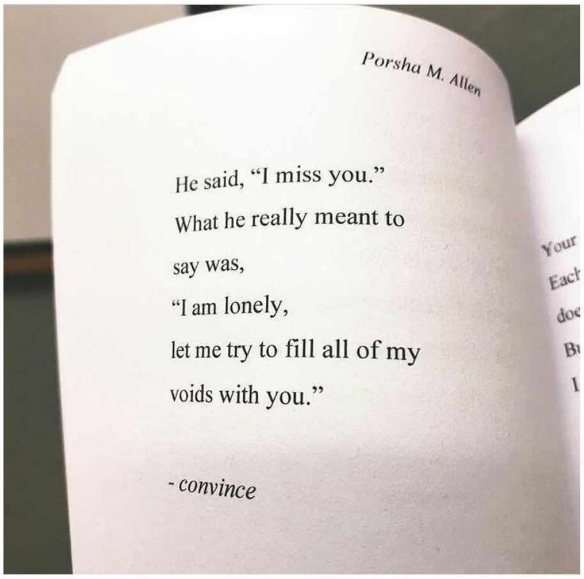
Instagram Screenshot



Only a man who doesn't
love himself, mistreats
the woman who loves him.

Figure 9

Instagram Screenshot



Porsha M. Allen

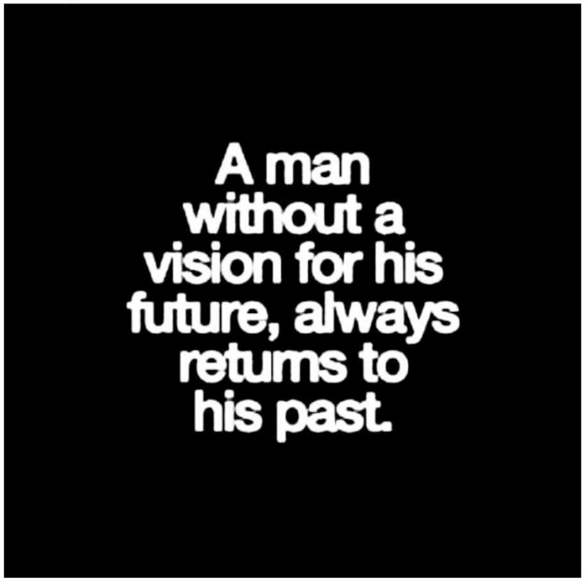
He said, "I miss you."
What he really meant to
say was,
"I am lonely,
let me try to fill all of my
voids with you."

- convince

Images seemingly targeted at individuals to consider about men's actions or behavior (Figures 10, 11, 12, 13) were different than the ones that alluded to macro-systemic gender issues, (Figures 14, 15, 16, 17).

Figure 10

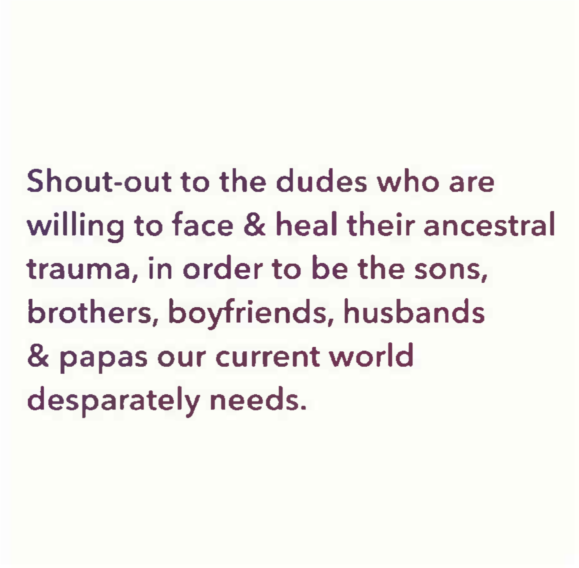
Instagram Screenshot



A man
without a
vision for his
future, always
returns to
his past.

Figure 11

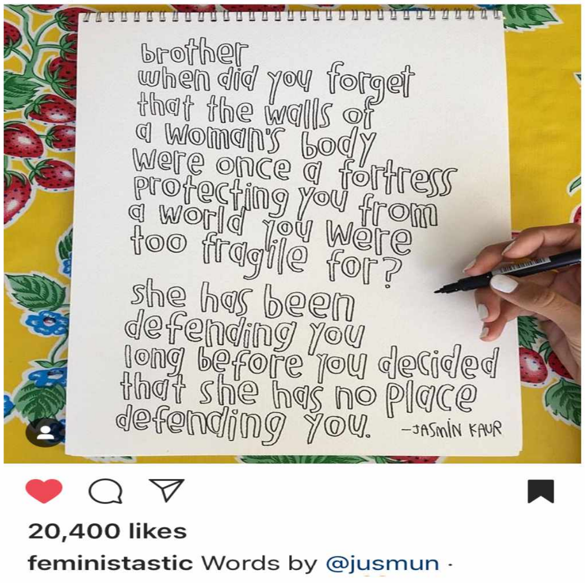
Instagram Screenshot



Shout-out to the dudes who are
willing to face & heal their ancestral
trauma, in order to be the sons,
brothers, boyfriends, husbands
& papas our current world
desparately needs.

Figure 12

Instagram Screenshot



brother
when did you forget
that the walls of
a woman's body
were once a fortress
protecting you from
a world you were
too fragile for?

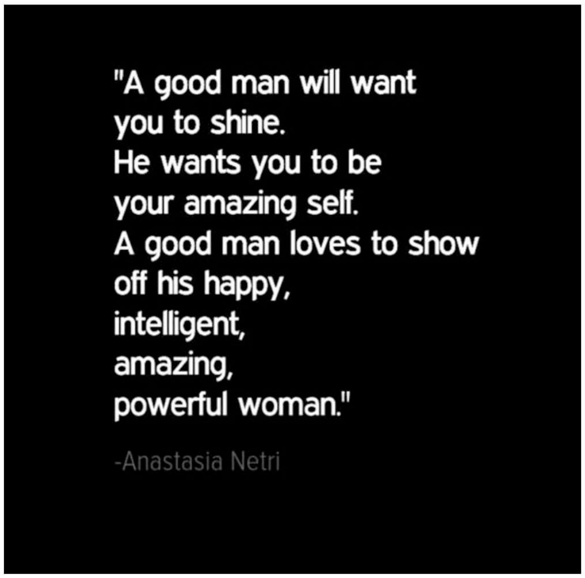
she has been
defending you
long before you decided
that she has no place
defending you.
-JASMIN KAUR

20,400 likes

feministastic Words by @jusmun ·

Figure 13

Instagram Screenshot

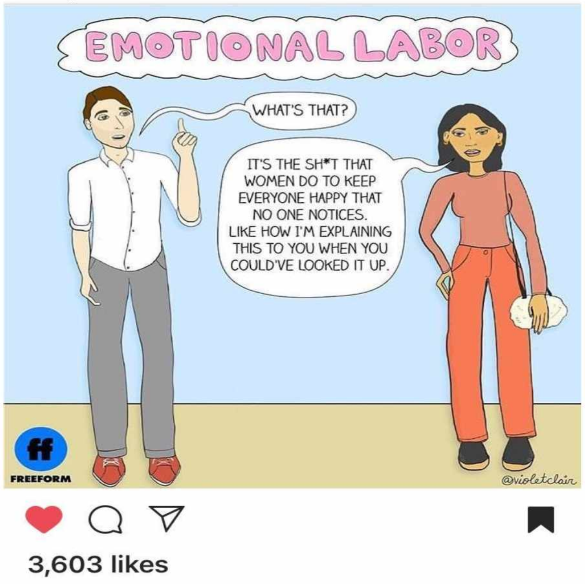


"A good man will want
you to shine.
He wants you to be
your amazing self.
A good man loves to show
off his happy,
intelligent,
amazing,
powerful woman."

-Anastasia Netri

Figure 14

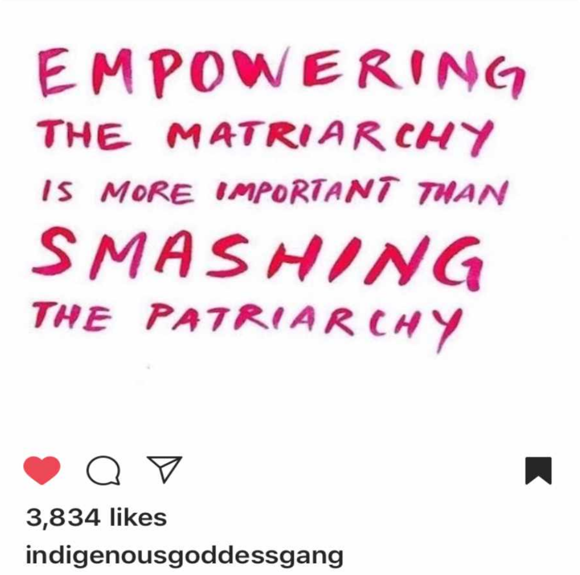
Instagram Screenshot


EMOTIONAL LABOR
WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S THE SH*T THAT WOMEN DO TO KEEP EVERYONE HAPPY THAT NO ONE NOTICES. LIKE HOW I'M EXPLAINING THIS TO YOU WHEN YOU COULD'VE LOOKED IT UP.
FREEFORM
@violetclair

3,603 likes

Figure 15

Instagram Screenshot

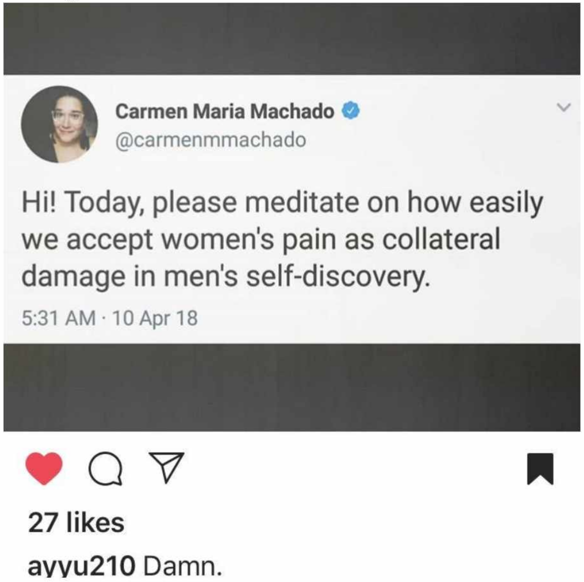

EMPOWERING THE MATRIARCHY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN SMASHING THE PATRIARCHY

3,834 likes

indigenousgoddessgang

Figure 16

Instagram Screenshot



Carmen Maria Machado
@carmenmmachado

Hi! Today, please meditate on how easily we accept women's pain as collateral damage in men's self-discovery.

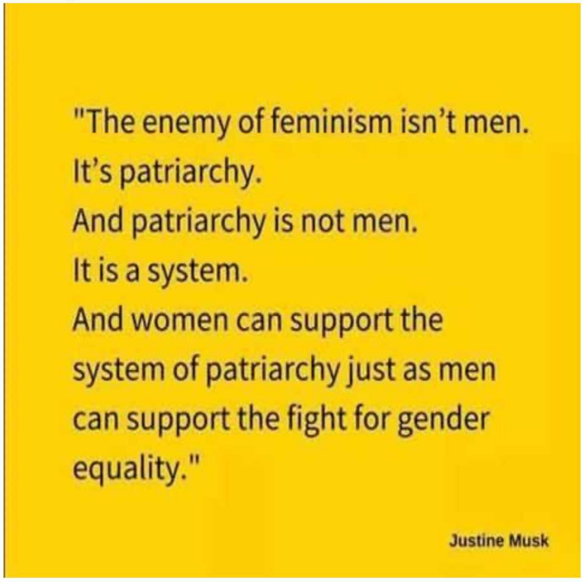
5:31 AM · 10 Apr 18

27 likes

ayyu210 Damn.

Figure 17

Instagram Screenshot



"The enemy of feminism isn't men.
It's patriarchy.
And patriarchy is not men.
It is a system.
And women can support the
system of patriarchy just as men
can support the fight for gender
equality."

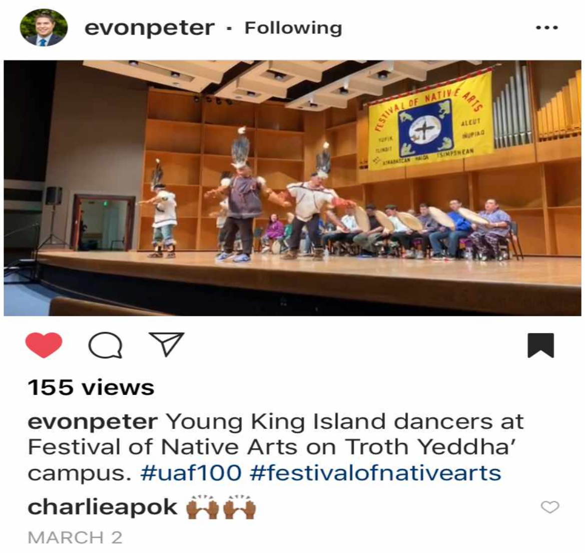
Justine Musk

Examples being 'a good man should…'(Figure 13) vs. 'the enemy of feminism isn't men. It's patriarchy…' (Figure 17).

Postings related specific to Indigenous masculinities had similar themes on redefining manhood but in three specific ways. The first way was through a sense of pride, (Figures 18, 19, 20, 21); the second was through healing, (Figures 22, 11, 23, 24); and the third was through a sense of belonging (Figures 25, 26).

