

Introduction

David Newhouse

This section presents six papers that explore diverse economic development issues. Adair et al. in “Conversations about Aboriginal Work Experiences” examines how Indigenous employees understand the workplace and what employers might do to improve retention and employee satisfaction. Their research found that creating a climate of culture safety, conceptualizing Indigenous people as resilient and seeking balance between life and work were themes emerged.

Natcher and Allen in “Corporate Agricultural Investment in First Nations Reserves in Canada” report on lessons learned from a failed 5-year (2009–2014) partnership between One Earth Farms and First Nations in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The lessons include ‘go slow, not so loud’ approach and relationship building based upon mutual respect and a shared commitment to well-being not just expansion, growth and profit.

Beattie in “What About the Salmon?” analyzes the ecological, social and political aspects of the Pacific Northwest liquefied natural gas project. Beattie argues that the analysis misses two critical analysis: surfacing buried epistemologies which would have demonstrated that there were two very different understandings of nature at play and unceded territory, which means that the decision making process should ensure the inclusion of all band members.

Hesseln and Hall in “Aboriginal Workplace Integration in Northern Canada” examines Indigenous labour force development policies and practices and suggests a set of best practices to enhance education and skills training programs.

Sommers in “Defence of Indigenous Participation in Capitalism” continues our series that examines the participation of First Nations communities in the capitalist economy. Sommers argues that the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation’s participation enhances their sovereignty.

Denis et al. in “Indigenous Conceptions of Well-Being” report on the findings of the Poverty Action Research Project that demonstrate that Indigenous economic development efforts should focus on more than improving incomes. Indigenous participants in the study had a broad definition of poverty that has important implications for Indigenous economic development.