Figure 18

Instagram Screenshot



evonpeter · Following

155 views

evonpeter Young King Island dancers at Festival of Native Arts on Troth Yeddha' campus. #uaf100 #festivalofnativearts

charlieapok 🙌🏾🙌🏾

MARCH 2

Figure 19

Instagram Screenshot

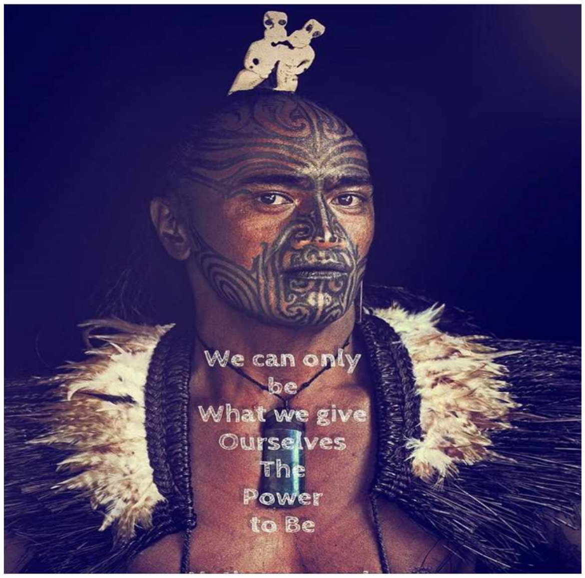
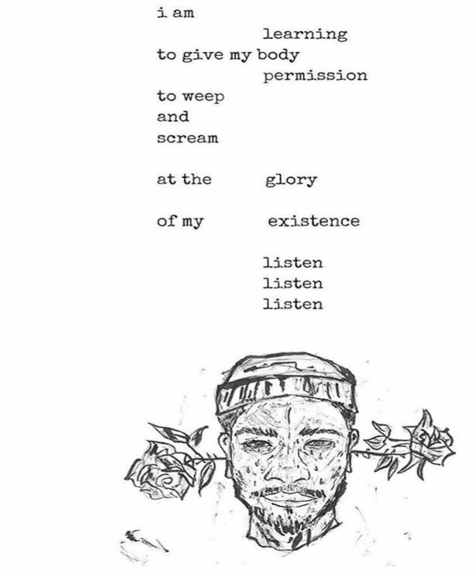

We can only
be
What we give
Ourselves
The
Power
to Be

Figure 20

Instagram Screenshot



i am
learning
to give my body
permission
to weep
and
scream

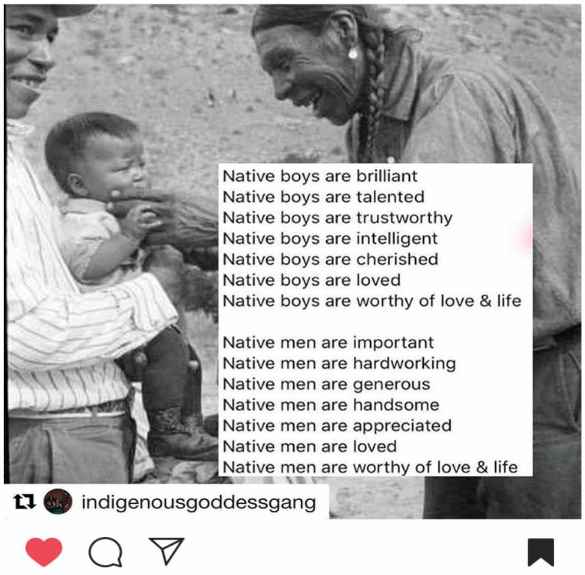
at the glory

of my existence

listen
listen
listen

Figure 21

Instagram Screenshot

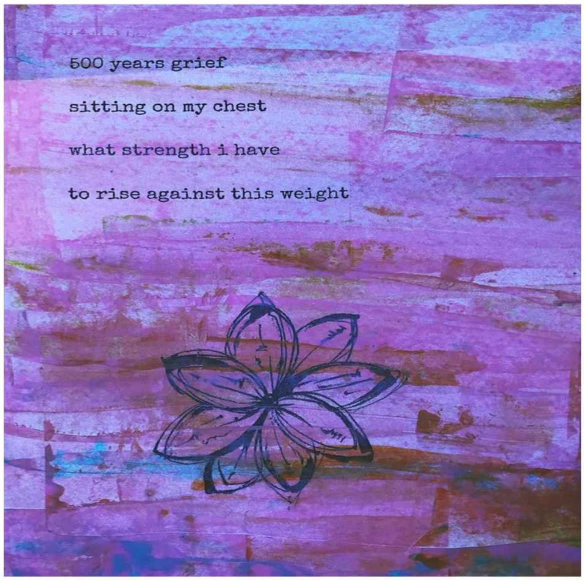


Native boys are brilliant
Native boys are talented
Native boys are trustworthy
Native boys are intelligent
Native boys are cherished
Native boys are loved
Native boys are worthy of love & life

Native men are important
Native men are hardworking
Native men are generous
Native men are handsome
Native men are appreciated
Native men are loved
Native men are worthy of love & life

Figure 22

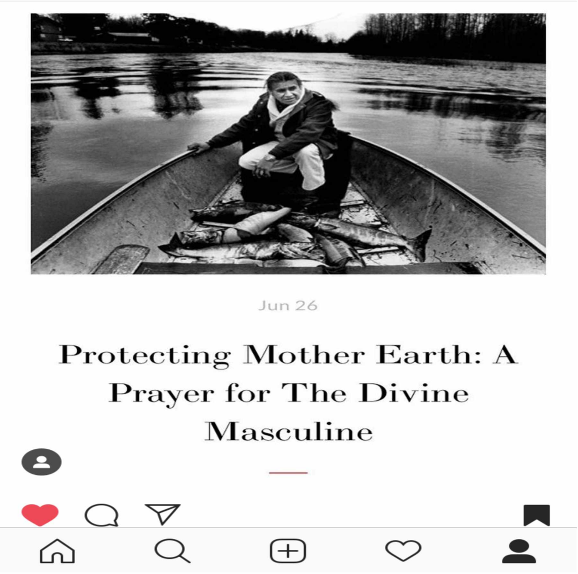
Instagram Screenshot



500 years grief
sitting on my chest
what strength i have
to rise against this weight

Figure 23

Instagram Screenshot

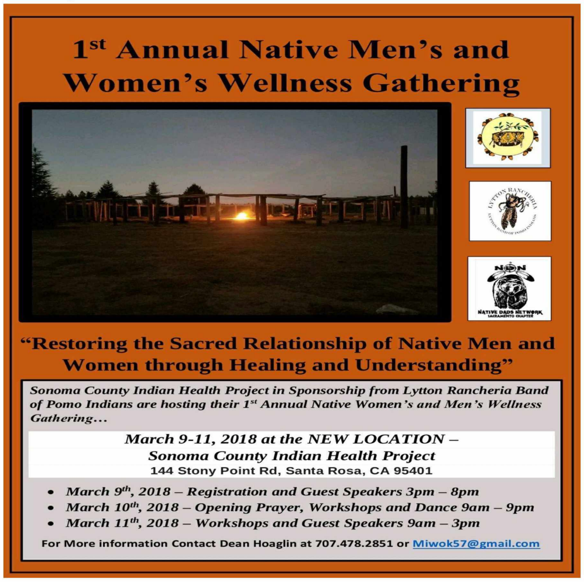


Jun 26

Protecting Mother Earth: A Prayer for The Divine Masculine

Figure 24

Instagram Screenshot



1st Annual Native Men's and Women's Wellness Gathering

"Restoring the Sacred Relationship of Native Men and Women through Healing and Understanding"

Sonoma County Indian Health Project in Sponsorship from Lytton Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians are hosting their 1st Annual Native Women's and Men's Wellness Gathering…

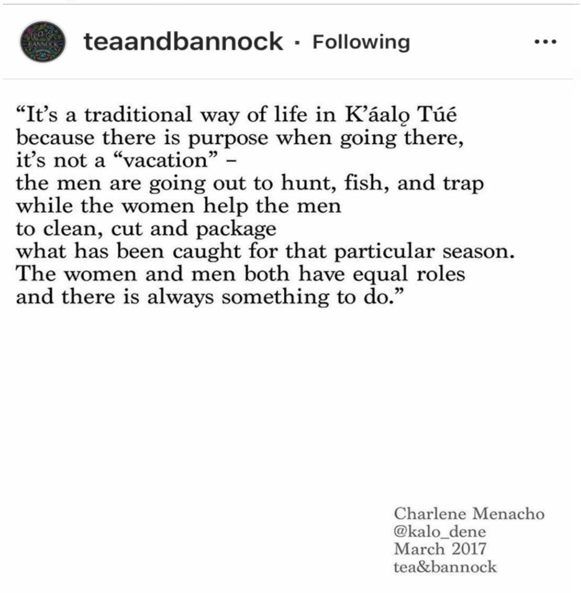
March 9-11, 2018 at the NEW LOCATION –
Sonoma County Indian Health Project
144 Stony Point Rd, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

- *March 9th, 2018 – Registration and Guest Speakers 3pm – 8pm*
- *March 10th, 2018 – Opening Prayer, Workshops and Dance 9am – 9pm*
- *March 11th, 2018 – Workshops and Guest Speakers 9am – 3pm*

For More information Contact Dean Hoaglin at 707.478.2851 or Miwok57@gmail.com

Figure 25

Instagram Screenshot



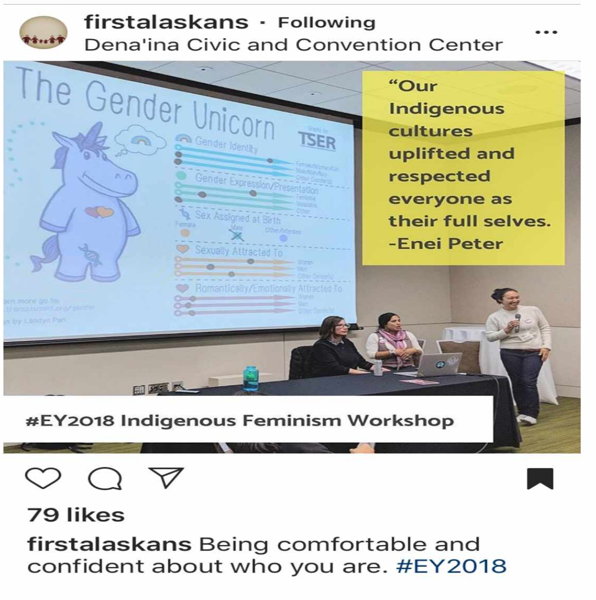
teaandbannock · Following

“It’s a traditional way of life in K’áalǫ Túé
because there is purpose when going there,
it’s not a “vacation” –
the men are going out to hunt, fish, and trap
while the women help the men
to clean, cut and package
what has been caught for that particular season.
The women and men both have equal roles
and there is always something to do.”

Charlene Menacho
@kalo_dene
March 2017
tea&bannock

Figure 26

Instagram Screenshot



firstalaskans · Following
Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center

“Our Indigenous cultures uplifted and respected everyone as their full selves.
-Enei Peter

#EY2018 Indigenous Feminism Workshop

79 likes

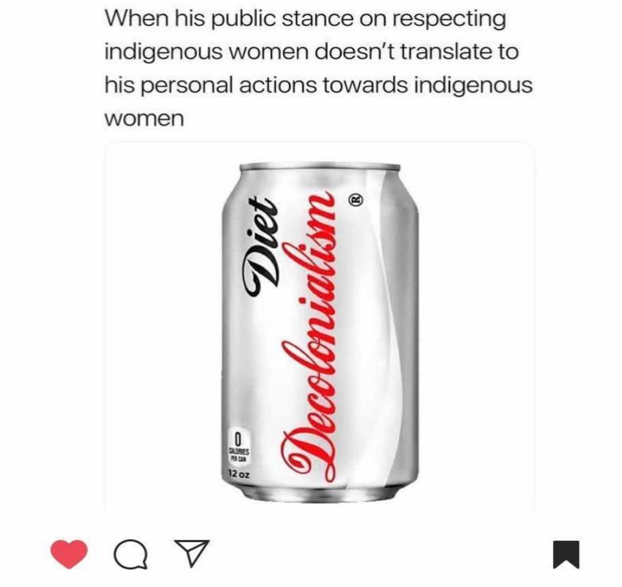
firstalaskans Being comfortable and confident about who you are. #EY2018

The Gender Unicorn
TSER
Gender Identity
Gender Expression/Presentation
Sex Assigned at Birth
Sexually Attracted To
Romantically/Emotionally Attracted To

A sense of pride in Figure 19 has a full-face men’s *ta moko* (Māori tattoo), while Figure 20 is an Indigenous artist’s becoming in their identity. Healing as a theme had notions of trauma and ancestry (Figures 22, 11), as well as connection to land, (Figure 22) with a flower, (Figure 23) in protecting Mother Earth. A sense of belonging speaks to different roles, but in an inclusive, not exclusive way (Figures 25, 26). One of the Indigenous masculinity images is specific to systems—colonization particularly (Figure 27) with a Coke can-like image with 'diet decolonization' on the side.

Figure 27

Instagram Screenshot



When his public stance on respecting indigenous women doesn't translate to his personal actions towards indigenous women

Within these themes there is much overlap that could be analyzed. The images, short poems, and call-outs all use this form of meme to pass information in short, succinct manner in social media feeds. Within the seemingly small amount of information, large ideas are circulated that create and inform ideas on gender, manhood, masculinities, and Indigenous masculinities.

This Chapter 2 contextualized the space needed for studies in Indigenous masculinities. Early waves of feminism spurred scholarly work including women's, gender, and sexuality studies. Interdisciplinary work and concerns of representation grew into articulation of intersectionality in regard to race, gender, class and global positionality. Alongside these notions of identity has been a slowly emerging area of masculinity studies. The effort to name and unpack dominant gender constructs have contributed to represent multifaceted identities in Western society. Within Indigenous communities, resistance to Western colonial ideologies, including gender constructs have produced recent works in Indigenous feminisms. Cross-cultural values related to balance, characteristics of human beings, sacred ceremonies, and relationships have set up space for the limited body of work in Indigenous masculinities. The current work organized here by region presents the gap which this project, *Alaska Native Men's Voices* offers to help fill. The limited research on this topic has been valuable for self-determined efforts such as health and education as described. Finally, a multimedia analysis draws upon social media information as a knowledge source but also a venue of transferring knowledge produced, particularly on a limited scholarly topic of Indigenous masculinities. Indeed, Indigenous scholarship is guided by the resistance of imperialism in academia while also Indigenizing the creation of knowledge which takes many forms.

Chapter 3: The value of *how* research is done, Alaska Native Men's Voices Methods

As a reminder for a way of self-determining the health and wellbeing of our communities, this project offers a look into Indigenous frameworks of epistemology, ontology, and axioms as a way to restore and empower gender relations among our people. This project will document Alaska Native men's narratives of lived experiences, highlighting the strengths and positive ways men contribute to our healthy communities. Using cultural rootedness to identify what healthy masculine identity looks like, Indigenous relations can heal and build a healthy people. The quality of being introspective nurtures self-determination. Better understanding of Alaska Native men has the potential to improve health for men, women—all genders, children, and families.

The body of the chapter is twofold: Project Development Methods and Project Methods. In an Indigenous research paradigm, the process and approach to research are a responsibility which differs from Western academic research. The *how* is just as important as the *what.* The application of relational accountability in research from an Indigenous perspective is worth articulating and will be described in Project Development Methods. Following this process and feedback gained are the Specific Aims, Research Questions and Project Methods.

Project Development Methods

Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) writes that "…relationships do not merely shape reality, they are reality" (p. 7). This project, my presence in Western higher education in general, has long been a pathway of developing relationships between myself and community. The purpose of attending higher education itself is to represent and serve my community though scholarship and research; I would not be here without the relationships I have built. Building from previous community supported work (Apok, 2013, 2016). I gave pause to ensure that the interest of doing a project with and for Alaska Native men would be worthwhile and beneficial to our people. I have deliberately included describing this process in writing as it contributes to Indigenous research methods. It is not appropriate for me to decide how to do a project on this topic alone. Community input and guidance are essential in doing research with Indigenous peoples. These honor the epistemology of working in relationship as an Indigenous scholar. Gathering input from community members to shape the project and research questions also aligns with the values Iñupiaq Elders have taught us, 'Respect for Others' and 'Responsibility to Tribe' (Topkok, 2015).

In Western academia and health research, the research is often decided by the investigator based on their background and expertise. In my positionality, within an Indigenous research paradigm, the choice of research topics, methods, data collection, analysis and dissemination necessitate processes much different than Western academia, articulated in the chapter Relational Accountability (Wilson, 2008, pp. 97-122). For these reasons described, I will share the process and approach I have taken to develop this project, in parallel to supporting frameworks. These include community-based participatory research (CBPR), community development models, my pathway through higher education with deliberate use of education to serve our community, and most recently, structured and unstructured forms of soliciting feedback on topic areas with community leaders and stakeholders.

Alaska Native and American Indian (ANAI) communities have found the CBPR model congruent to many tribal research guidelines and ethics, which was notably developed and written by Israel (1998) and colleagues. The CBPR model has ten integrated principles (Wallerstein et al., 2017, pp. 32-34). The following three have been applied in the development of this project:

- CBPR facilitates collaborative, equitable partnership in all research phases and involves an empowering and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities
- CBPR involves systems development through a cyclical and iterative process
- CBPR recognizes community as a unit of identity

The CBPR principles have been transformative for health research with ANAI people, offering an iterative process that incorporates the community, bridging science and implementation.

The other framework used in this project is a community development model, specifically the components of 'building social capital' through an 'assets based' approach. Here, community development is "...the planned effort to build assets that increase the capacity of residents to improve their quality of life. These assets may include several forms of community capital: physical, *human*, *social*, financial, environmental, political and *cultural* [emphasis added]" (Green & Haines, 2015, p. ii). This model is particularly useful in that it takes into consideration underserved populations such as ANAI as well as both urban and rural settings, suited for the Alaskan context. An asset-based approach aligns with ANAI community requests for research to be strength-based and have positive focused outcomes. In this specific project, the research questions have been developed from the community and elicits strengths of Alaska Native men. The inquiry was done in both structured and unstructured ways described below.

Structured Project Development

Structured project development described here is specific to having organizational and institutional supports. A structured way of project development included writing a concept proposal and soliciting feedback from mentors in health research. The concept proposal was also written and used to meet with three faculty of the Indigenous Studies Ph.D. program and one

Alaska Native Studies faculty prior to even applying and later being accepted. These meetings were to solicit feedback on the idea and also to identify if the program would be a suitable match to possibly to do the work. This was fruitful and indeed a good fit. The early partnership development is illustrative from the first CBPR principle described earlier. I also worked with the grassroots organization of Native Movement in presenting and having dialogue on Indigenous Feminisms (August 2018 Native Action Camp, October 2018 Elders and Youth Conference) with community members at statewide gatherings. I submitted and had an accepted modified proposal with First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth conference 2018 to highlight Alaska Native men's, women's and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Two-Spirited, plus other identities—(LGBTQ2+) strengths. In June 2018, I attended a community-based participatory research (CBPR) training, receiving a certificate from the University of New Mexico. About half of the attendees were from ANAI communities. I utilized this workshop to gain feedback and ideas on the project idea of Indigenous masculinities both in the sessions and in personal communication with the other Indigenous participants who work in research and health. These structured feedback methods are developmental and iterative as identified in the second CBPR principle listed above. These partnership developments strengthen relationships and are ongoing.

Unstructured Project Development

Unstructured project development refers to informal yet deliberate and intentional ways of listening to my community. The unstructured ways of soliciting feedback has been imperative to developing this project. Though done in less formal ways, this practice is informed by both Indigenous values of relationship as well as the third CBPR principle listed above regarding community. It is with purposeful intent that ways of knowing outside of academia are included as a method as an Indigenous scholar. The *way* research is done is critical for accountability. Further, my ability to work in this area is only by the support and guidance from my Alaska Native community.

Following the above section on formal project development through Indigenous Feminisms dialogues, I also reached out in personal communication informally to four Alaska Native men attendees on Messenger and had communication that way. Since October 2017, I have met with eleven various Alaska Native community leaders to get guidance and feedback on the project. Very comparable to interviews but not research, these meetings have been deliberately to shape the project and research questions. Kovach (2009) writes that, "…conversation is a non-structured way of gathering knowledge. While this may seem like another way of saying interview, the term interview does not capture the full essence of this approach" (p. 51). Early on, the question to my community was if they thought we needed an Alaska Native Men's project, which was always an adamant 'yes.' Though these conversations are considered 'unstructured' or 'informal' they generally followed this format: thorough introductions as needed, my background and previous work arriving at this topic, and an open table to share thoughts, ideas, expertise, questions and feedback on the topic. The guiding question was often "If there were a project with Alaska Native men, what would it look like to you?" Other informal gatherings have included a tribal health organization's men's wellness program taking the time to meet with me and share their thoughts. This discussion had four Alaska Native men in attendance. As people in my community asked about my schooling, I was able to share a little about the concept as well. The support and desire to have a project as mentioned continues to get lots of support and generates idea sharing. In the time I have reached out to people, there has been only one Alaska Native male who did not respond to the invitation to talk about the project. There were no reasons given but it is still important to share the absence of response. Many people recommend talking and meeting other individuals they think would be interested in the work. Finally, and of high importance, is that the continual guidance that has been given from Alaska Native Elders on this topic. I have been fortunate to have regular check ins with Elders specifically on my position in the community, academia, and research on this topic.

Through these conversations and feedback a level of saturation was met on three large wishes as expressed by the community: the wish for younger men to have time with Elders, the space for men to have 'real talk,' and the transition of men from rural to urban setting particularly in regard to role as 'provider.' Given these concerns and specific wishes from the community, I approached an Indigenous-led grassroots organization that supports growing people power through Indigenous values with an emphasis on action and transformation. Of note, these organizational values align well with the frameworks from community development-developing social capital through an assets-based approach. As I considered the space and format of how to incorporate community needs to facilitate the project in a safe and meaningful way, the setting became really important. The organization enthusiastically supported the idea of the project being homed with them, and the annual camp they hosted provided an ideal setting (see *Setting*).

The information from all project development methods led to the study aims and research questions below.

Specific Aims

SA1. Describe how individual Alaska Native men self-identify and how identity relates to health and wellbeing.

SA2. Analyze meaningful intersections of lived experience, synthesizing cross cutting themes across participants.

SA3. Demonstrate this narrative as generative of healthy gender relations.

Research Questions

How do Alaska Native men contribute to healthy communities? What are the paths that lead to the capacity of leadership in which they serve? What do Alaska Native men find meaningful about their roles in their community? What strengths are in place that can build upon? What can we learn across generations of Alaska Native men to improve health and wellbeing for future generations? How do Alaska Native men navigate expectations from western and cultural values? What does it mean to be a provider? What can contemporary narratives tell us about gender relationships? How can illuminating these lived experiences improve our approach and understanding of health, education, political, economic and social needs?

Project Methods

This project has been an iterative process with Alaska Native community members to develop the research questions with this particular sample. Pre-research activities as described above included listening to guidance to ensure the setting of these discussions would be a safe, healing space. With local partnership with Native Movement, the study was supported from the organization's annual camp. Applications from all over the state of Alaska were solicited, with travel scholarships available. Geared towards training northern organizers who influence and create change in their home communities using values of the Jemez Principles (Solís & Union, 1997), applicants sign up for skill building around camp themes. The camp planning committee worked together to plan camp activities based on three main themes: Gender Justice, Healing and

Wellness, and Non-Violent Direct Action and Art training. Though all interrelated, camp activities around Gender Justice and Healing and Wellness specifically provided a common language for all camp and study participants to reflect on their experiences. In addition to workshops on Indigenous gender constructs, camp participants broke out into men's, women's and Two Spirit 'houses' to dialogue and debrief. The Gender Justice theme is rooted in Indigenous gender concepts that aim to build understanding, self-reflection, healing, and healthy identities that are responsive to decolonizing concepts of gender and relationships.

This project used individual semi-structured interviews (Ahlin, 2019) for data collection. The common language of dialogue is highly valuable for capturing discussions on gender for this project. The researcher used participant observation through detailed field notes to record group interactions and discussion on camp themes. The project aims to understand individual experiences and reflections as illustrative of gender and identify conceptualizations as contributing to wellness in our communities. On balance to the inter-group dialogue being facilitated, individual interviews were done to elicit these perceptions from Alaska Native men. Having the camp theme workshops that align with the research questions, the researcher invited eligible [see *Recruitment*] camp participants to be a part of semi structured interviews [see *Study Instruments*]. From this initial recruitment, snowball sampling by referral was utilized.

Setting

The project was hosted through a grassroots Indigenous-organized camp at Howard Luke's Camp along the Tanana River near Fairbanks, Alaska. The yearly camp works to build 'people-power' and is grounded in Indigenous values for the health and wellbeing for sustainable communities. This setting included speaker series including Elders, hands on activities and workshops, outdoor learning, and ceremonial sweats. The camp included men's, women's and

Two-Spirited debriefs following directed activities related Indigenous gender concepts and fluid scales of identity and expression. The camp had traditional healing support and Elder guidance.

Sample

Camp workshops were based on the three themes: gender justice, healing and wellness, and non-violent direct action training, with women, men's and Two-Spirit debriefs. Alaska Native men participants were invited to be a part of the study. Interested participants who self-identified as male gendered, being Alaska Native, 18 years and older, could voluntarily enroll as study participants. All camp members could participate in the activities and camp workshops without enrolling in the study section. Study participants participated in regular planned activities and workshops. In addition to these, voluntary study participants took part in a semi-structured interview.

Workshop facilitators and camp organizers who met the same participant eligibility (Alaska Native, male, 18 years and older) were invited to participate in voluntary semi-structured interviews.

Study Instruments

As part of the pre-research activities, the researcher solicited local stakeholder perspectives on this topic [see Project Development Methods above]. Synthesized information from the interviews and correspondence was used to develop the semi-structured interview guide. The local organization hosting the project, Native Movement, also had a planning committee for camp which provided main objectives and approaches for engaging camp/potential study participants. The research study questions and objectives align with the local organizational interests and camp objectives on this topic. Three Alaska Native men from the pre-research interviews were re-contacted to verify the concept they had shared was being shaped into a related meaningful question. The interview guide was reviewed by an Elder. The input from pre-research activities, the camp planning committee, follow up with three Alaska Native men and Elder review all contributed to the development of the interview guide. These steps were completed before the study instrument was submitted to the UAF IRB. See Appendix (A) for interview guide.

Research Ethics Review

The study was reviewed through the University of Alaska Fairbanks Institutional Review Board. UAF IRB approval was obtained before any recruitment began ([1425170-1] Alaska Native Men's Voices, May 8, 2019 and renewed May 7, 2020. See Appendix C).

Recruitment

Registered camp participants who met the eligibility criteria were screened and invited to voluntarily participate in the study. Eligibility is: Self-identified Alaska Native, self-identify as male, and age 18 years and older (See Appendix B, Informed Consent Form).

Analysis

Individual interviews were conducted with a moderator's guide (Appendix A) for semi-structured interviews. Interview guide questions asked participants to reflect on the topics in their own lived experience. A priori codes were created from the interview questions while allowing for emergent coding. Analysis was done with Atlas.ti (v8.4.4). Interviews were transcribed and coded using thematic network analysis (Boissevain & Mitchell, 2018). As an exploratory study, analysis was done by themes across all participants, not by demographics. This was done in effort to put forward understandings on the topics across Alaska Native men and synthesize cross cutting themes. These findings will be provided in the next chapter. This chapter articulated methods used in an Indigenous research paradigm for developing and proposing a project from my positionality as an Indigenous scholar doing work in my own Alaska Native community. This included a theoretical framework to support the Project Development Methods and Project Methods. It is hopeful that in taking the time to articulate this process and approach it contributes to an understanding of applied research efforts with, by, and for Indigenous peoples.

Chapter 4: Knowledge sharing and stories- Findings from the Alaska Native Men's Voices project

This project invited and offered space to listen to Alaska Native Men's voices from their lived experiences. This Chapter 4 is a summary of the knowledge and stories shared findings from the Alaska Native Men's Voices project. As identified in Chapter 1, the project has three aims: 1) describe how individual Alaska Native men self-identify and how identity relates to health and wellbeing, 2) analyze meaningful intersections of lived experience, synthesizing cross cutting themes across participants, and 3) demonstrate this narrative as within an Indigenous gendered lens. The research design used both Indigenous research frameworks and community based participatory research. Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The following will present a description of the sample, study questions, thematic study analysis steps followed, and summary of key findings by interview question.

This chapter will address study aims 1 & 2. Chapter 5 Discussion will address aim 3 with study implications and recommendations.

Description of Sample

Project eligibility was those who self-identify as Alaska Native, male, and 18 years of age or older. Details on sampling strategy and information on location can be found in Chapter three, *Setting & Sample* sections. A total of 18 participants in the study who met the eligibility of self-identifying as Alaska Native, male, and 18 years of age or older were recruited into the study, 18 interviews are included in the data analysis. Participants were screened with 'yes' or 'no' questions to meet eligibility. Following, they were asked if they wanted to share more on their heritage, age, or gender. As described in Chapter 2, the gap of Indigenous masculinities, identity, and wellbeing, particularly within Alaska meant a broad sample intended to capture a range across participants. Indeed, this sample represents a distribution across ages, Alaska Native ethnicities/heritages, and nuances of gender. The ‘wide net’ is intentionally a starting place for this work in hopes it can be continually developed and defined as determined by specific communities. It’s important to note that the demographics presented were optional and are here only to represent the distribution across participants. A participant key is provided on pages 40 and 41. Table 1. outlines the self-identified participant demographics.

Table 1: Alaska Native Men's Voices- Participant Demographics

Number of participants	AGE CATEGORY	AGE, ethnicity/Heritage	Gender
2	18-24 years old	20, Koyukon Athabascan	Male
		23, Tlingit and Yup’ik	Male
6	25-34 years old	27, Tlingit	Male
		28, Tlingit, Yup’ik, Deg Hit’an Athabascan, and Filipino	Male
		30, Alaska Native Yup’ik	Male
		31, Iñupiaq Inuit	Man, *Sipiniq*, Two-Spirited
		33, Ahtna and Gwich’in	Male
		34, Iñupiaq	Male

Table 1: Alaska Native Men's Voices- Participant Demographics (continued)

Number of participants	AGE CATEGORY	AGE, ethnicity/Heritage	Gender
3	35-44 years old	38, Iñupiaq, Athabascan ‘way back there’, Jewish, Italian, Scottish, and Welsh 39, Gwich’in, Koyukon, and Jewish 42, (Alaska Native, confirmed eligibility only)	Male gender, ‘but not unconditionally’ Male Male
2	45-54 years old	51, Gwich’in, Scottish-Irish 54, Iñupiaq	Male, evolved Male
3	55 years old +	60, Black, Mohawk, and Yupiaq Elder, Ahtna 69, Yup’ik Eskimo & Iñupiaq Eskimo	Male/angun (man)/provider-Nukalpiaq Male Male
2	18 years and older, eligibility verified only, specific age not reported	#, Gwich’in, Yup’ik, Iñupiaq ‘by proximity’ #, (Alaska Native, confirmed eligibility only)	Male (Male, confirmed eligibility only)

Study Questions

Within study aims, this project outlined research questions that would elicit reflections on identity, particularly as Alaska Native males, in relation to their place in community, with a strengths-based approach to understanding. The conceptual framework is drawn from Indigenous worldviews, values, and constructs, including Indigenous feminisms. This framework necessitates acknowledging relationship-based realities even while conducting individual interviews. Therefore, the questions move between self-identity, community, health and wellbeing of self, to strengthening relations and thoughts for future generations.

Semi-structured interviews were developed with community guidance and input as described in Chapter 3, Unstructured Project Development. The interview guide (Appendix A) was reviewed by an Elder mentor before being submitted and approved by the UAF IRB.

Thematic Study Analysis

Interviews were audio recorded with permission. The interviews were transcribed and uploaded into AtlasTi v.8.4.4 for coding. A priori codes were created from the interview questions while allowing for emergent coding. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data; this approach identified common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning. Nine codes were created and defined based on the interview guide (Appendix A) for analysis. Three additional codes for demographics, quotable text, and question areas were utilized for the process. An initial coding was done largely by question. This was followed by a refining coding round where codes were reviewed for accuracy of theme in initial coding, as well as review of ‘question’ codes, demographics, and any co-occurring themes. Analysis and coding notes were taken manually from June 2020-October 2020 through the rounds of coding to document consideration of interpretation and meaning during analysis. After these rounds, emergent and splitting of codes was not necessary, in part due to the small sample of areas that may have arisen, and also in the nature of a descriptive study capturing what this group defines themes as in their understanding. Instead, these areas of unique topic areas are kept attached to the question which elicited the information. Further, themes and ideas are noted in the frequency of which ideas arose or had overlap in the following summaries, whereas in a larger data set these may have created new codes or done a co-occurring analysis of code groups. Table 2. presents the AtlasTi codebook—codes paired with the definition, in this case, the interview question.

Table 2: Alaska Native Men's Voices Codebook

CODE	DEFINITION / QUESTION
MEANAKM	To begin, what does it mean to you being an Alaska Native male?
EXP	Thinking about your life, what experiences taught you what it means to be a man? -What teachings are important to you? Who taught them to you?
ROLES	What do you find meaningful about your role(s) in your community?
HEALTHY+WELL	If you were to define/describe what it means to be healthy and well, how would you do that?
HEALING	How have you moved, or seen other men, towards healing and wellness? -Would you mind sharing reflections on what has contributed to your wellbeing?
PROVIDER	What does it mean to you to be a provider?
INWARD	What comes to mind when you think about looking 'inward'?
RELATIONS	What are your ideas on strengthening how we relate to one another? How do we strengthen our connection? Among men? Among men, women, all genders?
FUTURE	What would you like future generations of Alaska Native men to know?
DEMO	Demographics if participant wanted to share more on their ethnicity/heritage, age, and/or gender.
QUOTABLE	Quotable text
QUESTION	Unsure how-to code, where it fits, revisit

Summary of Key Findings

To begin, what does it mean to be an Alaska Native male?

When asked, “What does it mean to be an Alaska Native male?” the most frequent response was having a responsibility to others, family, and community.

One participant, remarking on an activity from camp, "But in that circle, in that moment, was the most profound moment of my life. And it felt like I am now responsible to uphold all women, all the time, everywhere, for the rest of my life. And so just to say I'm a man doesn't seem to encompass the depth and breadth of what that means. So we'll just go with male gender" (JB).

The responsibility to be a role model was specifically noted. Many responses also described being an Alaska Native male meant being connected to land, place, culture, and language. "I'm embedded in this cultural system that I have a place in" (NAT). And, "You know, I was raised pretty White, and for me, being Native just meant really having a connection to the land. And through that comes the culture, the language, the food, but I guess for me I think mostly of being tied to this land" (DL). The spaces of belonging meant a reciprocal relationship of responsibility to them; whether it was connection to place, language, or community.

Though conducted in English, more than half of the interviews include participants using and referring to words and concepts in their Alaska Native languages. Iñupiaq, Yup'ik, Tlingit, Gwich'in and English were all languages used in participant interviews. These connections to land, place, culture, and language were closely followed by having a sense of belonging. A place of belonging included an acknowledgement of a spectrum of genders and fluidity.

"In white colonized American culture, I am a man and I get male privilege. I have a responsibility to teach other men to love women and love themselves. But I also, the more I learn about the *Sipiniq* and the Two-Spirit and how it represents intersex in trans people, but also queer people. And I would be male-female and I never really fit into one or the other…I am somehow in between or have a different experience…I do find a lot of masculinity including gay masculinity to be so toxic. And someone like me who has feminine qualities, even though I physically look like a man and feel like a man most of the time, I do have strong feminine aspects and characteristics" (DL).

When responding to this question around identity participants were cognizant of stereotypes, racism, and privilege. However, none of these stereotypes were self-defining, instead they were recognized as present. Concepts such as being a provider were sometimes brought up in responding to this question, though not overwhelmingly. Instead, it fell more along the meaning of being responsible to others.

"It's various things…I'm not ashamed of calling myself an Alaska Native male, not to be afraid of those stereotypes and everything around—the stigmatism around identifying as that…Some of the things that help me identify as that is just learning my heritage and everything and knowing my background behind the people before me…my grandmas on both sides…They always told me 'don't be afraid to say you're Alaska Native'" (AT). This participant states social expectations of shame due to stereotypes but then shares how they have navigated that through learning about their heritage and the grounding their family provided in their upbringing.

When responding to being asked what it means to be an Alaska Native male, one participant said, "Honestly, that's something that I'm trying to figure out, you know, because I was socialized in a lot of ways just as an American male, not as an Alaskan Native. But it definitely, like, one of them is definitely a protector and a provider. And to try to be a good uncle and good father, and a good role model to other native men here" (JL). Lingering differences between 'American male' and 'Alaska Native male' here are not teased out, but the participant is able to name valuable roles they try to fulfill.

Thinking about your life, what experiences taught you what it means to be a man? What teachings are important to you? Who taught them to you?

When asked ‘Thinking about your life, what experiences taught you what it means to be a man? What teachings are important to you?’ participants shared reflections on many different kinds of experiences. Learning through challenges and adversity was a common shared reflection. Within this, notions of identity and sexuality were parts of learning about self.

“And knowing I was queer from so long ago, and hearing all the terrible things Christians said about gay people I had to make a choice… Love myself or love the church, and I chose myself” (DL). This powerful sharing of self-love and acceptance in the face of much adversity seems like an important turning point in this participant’s life. Self-acceptance here is on identifying as queer, next, another participant shares about self-acceptance but regarding their mixed heritage.

“Wait, they’re calling me half-breed. They’re calling me names and you’re on their side of what’s going on here? He goes, ‘Listen to me. I taught you better than that. God doesn’t create half of anything. God made you one hundred percent Native. One hundred percent Black. One hundred percent Indian. Not part. Not quarter. Not eighths. Not one-third or whatever.’ …The way that native thinking is, is that you are complete and whole…So that piece…it became-you know, it spread into the rest of my life. When we approached being a father, you have to be 100 percent what it means to be a father. One hundred percent what it means to be a man. One hundred percent of what it means to be a hunter. Learn all of it.” (KEP) Understanding oneself as a whole being in every regard carried through from one aspect of identity to others. Lessons from important figures contributed to both participants resolving conflict with oneself in becoming whole.

Though the question was not framed through a challenges-based inquiry, participants shared about experiences of trauma, mistakes made, and hardship.

"Well, in my language we have a word that, it's qauri. Qauri means that first moment of recollection in your life, and the first thing I remember in my life is cleaning blood off my mom's face from my dad hitting her, and that was something I vowed never to do. And so what it means to be a man is to not be violent…And so the stuff taught to me is the women in my life. So my mom made me a man" (SR). Learning about being a male can take forms in learning what *not* to do or be.

Overcoming hardships was also a part of learning the right thing to do. Additionally, several noted that experiences or lessons were not gender-specific. "I think everything is for every gender" (SR). "And there's so many little moments that I can't recall living with them that taught me…to be a man. And a lot of those lessons weren't meant, weren't gender specific lessons. They were just scolding me when I messed up and them trying to help me mature" (JB). Being taught or learning the right thing to do were values and morals for all peoples regardless of gender.

There were observations made and distinguished between Western and Alaska Native cultures. "Being a male, to me, an Alaska Native male, or a young man, is deeply rooted to the role of being a provider. And I know that for a very long time our people have been providers, but we also respect other people who are of different genders who are also providers" (B).

"What I tell people, this is why I'm so, what's the word I'm looking for, like I'm forgiving of other men because I'm just like, oh, yeah, I know, I was socialized in the same world you were. I had the same bad assumptions about what it means to be a man, and about what it means to be a Native man" (WJ).

The first quotation highlights a specific, positive, strong connection to the role of provider from their Alaska Native culture. The second quotation, opposingly, points to the external social negative assumptions that impose on manhood.

Experiences from cultural ways had many descriptions, including learning about being whole, having a sense of spirituality, going hunting, fishing, and participating in Alaska Native sports.

When asked about specific experiences that taught them about being a male, one participant specifically noted, “I would say Native Youth Olympics….Our hunters were the ones that created those games, because of their responsibility. They had an important responsibility to their community to provide” (KW). This participant makes connections between their learning of being male from the contemporary Native Youth Olympics being rooted in responsibility of hunters to provide. Later, this participant describes coaching as their way of providing.

“I don’t think it was like traditional Iñupiaq or Iñupiaq masculinity. You know, maybe my uncles on my Iñupiaq side more so, you know. But it was a lot of things. So my dad was, he was a hunter and fisherman, and we’d go out and gather a lot. And the same with my grandpa. They would go out walrus hunting and things like that. Those were things instilled in me that this is what men do. You know, we go out, we hunt, we provide. Like, a lot of times, things even now that I do is just to provide safety” (WJ). Here, assigning or labeling activities to genders caused hesitancy but hunting, fishing and the value of providing were strongly instilled. Providing also including providing of safety.

Participants also answered, ‘what experiences taught you what it means to be a man?’ through learning to help and serve others. They described serving others in various roles and having responsibility to family and community. In part to sharing about these experiences, participants shared *who* was a part of this learning. Family members including other men, such as parents, uncles, brothers, and grandparents were mentioned.

"Well my uncles are all really hard-working men who-they just get it done, you know…And that's something too my mother tried to instill in me too especially, because she is like you can't just sit around and do nothing…like the value of being of service to other people in the community. And so that-she worked very hard to instill in me…and I'm glad she did because that's what I feel like it is to be in community…to be of service to each other and to…take care of Elders…You know, those things that we can provide to each other" (NAT).

Strong females in matriarchal structures, especially mothers, were also significant figures mentioned as those who participants learned from.

"So I always think like a lot of the values I have, as a male, were actually like-I don't know what word, fostered…by my mom, especially my Native values side of it" (CM).

"I mean, there are all those kinds of traditional native things that we have. So it all lends towards our well-being, but it starts with our spirit…My mom was the one who taught me, that she carried it forward, that I have to pray" (KEP).

Learning values and who taught them to be a man was often credited to mothers. Coming from Alaska Native Cultures with matriarchal cultures, this differs greatly from Western patriarchy. Some participants mentioned having mentors and coaches outside of family members as well.

What do you find meaningful about your role(s) in your community?

When asked this question, participants spoke to certain familial roles such as father, uncle, cousin, and grandchild.

“So what I find meaningful…is a coach or father or, is absolutely what I didn’t have growing up” (AR). Fatherhood and coaching are important to this participant. As seen earlier, this participant is developing what they want to be from an absence of what they had. They see the need and importance of such roles and are actively working to be those.

“One of the ones that come to mind most readily is just lately being an uncle, right. There’s actually a lot of young men in my life…that they don’t have dads, and they actually don’t have uncles either. I mean, they do, but they’re not around…And so this is the role I play….That made me feel like I was, in some small part, doing what I was supposed to be doing” (WJ). Like the previous quotation, this person sees the value of young men having father-like figures and uncles. These roles are not just by mere existence, but by filling them, being present and doing what is needed in those roles.

Specifically, fatherhood was spoken to a lot: growing up without fathers, doing what they didn’t have growing up. As a father, to try and lessen the work for others. They wanted to create positive memories as a father instead of cause hurt or trauma that kids have to heal from later. It was important let kids know you love them as a father.

“As a father…that’s incredibly important to me…I want to role model for my children but I also think…I really want them to look back in their time with me and have…some really good memories and to remember that I was you know, very, very supportive of them and I really showed my love for them” (OP). Showing love through actions like children having good memories and quality time was a part of child and father relationships.

They also spoke to community roles such as coaches, role models, and culture bearers. One participant, first noting all gender’s roles, then spoke to the specific importance for males, “Well, I think the basic roles might be the same between men and women. That we’re all protectors, we're all providers, we all want to be caring… And I've seen it sometimes in kids, they're desperate for male role models. I heard one kid interacting with a male, and just for a short period of time. It was his first time he met this male, but to me he said, 'I wish you were my father.' And that's just kind of heartbreaking to see this young person desperate for loving and care from an adult male. And so I think as adult males, we need to be those mentors, those caretakers for younger generations" (KW). Striving to be caring and expressing love were woven into these descriptions of male roles. The painful need was noted along with the effort to fill these within the community.

Less mentioned, but not entirely absent from discussing roles in community, was the role of being a partner or having healthy relationships. "So I think it's important and can help the next generation of males to grow up and be healthy, and have healthy practices, and healthy relationships, and be a positive partner in the community" (KW). This quote and the one above both emphasize the dedication at the community level and long term wishes for future generations.

The changes of roles across genders was discussed across many interviews. Seeking balance, by 'stepping up' or being present as males was important.

"Being the only male in a lot of these situations…I want to put my best foot forward and represent well because there are other younger Native male leaders out there and they want to see somebody they can identify with…And so being the only Alaskan Native male, I was like, oh man, I really gotta step up" (CM).

"…In Alaska, due to very different problems, due to colonization and everything, men have really kind of, I guess fallen a bit. And in their place women have been the ones to take up these important roles and become the leaders in many places, which is a really good thing. But at the same time…there's not really many men representing themselves there. So I guess the role of leadership…" (H).

"We need to stand up and take that extra step to be a part of those conversations…we were talking about earlier with the amount of strong Native women that are out there on the forefront that there might be some shame involved that we're not holding our own…There should be more men gathering" (CM).

"And the roles that men have in this is that we've had to adapt because the world has changed around us, literally. And not just men, but women as well…our roles have become obsolete in some aspects in many respects. So we've had to adapt….Now it's the *being there* part, whether it requires that nurturing that the mother normally in the olden days would provide, or the discipline that we both have to provide…and so that role has adapted to a role that's called *being there*. And I am there" (KEP). There was a lot of awareness of the changing roles and resulting absence of men in various spaces. Participants felt the responsibility and importance of being present both in acknowledgement to women but also in being role models for other men.

The roles of LGBTQ2+ in the Native community was also brought up. "There are Alaska Native males who are marginalized, especially in an LGBTQ2+ category. In ancestral times, they were considered really special people…we need to reevaluate those ancestral roles and how they've changed but also still honor those roles" (SAT).

"Well, if you mean in the gay community, I bring the Native…And so in the Native community I bring the gay…A hundred years ago every queer person in Native families had a clear role…so it's my responsibility…I guess this is my role now" (DL).

"Although I didn't want to be a woman, I also knew I was more gay than straight….Everyone is told they have to conform and fit into the mold, and be accepted and find what matters most is their own truth and their own understanding of themselves and how they related to others" (AJ).

Knowing all aspects of one's self fully, brought intersectional LGBTQ2+ identities into interview discussions. From honoring gender spectrums within cultures to navigating roles and self-awareness, this was an important emerging area shared from several participants.

The role of being in Western higher education and academia as a community was spoke to by several participants. All of which mentioned the lack of peers, both as Alaska Native/Indigenous but also as males.

One participant attends college out of state shared, "…there's maybe five Native Americans counting myself, if that" (H). The same participant also mentioned their home community in rural Alaska, "…For at least the past 20 years there hasn't been anyone who's graduated from high school there that has gone on to college and graduate from college…I've tried to let a lot of the other kids know that there are scholarships out there and so many opportunities for us to keep going forward and furthering our education" (H).

Another participant echoed the lack of peers, "I think just as student in general in higher ed, I already don't see a lotta men, but in particular, I don't see a lotta Native men" (AT). They described an Alaska Native cohort they were in and that, "The men dropped out a whole lot faster than the women" (AT). They also shared, "…a lot of the guys…were in majors we didn't necessarily want to be in, but were told… 'this would be a good major for you because you're a man'….I think we get pushed into these certain majors like engineering or automotive diesel or whatever, you know, biology or these sciences. We get pushed into 'em because they're male-dominated" (AT).

A third participant recalled their experience, “And when I was going through my graduate programs I was the only male that went through my master’s and for my PhD” They found this role meaningful, “I’m here for Alaska Natives as a whole at the university because there’s so few faculty members here that are Indigenous” (SAT). In higher education, the sense isolation came through from being a minority in two ways, as males and as Alaska Natives. One participant offered gendered expectations in degree majors being an area of conflict which set male students up for programs they may not necessarily succeed in.

Finally, besides the different types of roles, participants described roles as actions. To protect and provide safety was mentioned across many participants. “Even though I don’t believe that anybody should be forced into any gender roles or anything they don’t want to be. But it’s a role I feel comfortable in, being a provider and protector….Keeping people safe from each other even and from themselves….I think, part of that does come with that warrior ethos because when I wrote about it, the first sentence was that ‘I’m already dead in my head and my heart’ because you give yourself up to death. You’re not scared of it anymore. You operate freely and invincible” (WJ).

Another participant said, “So roles, they’re fluid. You know, my role is to be authentic in this interview….Giving. I find it very meaningful as my role in my community….because that’s how we used to measure richness. Not by how much you had. By how much you gave away. And that’s very meaningful to me…Service, physical acts of service are meaningful to me” (JB). The same participant said later, “And so that works into my role into my community…I’m dutied to be honest with others, and not to encourage other people in their own inauthenticity, but to rather nurture their best self” (JB). Being authentic, and to be their whole self in all their roles was mentioned by a few participants.

Being helpful and of service was mentioned by many interviewees through their familial roles, volunteering, or generally feeling like they are doing their part within a collective. Physical labor and literally doing work that was helpful aligns with the sentiment above on ‘acts of service’. The roles to be self-aware, to sit with feelings, trying to be better and improving self, learning, and teaching were all other action-oriented roles that were named. The roles as actions is helpful for describing what different roles can look like and what men take on as part of these.

If you were to define what it means to be healthy and well, how would you do that?

Participants defined health and wellness often holistically—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. “So he said to be strong in your spirit, be strong, and therefore, that will create a strong mind. Be strong in your mind, therefore, that will create your emotion, strong emotion. And if you’re strong in that way, then you can make health, wise decisions to affect your health. He said don’t be afraid of your body. He said your body sometimes will do things, but you can’t be afraid of it” (KEP).

Physical health includes staying busy and active. This could look many different ways; exercising or carving for example. Eating healthy foods was noted as important. Healthy foods included ‘real’, ‘traditional’, ‘Native foods’. Physical awareness, physical intelligence was distinguished from mental intelligence, as in sensing, and having visceral awareness. Physical health also included acknowledgement that food impacts feelings.

Mental wellness included descriptions of being present, thankful, and humble. Meditation or meditative activities in various forms were important to participants, and occurred through some physical activities such as like carving, kayaking, or Iñupiaq dancing.

Articulation of emotional health was talked about with feelings of anger, struggle. A participant shared, “And how do you teach men to not get angry? And, again, I think when I talk about self-control, I'm not talking about suppressing emotions. I'm talking about you recognize them, you look at them, you're aware of them, but you're in control of them." The same participant described an interaction with another male, "But the truth was… we're all scared man. But you need to be in control of that. So healthy and well would be that" (WJ).

Though health and wellness were described holistically, the spiritual aspect was sometimes not brought up by all participants. Some specifically said they were not sure about spiritual health. When participants did share, spiritual health was being connected, prayer, and ceremony. Being connected to nature, and the 'sacred circle' across generations was a part of spirituality. "Spiritual wellbeing is that-connecting ancestral knowledge that helped us survive and be resilient…We need to remember that our Elders survived so that we can survive and so that our descendants can survive….We need to show that we are mentally taking care of ourselves and spiritually acknowledging who we are and practicing the same spirituality that our ancestors have done for thousands of years so that we can remain resilient" (SAT).

Being in balance through descriptions of actions and energy came up. Being giving and being humble were a part of wellness. Having 'vibrant energy' while also being able to be calm were energies that were named as important. These seemingly oppositions reflect one participant's response to defining healthy and well, "Balance, in one word" (JB).

There was a continual awareness of all genders. There was a sense of doing what you are supposed to be, having purpose as healthy throughout.

How men love—as parents, partners, friends, and caring for oneself—was described among several participants. "I think one more thing I want to say is that it's really important to teach men how to love… I'm really intentional about showing them how much I love them, and I tell them it, and I show them it, and I demonstrate it to them. And there [is] nothing unmanly about that." "And I talk to my guy friends about it. I tell them I love them because I do love them. And, again, there's nothing unmanly about that" (WJ).

Another interviewee described, "I guess the power of the event was just the community coming together and that the participants felt like they belonged, and they were a part of the community…the key word would be supported and feeling like they belong. And I think that's the utmost importance for health is those aspects of feeling like you have support and you belong, and you're cared about and you're loved" (KW).

"Healthy and well? I think it can be a lot of things. But it should be, first of all, love" (AJ). Open naming, sharing, expressions of love is a powerful narrative from participants about male identity, health and wellness.

Embracing one's identity was a part of defining being healthy. An identity which was one of belonging, having a place, and being in community as an aspect of social health. A male identity as one that allows love and honesty was healthy, "It's creating identity that allows other men to like, for them to see me, be okay with loving other men and for them to love me, and love me for what I do" they continued, "And that their bodies and their sexuality are also beautiful and wanted" (DL).

Cultural health was important for participants as individuals but also in their communities. "I think a lot of my wellness, or like my journey, has been learning language and it sort of for me was like really transformational to learn….And so when I was learning Tlingit I would find these moments where I was like, just overwhelmed and I would just cry and bawl, and would have to figure out inside myself why it was that I was feeling these things" (NAT).

Looking to Alaska Native cultures for guidance and ways of being that are healthy was brought up in various capacities. "For me too, there is a lot of work especially for Alaska Native men around unlearning these things that mainstream society has taught us that aren't from our way of being….And that was really powerful for me to think about because in Alaska Native cultures, I feel like there is this way in which you become a warrior when your community calls on you to be a warrior and fight for us…And then we had a way of bringing everyone back in….all of us coming together and closer. And then also like actually having men talk about it…is important to me too because there is things, I think men will share with each other that won't share with- in a room when there are women present…" (NAT).

"The most important, in our case, would be culturally healthy and well, and giving back…I don't think it's individual wellness that we're searching for. It's a cultural wellness. And it goes back to for our culture to be well, we need both sexes or men and male- or men and female to be both strong" (CM). The strength of cultural knowledge moved throughout individual stories to community level wellness.

Healing: How have you moved, or seen other men, towards healing and wellness?

Participants were asked about healing and could share from their personal experience or as observations. When discussing healing, there was clear acknowledgement of trauma, hurts and harm that needs healing. "To break the chain of various abuses… And that's a beautiful thing, the beautiful way that the lack of abusive and wellbeing. I think it's gonna make—I hope—it's my hope it'll make my *tutik* [grandchild] even a stronger Alaska Native and Indigenous…healing is just to start off with not seeing that abuse that I witnessed when I was growing up" (SAT).

Intergenerational healing, as shared above and in other examples was important across participant age groups. The older ones heal watching the younger, younger ones heal watching the older, this sometimes happening in knowledge being shared and passed on. Healing then was going both 'directions' or in a cycle.

In a few instances, the topic of healing co-occurred with ‘looking inward’, with the idea of healing has to come from within and requires being honest with oneself. A participant added, “I started walking the walk instead of just talking the talk. And that was transformative….I have moved towards healing and wellness by opening up to myself and being honest with myself, and being vulnerable” (JB).

“I’m talking about your spirit. Listening from inside. Listening from your mind. Listening from who your core is. And by doing that, I’ve seen other people move toward healing and learn from them. Move towards wellness and learn from them” (KEP).

Almost all participants specifically noted awareness of social stigma of men not having emotions and the negative social perceptions. “We’re taught in society that men aren’t supposed to cry, men aren’t supposed to show emotion. We’re supposed to emotionless….we have all this weight on us that we never relieve ourselves from because we’re taught, you know, by society that it’s wrong” (AT). The prohibition of crying is specifically pointed out here. This seems to collect internally into a heavy weight.

Therefore, “Having men who you can be close with and share your internal world with, where it’s not a risk to your safety or where you’re afraid that you’ll be ridiculed for sharing your feelings or, having feelings at all” (NAT). The ability to share emotions and feelings are weighed with being able to stay safe.

Feeling heard, being seen, and having space to share was healing. Having a mentor or teacher was specifically helpful to some. Social media was mentioned as a space able to be used to be proactive.

“I want people to see there are Native men who are trying, you know, and doing better” (OP). The same participant also said, “You know, we are constantly bashed on social media…So it's almost like we're becoming less visible but we're also the targets…I know that's gotta be tough on some Native men you don't have a good foundation or don't feel secure about themselves" (OP). It was important that visibility or being heard was done with humility and intentions were not about that person.

Visibility for notions of identity were impactful. Recalling two different intersectional experiences of Native and LGBTQ2+ representation, one participant said, "I've never felt more like my voice is being heard and my call for help was heard" (DL).

Seeking help was important, reaching out to family or friends, but also counseling was pointed out as helpful on healing journeys. Less mentioned but noted was providing as healing. For example, having a job that gives, fishing, art therapy, and supporting others in the background who are healing others. And finally, one thought: "If you're laughing, you're healing" (VG).

Provider: What does it mean to you to be a provider?

Being a provider was described and understood in various ways. Providing meant giving 'space' in 'intangible' forms of support, protection, sense of security, a sense of belonging, giving a calm demeanor, and giving space for emotions.

"Being a teacher…what it means to me is just to be calm, logical, responsive versus these days it's easy to react….So, I always try to be humble, be patient, be kind. I guess, that's what being a provider means to me, is humble, patient, and kind" (VG).

"And so for me, just provider in essence is providing the emotional motivation, the physical, like going out and catching stuff and…just our culture in general is like, it's not just going out and getting subsistence food. It's our money and everything. Its providing that mental and physical presence of being a provider" (AT).

"What it means to me to be a provider is a lack of selfishness. It's about doing what you need to help your people" (NAT). These abstract examples present flexible notions of providing that can encompass being present in a manner that positively impacts others.

Providing also meant through actions of being prepared, engaged, mentally present, listening, being responsive, and setting an example. Sometimes, the specific example of providing food was given.

"As I started fishing more and talking to more Elders, they explained to me it's just somebody who provide anything. It's not necessarily, you know, monetary value, but it's also subsistence value or knowledge" (AT).

"I remember we took a friend of ours…out and we caught fish. He caught fish. And then I remember the next time that I saw him and he was like…It felt really good to watch family eat the fish that I caught. He felt like really good. And that's how I feel, too…And I think that's true for everybody that provides, you know. Even my wife talked about it, too, that it really gives her a deep feeling of satisfaction to watch our boys eat the berries that she picked" (WJ).

Another form of providing was sharing knowledge and skills through teaching and coaching. Teaching and coaching was described within families and also in the larger community. These activities fostered many of the notions of providing listed above.

"I guess in my life I'm a coach, so that's how I provide. As a coach I can give guidance that I learned from my coaches, my Elders, my mentors. This is all stuff that has been passed down that had benefited me and I feel like I'm at a point as a coach where I can use those same lessons to benefit our younger people, and so that's how I can provide. It might not be a hunter going out and finding food for my family, but I feel like I provide as a coach, guidance opportunities, life lessons, memories, fun, a sense of belonging, community. That's how I feel like I can provide" (KW).

Among the participants, there was noted tensions among jobs, hunting, and economy and extractive industry.

"Well in this cash economy we live in, it means to have a wage, living-wage earning job. To be able to maintain a job that can be used for paying rent, buying store bought food, buying gas, buying all-paying for all those things that you have to pay for in the modern world....And of course, September is my favorite month of the year, and I've had to miss it for so many years. But that's when thousands of caribous migrate by, and boy, I love hunting caribou. And bringing home a sled boat of caribou carcasses, caribou meat is one of the best feelings I know. It feels really good to provide and protect. I feel real good when I was shooting those caribou" (JB). The 'hunter-provider' association here is articulated as one of the best feelings this participant knows, while the same time providing economic needs as well.

Inward: What comes to mind when you think about 'looking inward?'

The idea of looking inward brought up descriptions of being hard, scary, but necessary. Several mentioned an 'initial flinch' type of response but always followed that it was important to do.

"The first thing that comes to mind when I think about looking inward is not what comes to my mind, but what comes to my emotions. And that's scared. I flinch at looking inward. It's tough. It's hard. It's scary. It's vulnerable. But it's so good" (JB).

Going inward meant being open, honest, having integrity, humility, gratitude, and being vulnerable. Participants said that to look inward they must have courage, discipline, faith, and patience to do so – and to go inward frequently.

Participants described going inward with honesty and the intent to become better. This was described as a time to take an internal inventory of 'who I am', a time to reflect, pause, and think clearly. This was an examination of oneself to do internal work. An Elder posed the question, "What makes you so uncomfortable that you don't show up?" (WJE). This question pushes one to look inward, to assess their intentions and actions.

One participant described looking inward as a central tenet to culture, that it is a part of their responsibility. To go inward with ancestors was connecting to the past, present, and future. Another participant similarly said, "So you have to continuously look inward. And what does that mean? …That you're mentally doing fine and spiritually that you're…living your cultural heritage in a respectful way that honors your ancestors and benefits the descendants" (SAT). These two inward reflections present a transcendence of time where within one person's connection to the past, present, and future at once is an influence of ancestors. As described then, the depth of looking inward is immense and expands generations.

The outcomes of going inward are feelings of being renewed. Some described outcomes of being strong in beliefs and having a full awareness of within and around. An Elder likened looking inward to going in maqi [steam bath]: 'naked like when you were born,' then it burns, you stick with it, and then you come out refreshed, cleansed, replenished (KEP). Similarly, another participant said, "And the hardest thing, sometimes, is to not flee from my own feelings, but to just sit inside that fire" (JB). The vulnerability in this process meant being able to cry.

In addition to personal growth and reflection, it was recognized that it helps understand self to others and resolve conflict by knowing oneself better. In relation to others, one can address prejudices, bias, conflict, frustrations, and responses. Another metaphor used was a home; you have to look around inside, and 'clean' house, for your yourself but also for having guests. This process helped knowing that one can overcome mistakes. Moving through these, they are then able to ask for help and able to find focus.

Finally, the power in looking inward was described, “And if you never look inward you’ll never be a full person. You’ll never understand the full complexity that makes yourself up…And if you want to avoid those responsibilities, you just look outward. You look at other people. But when you look inward you see that and you realized well, you have to do it then. And if everyone would just look inward and feel that, it would be a revolution” (DL). The idea of becoming a full, whole person is described again, and as individuals take steps such as looking inward to become that, the potential is described as revolutionary.

Relations: What are your ideas on strengthening how we relate to one another?

Ideas on strengthening relations covered community level ideas, specific roles of relations, actions that can be taken to strengthen relations, including many needed forms of communication.

The topic of relational accountability came up frequently: to give grace while also holding accountability to each other. Communal structures such as the ‘Sacred Circle’ and qalgi [men’s community house] were given as examples of broader ways in which healthy relationality is created among everyone. Matrilineal clan systems were noted as ways to strengthen relations, and specifically, not the patriarchy. A description of ‘communal locust of control vs. individual locust of control’ was offered by one participant which was knowing and respecting other roles, what you can, and cannot do. Respecting what others are doing to contribute and having shared work was part of communal relations. It was noted that usage of age groups in activities was valuable for learning, teaching, and being together. One participant said that for any gender, standing up for beliefs and for our people creates respect that is outside of the structures of corporate models that often designate leaders by title instead of these principles.

Participants mentioned the need to break down stereotypes as a part of strengthening how we relate to one another. For example, toxic masculinity. “Recognizing toxic masculine characteristics in modern culture and the dominant culture could be really important for the Native Community. And having discussions between what toxic masculinity is, and if the phrase ‘just be a man’ or ‘just man up’ I think is toxic, or it’s an indication that its coming from someone who’s toxic. Aggressive behavior, whether it’s fighting, I do not think that in most instances fighting is necessary to resolve disputes” (AT). This participant specifically names harmful words and behaviors that are salient in dominant/Western cultures and recognizes the value of detaching those notions from being a part of the Native community.

Similarly, male stereotypes are criticized in society—especially the prominence of men as abusers. It was important to break men’s accounts down by knowing their background, their story, and recognition that there is a passing down of trauma. Other breaking down of hierarchies attached to identity and sexuality were mentioned and the need to expand and be open to spectrums. Strengthening intersectional identity also with culture was noted.

Strengthening relations also brought up specific individual roles and purposes in relations. Aunties and uncles were named as important roles. Learning from the role of Elders was specifically named as a role needed to strengthen relations. A specific role for men was to have ‘more stay-at-home fathers’ who are with their kids. “So it’s going right to the source and making sure that we teach men how to raise men. And we teach men how to stick around for their children” (WJ). Along a recognition of a spectrum of genders, having queer allies was another specific role that can strengthen relations.

Strengthening relations was also discussed by actions: showing up, asking for help, participating, being a role model, teaching skills, and being patient. Doing physical labor including protecting was an action that could be taken to strengthen relations. It was mentioned that wanting clear asks of 'what to do' was important as well as having the courage to ask questions if unsure. Doing things through shared values such as humor, laughter, and identifying similarities among each other. Dancing (Yup'ik and Iñupiaq) was a specific activity mentioned by different participants that creates connection and joy. Having cooperation is needed. Also, that "Laughter strengthens us and bonds us. It strengthens our connections" (JB).

Finally, forms of communication as a way to strengthen relations was discussed. The need for spaces, places, time, to talk and connect. "Just getting men in the room to talk to each other is like—it feels revolutionary…" (NAT). There are difficult but needed conversations that need to happen for people to communicate with honesty and vulnerability. Knowing non-verbal communication was mentioned, along with empathetic listening. Men need to be able to talk about life. Men desired to talk among men, and in general 'visiting' with others and connecting out on the land, and spoke of the benefit of younger people going out camping and not being on devices. Having communication that has healthy, positive boundaries, emotional safety, and awareness of others' emotions across all relations was discussed.

There were very specific points for men. One participant said, "If men have stronger connections to other men it improves their relationships to significant others…If I can share my emotions with the whole community openly and feel safe about it then we are all doing better" (NAT). And another said, "So my ideas on strengthening how we relate to one another, and strengthening our connections, and [talks softly], *we have to be aware of ourselves and aware of what we're saying, how we're saying it, and who we're saying it to*…With men, it looks real different than it looks with women" (JB). These men-specific points are about connection and how that connection is made.

Future: What would you like future generations of Alaska Native men to know?

The final interview question asked participants, "What would you like future generations of Alaska Native men to know?" Responses around emotions and feelings were frequent. A participant said, "That it's okay to use your emotions in a healthy manner, that you have to release your negative emotions in a healthy manner, that you don't hold all your stuff inside" (SR). Likewise, "I want them to know that our ancestors were emotionally intelligent. And however they choose to be, our ancestors always had a role for them. And so it's always okay to cry. It's always okay to go through your emotions in a healthy way, and to not suppress them…And just allow yourself to cry. Allow yourself to feel those emotions" (JL).

Another sharing of what a participant would like future generations to know, "Learning that it's okay to ask for help is good, and it doesn't' make you weaker person to ask for help if you need someone's shoulder to cry on. So I think that's important, and I would like to pass that message on. It's okay to cry and ask for help" (B). And, "Don't let fear, anger, hatred, guide their lives. And to be real. Real with themselves, primarily. Because if you can't be real with yourself, you can't be real with anybody else" (JB). Crying, awareness of feelings, and emotional release were incredibly important across these participants' ideas for future generations of men.

Many responses also were on being in relation with others. For example, "And so there's an old saying that they say treat people how you want to be treated yourself. Well, that's not good enough for everybody, so we need to treat people how they want to be treated, and that's about the respect part, you gotta put their emotions into it. You have to put other humans' emotions into everything you say" (SR). In the relationship of father to son, "Be present if they ever do have a son, to be present and to engage with them with whatever they feel comfortable with…explaining the why…why it's important, why you're teaching them" (AT). And, "We want to teach our kids to be the fathers that we never had" (SR). The thought of future generations in father roles emphasizes a vision of healthy families in perpetuity. There were also thoughts about being a respectful partner to significant others.

On notions of identity, and for all genders, participants wanted the future generations to know to not have shame in their Native identity and have respect for their culture. It was important to "Always learn where you come from. Always try to know your history. Always know your past, present and future. Know where you were, know where you are, and know where you will be…be someone that someone else will be proud of" (VG). Another participant on knowing culture, "So respecting your culture and the living and breathing aspects of it…that can help you live a fulfilling life, a meaningful life, and perhaps there are ancestors watching over you…Traditional foods are healthy and preferable to imported and processed…knowing the history of your nations or your tribe's political struggle is an ongoing duty for you and your people" (JL). Also on identity, "First and foremost, queer people existed at very, very meaningful roles in all our societies…they were loved and they were meant to be here. And they had important work to do to support you too" (DL). Specific cultural values were also pointed out, "Knowing to show respect for others, to know our family tree, to know our language, to have humility, have patience, respect for Elders especially. Live these cultural values so that he can make even a stronger future generations" (SAT). All of these integrated aspects belong to having a strong cultural identity that participants want future generations of Alaska Native men to know.

As mentioned above in culture, the topic of ancestors and intergenerational connection was recurring. “That their grandparents, and their great-grandparents, and their great-great grandparents, and their great-great-great grandparents, and their great-great-great-great-great grandparents love them, cherish them, wish nothing but the best for them. Want them to be good people. Want to them to not hurt other people. Want them to be good to themselves, not hurt themselves” (SAT). And, “I want those who come after me to know that I fought like hell to create a better world for them. Because I know the people who came before me fought so hard and that they won so many battles, they created something better for me…to know that I was thinking about them and that I cared for them, and I care about their success. And I care that they should have this land that our ancestors took care of and provided to us” (NAT). The hope of knowing these ancestors wished and worked so hard for them may also forwardly imply the future generations do the same for their future ancestors. That they come to know this not just for themselves, but for the continuance of blessings onward.

A part of cultural knowledge was staying connected the land, “Love the land. Love the air. Love the water. Love the earth. Because that’s what sustains us” (JB). And that “Their connection to their ancestors to a way of life here in Alaska that carried our people for thousands of years that there’s a lot of knowledge. You can go out on the land…there’s signs on the land from our ancestors…there was that intimate strong connection to the land, to each other, to the animals….I hope there are future Native males to reflect on this…remember your connection, your roots to your ancestors and all the things they had to teach you…And it can guide you and direct you in life” (AJ). Or simply put from another participant, “Lose your phones for a while” (CM) to stay connected to the land.

Forward-thinking was another area that participants wanted future Alaska Native males to know about. An Elder used a Yup'ik phrase, "Uptarlliinaraluteng—keep getting ready your life is coming!" (KEP). There was advice to always have a goal, be patient, honest, productive, present, and humble. On making mistakes, "I don't want them ever to give up even if they fail real bad" (JB). And that, "Healing is possible as long as you're living and you're breathing and you're willing to be honest with yourself...ask for forgiveness for any person they may have hurt" (OP). These sentiments as thinking forward provide encouragement to keep going even if challenges arise.

Finally expressed in sum, "let him know that he is loved" (SAT).

Conclusion of Findings

The findings from this project begin to illustrate meanings of how Alaska Native men self-identify and how they understand their place of belonging in our communities. The findings also share concepts of health and wellbeing across generations, from internal reflection and healing to building solutions and healthy relationships. It is clear that Alaska Native men are continuously navigating expectations from Western society while living Indigenous cultural values. The findings present contemporary definitions of what it means to be a provider and what they find most meaningful. These narratives have provided insight into gender complexities intersecting with Indigeneity. Throughout all of this, they offer strengths and wisdom from their experiences to put forth a beautiful vision for future generations of Alaska Native men.

Participant Acknowledgements

I am truly grateful beyond expression to the men who participated in this project. Like all good stories, I am confident I will continue to learn and find meaning from these for many years to come. My attempt to summarize the depth and richness of the voices, if any shortcoming is found, is all mine. I realized through this process, how far overdue we are in hearing from Alaska Native men and how vulnerable and brave it was for them to share. I take seriously the responsibility to take care of what has been shared with me and put it forward into something helpful and meaningful. I genuinely hope that the stories shared and presented are only the beginning of a healing journey for many generations to come.

Participant Key

This key is provided to honor the chosen way in which participants wished to be a part of this study. All participants met the eligibility of self-identifying as Alaska Native, 18 years of age or older, and male. 18 participants consented to be a part of the study. The informed consent form had three options for participation: *Yes*, full name used alongside comments in final dissertation and results from this project, *No*, no use of name, or- *Alternation*: Name or pseudonym to be used.

Direct quotes use initials of the below list for consistency in reading. While heritage and age were inquired, data was not analyzed by demographic groupings.

(SR) Stanley Riley, 34, Iñupiaq, male
(DL) David Leslie, 31, Iñupiaq Inuit, man, *Sipiniq*, Two-Spirit
(NAT) Naawéiyaa Austin Tagaban, 27, Tlingit, male
(JB) John Bob 38, Iñupiaq, 'Athabascan way back there', Jewish, Italian, Scottish, Welsh, male gender *remarked that within last few days it changed from being unconditional to male gender for now
(JL) John Lennon, 33, Ahtna & Gwich'in, male
(H) Henry, 20, Koyukon Athabascan, male
(KEP) Keggulluk Earl Polk 60, Black, Mohawk, Yupiaq, male/*angun*/provider> *Nukalpiaq*
(WJE) Wilson Justin, Elder, Ahtna, male
(CM) Colin McDonald, 42, (Alaska Native, male) confirmed eligibility
(WJ) Warren Jones #, Gwich'in, Yup'ik, Iñupiaq 'by proximity', male
(AT) Aaron Tolen, 23, Tlingit, Yup'ik, 'it's complicated', male
(KW) Kyle Worl, 28, Tlingit, Yup'ik, Deg Hit'an, Filipino, male
(B)Brad, # (Alaska Native, male) only confirmed eligibility
(OP) O.P, 39, Gwich'in, Koyukon, Jewish, male
(VG) Vincent Gregory, 30, Alaska Native Yup'ik, male
(EB) Edgar Blatchford, 69, Yup'ik Eskimo, Iñupiaq Eskimo, male

(SAT) Sean Asiqłuq Topkok, 54, Iñupiaq, male

(AJ) AJ, 51, Gwich'in, Scottish, Irish, male 'evolved'

Chapter 5: Alaska Native Men's Voices Discussion & Conclusions

In an effort to self-determine pathways to health and wellness, this project effort was designed to contribute to restoring and empowering gender relations as Indigenous peoples. Recognizing the impacts of colonization on concepts of gender and healthy relations, the need to put forward Indigenous knowledge and values in place of harmful Western binaries was identified. On balance to theoretical frameworks of Indigenous feminisms, available literature showed little study along the spectrum of genders, specifically for Indigenous masculinities. Regionally, and specific to Alaska the extant literature was scarce. Developed closely with community, the project posed these research questions:

How do Alaska Native men contribute to healthy communities? What are the paths that lead to the capacity of leadership in which they serve? What do Alaska Native men find meaningful about their roles in their community? What strengths are in place that can build upon? What can we learn across generations of Alaska Native men to improve health and wellbeing for future generations? How do Alaska Native men navigate expectations from western and cultural values? What does it mean to be a provider? What can contemporary narratives tell us about gender relationships? How can illuminating these lived experiences improve our approach and understanding of health, education, political, economic and social needs?

Project methods followed Indigenous values of honoring relations and 'doing things in a good way,' which included informal and formal ways of gathering guidance and feedback. Ultimately, the project methods included individual semi-structured interviews, initiated in a specific setting for hosting dialogue on gender. The specific study aims were:

SA1. Describe how individual Alaska Native men self-identify and how identity relates to health and wellbeing.

SA2. Analyze meaningful intersections of lived experience, synthesizing cross-cutting themes across participants.

SA3. Demonstrate this narrative as generative of healthy gender relations.

The following sections of Chapter 5 include Summary of Findings, Discussion, Conclusions, Limitations, and Recommendations for Future Research.

Summary of Findings

The findings from this project are a starting place to describe how Alaska Native men self-identify and how that is connected to health and wellbeing. First, noting optional, self-reported demographic information in itself presents varied identity descriptors that would not have been captured if limited to check boxes (Chapter 4, Table 1. *Alaska Native Men's Voices-Participant Demographics).* Although all participants confirmed eligibility of identifying as 'Alaska Native,' 'male,' and '18 years or older' the additional information illustrates the complexity of Indigenous identity. Instead of being a limiting factor, the nuance of seemingly surface level information offers an entry to better understanding the multifaceted lived experiences discussed. It sets into motion affirming Indigenous maleness/masculinities that do not necessitate colonial 'authentication.'

Questions such as "What does it mean to you being an Alaska Native male?" "Thinking about your life, what experiences taught you what it means to be a man? What teachings are important to you? Who taught them to you?" "What does it mean to you to be a provider?" and "What comes to mind when you think about looking inward?" framed individual reflections on identity and being. Participants noted ideas of gender fluidity, awareness of stigmas associated with ‘Alaska Native male,’ but ultimately self-identified around affinity to cultural connectedness. Within these responses, self-examination of learned experiences moved outward to an articulation of self to others, through responsibilities, familial roles, and in various kinds of communities of belonging.

Questions such as, “What do you find meaningful about your role(s) in your community?” and “What are your ideas on strengthening how we relate to one another? How do we strengthen our connection? Among men? Among men, women, all genders?” prompted discussions on *how* they enter places, spaces, and roles. Participants shared their intentions of relationality within those different roles as part of collective spaces. Both the above set of directed individual questions and latter questions on relations revealed meaningful cross-cutting concepts that depict mutual dependence of Indigenous identity to community and wellbeing.

Finally, questions such as, “If you were to define/describe what it means to be healthy and well, how would you do that?” “How have you moved, or seen other men, toward healing and wellness?” and “What would you like future generations of Alaska Native men to know?” provided rich understandings of holistic wellness, the continual healing journeys being undertaken, naming of feelings and emotions, and expressions of love.

Discussion

Indigenous theoretical frameworks provided a setting to understand gender, separate than that of Western constructs, in effort to restore harmony and bring healing to relationships. Specifically, the perspectives and experiences of Alaska Native men were identified as valuable but unheard voices in the narratives of community health and wellbeing. In enacting of self-determination, the affirmation of Alaska Native men’s voices as part of defining health and wellness is necessary. Across the literature there were consistencies which the findings fit well within.

AlterNative worldviews on gender from three Indigenous regions discussed in Chapter 1 reviewed the ways in which colonization negatively impacts Indigenous identity and wellbeing. Moreover, the works put forth that Indigenous communities have knowledge systems that strengthen identity and restore relational ways of being. Within current Indigenous scholarship the consistency of writing on empowered gendered relationships, knowing that Western frameworks fall short on encompassing concepts—the findings reflect fluid notions of identity that that are deeply connected to culture and self to others. Similarly, in the findings from this project, Alaska Native men spoke to navigating Western expectations and stigmas while living their cultural values and having a sense of belonging with their identities. The literature review in Chapter 2 presented aspects to the socialization of men and Indigenous men through social media specifically. There were striking parallels of the content analysis to participant interviews: themes such as being in community was common, as well as the acknowledgement and roles that LGBTQ2+ people have in Indigenous communities. Likewise, though not explicitly asked about, fatherhood was spoken to quite often. Finally, as also found in social media themes, the presence of terms such as 'toxic masculinity' was referenced but was not what participants used to unpack their ideas of masculinity.

The above theoretical models and existing literature set up foundations for this project to pose exploratory research questions which were also guided from community input. Specific questions around defining health and wellness and men's roles within that, being a provider, and looking inward, brought forward findings to help answer the research questions and gaps of knowledge around Indigenous gender constructs.

Consistent with Indigenous models, defining health and wellness were described in a holistic manner. Spiritual health, though not always directly named, was brought up specifically with connection to ancestors. The concept of intergenerational healing resonates in the descriptions as healing for the present person but also transcending linear time and healing the relations of past and future into multidimensional awareness. It is not within this project, nor was there saturation on this cross-cutting theme but it is worthy of noting as important. Answering the research question to how they are contributing to healthy communities begins with balance within and grows outward to the many types of roles they found meaningful.

Specific areas such as being a provider in some ways changed to include Western demands like jobs and economic vitality. However, the deeply rooted values of providing, why it is important, and forms of providing did not stem from contemporary changes. Being a provider was affiliated with contributing to others wellbeing in families and communities. The breadth of what it meant to provide offered expansive understandings which Alaska Native men could find meaningful entry ways of belonging. Navigating intersectional identities across multiple heritages and gender spectrums was a place of growth and healing for participants with resolve of being true to themselves. Two participants specifically noted the decision to love themselves.

The question about looking inward was developed in the ‘pre-methods’ as a starting place of self-reflection. The depth of personal exploration and honesty in the findings show emotional intimacy which participants were keenly aware as essential to being whole and well. The transformational aspects of these findings nod to the healing potential when looking inward is practiced.

The weaving of self to others was consistent throughout. When asked individual-framed questions, participants answered from their experiences while at the same time speaking to various sets of relations including connection to others—family and/or communities, culture, land, and language. In some definitions, being an Alaska Native male meant being responsible to others. Further, strengthening relationships included individual actions and behaviors within specific roles. Familial roles and having a place in the community were meaningful, as men specifically but also broadly across genders and generations. Roles then, in an Indigenist framing are inclusive and expansive, versus a tendency in Western gender narratives of roles as restrictive and exclusive.

Putting forth a strengths-based research design was done with intentionality. However, the findings are also a reminder that healing is a continuous undertaking both as individuals and as families and communities. Experiences and impacts of trauma were spoken to candidly by many participants. What stands out is that despite traumatic experiences, participants found ways to navigate it by commitment to not perpetuating forms of violence and defining for themselves what they did *not* want to be. In fact, the capacity for love came through strongly when sharing what they want future generations of Alaska Native men to know.

The expressions of emotions, feelings, caring, asking for help, crying—all juxtapose what messages are sent by Western masculinity. This alone demonstrates the value of an Indigenous-gendered lens to approach understandings of health, wellbeing, educational, political, economic, and social needs for Alaska Native men. Unlike the ideals of Western individuality, the findings also strongly encouraged knowing oneself in relation to their culture, their ancestors, being connected to land, water, and teachings from all of these. Within the articulation of what participants want for future generations were descriptions of the existing strengths known to keep them grounded, healthy, and well - what they need to thrive.

Conclusions

Creating space for Indigenous understandings of genders requires removing the Western impositions that have harmed Indigenous identities and have been barriers to health and wellbeing. Indigenous feminisms as a tool to decolonize gender and restore alternative ways of being includes honoring all genders for their full self, as whole beings. Though implied in theory, men of course are a part of empowering all genders. This project is a beginning place to track the transformational healing that can occur when relations are liberated from colonial constructs and instead self-determined and defined by Indigenous peoples themselves. While project findings have incredible depth for an exploratory study, the knowledge beyond is so much greater. It would be pre-emptive for this project to propose a specific Alaska Native gender framework. However, the braiding interdependence of self to others with health and wellbeing are notable concepts to carry forward. Likewise, the findings represent Alaska Native men's voices, which in Western academia might fall within a category titled 'Indigenous masculinities.' However, notions of wholeness, fluidity with balance, having connection and belonging, and honoring relations are tenets of shared Alaska Native cultural values. So, while these may need to be explored more specifically with men in our community, work in 'Indigenous masculinities' in relation to Indigenous feminisms should be cautioned to not replicate or be misconstrued as a Western binary.

The affirmation of Alaska Native men's voices in the space of community wellness has several implications that deserve mentioning. One specifically mentioned by participants is Alaska Native men in higher education. The few experiences of going through that were illuminating as an unserved population. By way of strengths-based inquiry though, participants shared what they found meaningful and could be used as a starting place to better understand this gap. In regard to health disparities research, having a sense of belonging and connectedness are key components of what is known as protective factors in suicide prevention. For Alaska Native and American Indian men who disproportionately make up these losses, further identification of cultivating a sense of belonging and connectedness could provide direct interventions and harm reduction. Implications for community development of social, economic or political models could integrate findings on meaningful roles and strengthening relations to better engage men. Dedication specifically to uplifting Indigenous LGBTQ2+ is a clear and much needed space in healing gender relations. Within and beyond these several listed implications, avoiding homogenization across all Alaska Native cultures should be considered and articulated: being open to and welcoming complexity across genders, heritage, and generations.

Finally, within personal spheres, in our daily lives, with friends and families, this project beckons that we be more inclusive and considerate in creating safe space for Alaska Native men's voices. As a larger community, the answer to wanting a project with Alaska Native men's voices was overwhelmingly "yes." We asked, they answered. When given the space to share, participants stepped in authentically, honestly, and given the findings—bravely and with vulnerability. Outside of answering the questions several participants verbalized preparing themselves for the interview in wanting to be open and truthful. Some remarked that they shared things in the interview that they've thought but not ever said before. Honoring the truths in which they shared carries a responsibility to create more spaces that will foster their wellbeing and place of belonging. If we imagine the future generations of Alaska Native men with all of the love and intention that participants put forth for them and work for that vision, all of our families and communities will be healthier.

Limitations

This study has possible limitations. The first possible limitation, as described in the literature review, is that the gap of available literature on Indigenous masculinities. Therefore, there is little comparative studies to support validation. The project addressed this gap by drawing upon gender studies broadly, Indigenous worldviews scholarship, and three regionally categorized areas of intersectional studies on Indigenous masculinities. This study also drew upon community input to contextualize, develop questions, and guide the overall research design. In part to this limitation of lack of previous research, the study sample was ‘Alaska Native’ men. There are 229 distinct federally recognized tribes in Alaska and over twenty-one language groups that fall within this embraced term. This limitation therefore means findings cannot be accurately generalized to all Alaska Native peoples or men.

The study acknowledged this broad identity grouping and in consideration of inclusivity, invited all heritages of Alaska Native men. Intersecting with that consideration was men who would be ready and willing to discuss concepts of gender. Identity terms always carry historical, socio-political implications; while the term “Alaska Native peoples” is an embraced term, the study invited participants to share their self-identified heritage if they desired. As an exploratory study this sample cast a wide net. Future studies by specific cultural, heritage, or geographical groupings may be useful. Likewise, within Alaska, the geographical life experiences of living in urban and rural areas is a layer of complexity. This statement is not meant to reinforce dichotomous tensions. However, life experiences that inform social constructs may vary. The study took the approach that cultural values are carried and lived throughout both urban and rural locations.

As suggested in the latter point, a community-specific study may be of value. Finally, specific age groups may also present unique findings not available in this study. Instead, the value of intergenerational voices was considered more suited for this project. The sample indeed ended up being well dispersed. Given specific implications of the study, an age group perspective may be useful depending on future study topics. Overall, despite possible limitations, this study provides a basis for future research.

Recommendations for Future Research

Considering the above limitations, recommendations for future research would be looking at more specific facets of identity among Alaska Native men, whether it be by cultural heritage, region, or age. Considering information from the findings, future research with and for LGBTQ2+ peoples among Alaska Native peoples appears to be much needed. Specifically, reconnecting to culturally rooted concepts, language, and identification of valuable roles and place of belonging would be impactful. Having and being role models was threaded throughout interviews. A study among mentor pairs (e.g., uncles-nephews, coach-student, grandparent-grandchild) might help support and encourage meaningful relationships. Another specific role brought up by participants that would be a recommended project would be about fatherhood. Likewise, reaching out to Alaska Native men who have gone through Western higher education may help close gaps in that area. There were many interesting activities that participants engaged in that contributed to their wellbeing. A project that would highlight ‘protective factor’ activities such as dancing, carving, being on the land, hunting, etc., would be interesting and could inform promotion of healthy activities for men.

Related, and given known health disparities—from a health care framework, looking at prevention, communication with providers, interventions or treatments specifically for Alaska

Native men is needed. Finally, noting what was not explicitly present in the study, not asked and it did not emerge uniquely, was ceremony. Defining and articulating ceremony that keeps Alaska Native men well could be helpful, as many rites of passage have undergone changes. There are many possible and recommended areas of future research related to this study described above. The hope is that production of Indigenous worldviews of gender can further shape the path of sovereignty and self-determination in healing and wellness.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Alaska Native Men's Voices Interview Guide

Charlene Aqpik Apok Sean Asiqluq Topkok

crapok@alaska.edu 206-660-2362 cstopkok@alaska.edu 907-474-5537

Thank you for your time and willingness to be a part of this study. As described in the informed consent, we want to learn about the lives and experiences of Alaska Native men. The goal of this study is to learn how men’s roles help create healthy communities. You are being asked to take part in this study because you: identify as Alaska Native, identify as a male, are 18 years or older, and are willing to share your experiences.

In case you haven’t participated in an interview before, I’ll share about it now before we begin. There are no right or wrong answers. Your experience, perspective and questions are all insightful. I will ask questions from the guide. I may have follow-up or prompts to better understand your responses. You can skip any question or prompt. You can stop any time.

Are there any questions you have before getting started? [*pause*]

If it’s okay with you I will start the recording now.

Thank you for taking part of this study. Before beginning, I want to verify we went over the informed consent and you agree a part of the study? [*pause*]

Can I also verify: you are 18 years and older? Are you Alaska Native? (Prompt: What is your heritage?) Do you identify as a male? (Prompt: What is your gender?)

Thank you for answering those. Again, you can skip any question or stop at anytime.

- To begin, what does it mean to you being an Alaska Native male?
- Thinking about your life, what experiences taught you what it means to be a man?
    - What teachings are important to you? Who taught them to you?

- What do you find meaningful about your role(s) in your community?
- If you were to define/describe what it means to be healthy and well, how would you do that?
- How have you moved, or seen other men, towards healing and wellness?
    - Would you mind sharing reflections on what has contributed to your wellbeing?
- What does it mean to you to be a provider?
- What comes to mind when you think about ‘looking inward’?

- What are your ideas on strengthening how we relate to one another? How do we strengthen our connection? Among men? Among men, women, all genders?
    - What actions can we take? What roles do men have in being part of solutions?
- What would you like future generations of Alaska Native/American Indian men to know?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share? Any questions you think I should have asked?

Appendix B: Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form
Alaska Native Men's Voices

IRB #1425170-2
Date Approved: May 8, 2019

Description of the Study:
You are being asked to take part in a research study. We want to learn about the lives and experiences of Alaska Native men. The goal of this study is to learn how roles of men help create healthy communities. You are being asked to take part in this study because: identify as Alaska Native, identify as a male, and are willing to share your experiences. Please read this form carefully. You can ask questions and discuss anything about the study before choosing whether or not to take part.

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to do a survey (age, heritage, gender etc.) and take part in a 1-2 hour audio recorded interview.
Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The risk if you take part in this study is loss of confidentiality. Someone may find out you took part in this study. However, we take many steps to prevent this from happening. See more below.

- We do not guarantee that you will benefit from participation. However, we hope that information from this study helps better understand the lives of Alaska Native men.
- **Compensation:** In gratitude for your time and willingness, you will receive $50.

Confidentiality:

- Any information obtained about you from the research will be kept confidential.
- Any information with your name will not be shared with anyone outside the research team.
- We will code your information with a number. This separates your answers from your name.
- We will properly discard all paperwork. We will securely store all research papers.
- Your name will not be used in reports, presentations, and publications.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

It is entirely voluntary to take part in this study. You are free to choose whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part in the study you can stop at any time. You can change your mind and ask to be removed from the study. Whether or not you choose to participate, it will not affect your grades or services at the University of Alaska.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have questions now, feel free to ask me now. If you have questions later, you may contact Dr. Sean Asiqłuq Topkok. cstopkok@alaska.edu. 907-474-5537. Or- Charlene Apok crapok@alaska.edu 206-660-2362.

The UAF Institutional Review Board (IRB) is a group that examines research projects involving people. This review is done to protect the rights and welfare of people involved the research. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, you can contact the UAF Office of Research Integrity at 474-7800 (Fairbanks area) or 1-866-876-7800 (toll-free outside the Fairbanks area) or uaf-irb@alaska.edu.

Statement of Verbal Consent:
I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I am 18 years old or older. I have been provided a copy of this form.

_______ I consent to participating **AND** being recorded.

_______ I consent to participating but **NOT** being recorded.

You can participate in this study with a verbal consent and no use of your name. You can also choose to have your name or preferred pseudonym used.

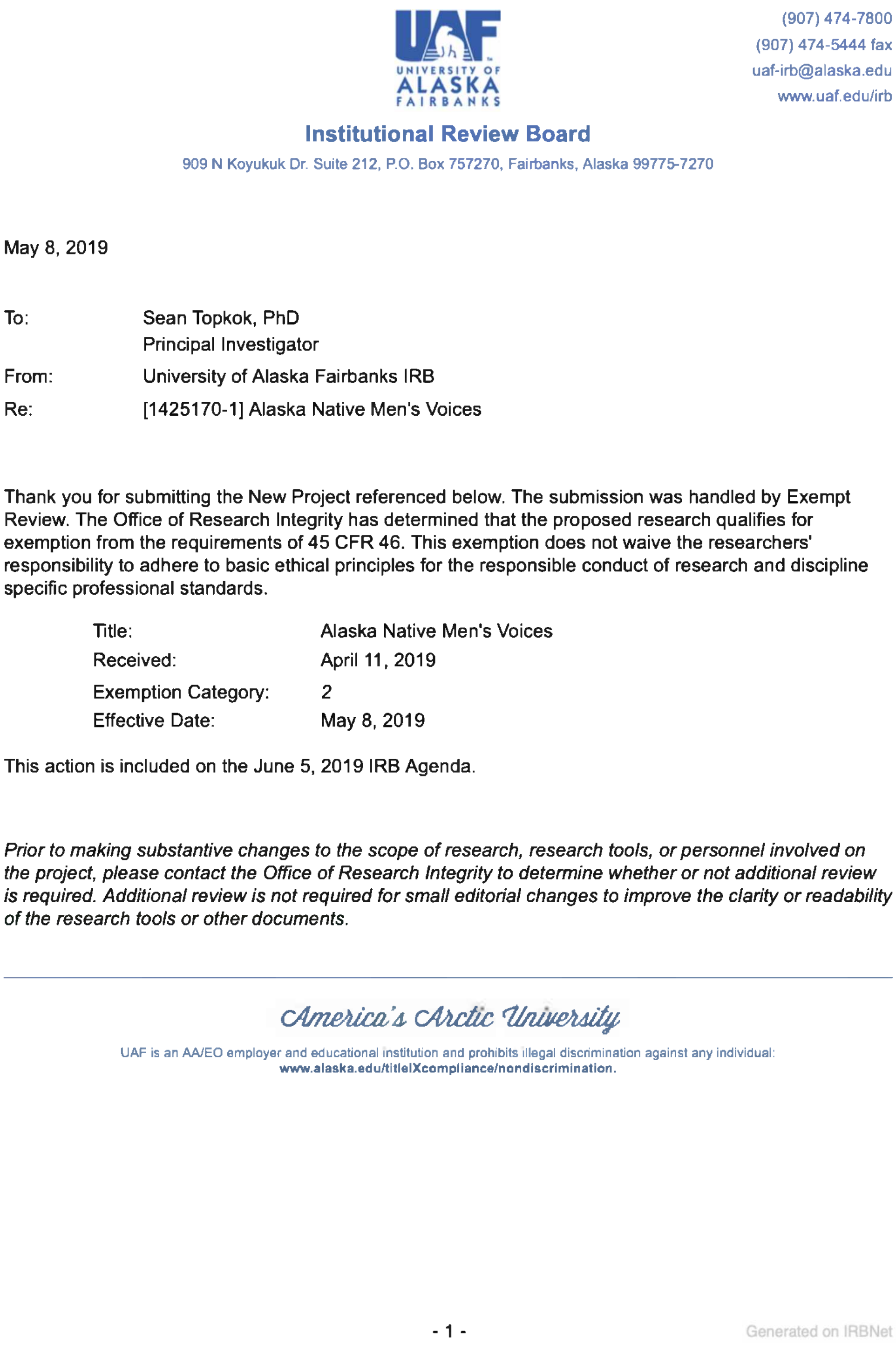
Please indicate whether you agree to have your full name used alongside your comments in the final dissertation that results from this research.

__**YES** (If you change your mind about this at any point, please let the researcher know)
__**NO**
__**ALTERATION**:
Name or pseudonym to be used:____

____
Signature and Printed Name of Participant & Date

____
Signature of researcher, Charlene Aqpik Apok & Date

Appendix C: IRB Exempt Letter



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May 8, 2019

To:	Sean Topkok, PhD Principal Investigator
From:	University of Alaska Fairbanks IRB
Re:	[1425170-1] Alaska Native Men's Voices

Thank you for submitting the New Project referenced below. The submission was handled by Exempt Review. The Office of Research Integrity has determined that the proposed research qualifies for exemption from the requirements of 45 CFR 46. This exemption does not waive the researchers' responsibility to adhere to basic ethical principles for the responsible conduct of research and discipline specific professional standards.

Title:	Alaska Native Men's Voices
Received:	April 11, 2019
Exemption Category:	2
Effective Date:	May 8, 2019

This action is included on the June 5, 2019 IRB Agenda.

Prior to making substantive changes to the scope of research, research tools, or personnel involved on the project, please contact the Office of Research Integrity to determine whether or not additional review is required. Additional review is not required for small editorial changes to improve the clarity or readability of the research tools or other documents.

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