Journal of
ABORIGINAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Journal of
Aboriginal Economic Development

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The Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development is the first journal devoted exclusively to issues and practices in the field of economic development and Aboriginal peoples' communities. The journal, published jointly by Captus Press and Cando (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers), offers articles that are of interest to those who teach and those who work in the field.

Table of Contents

The State of the Aboriginal Economy

THE ARTIST

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Keith Nolan

As a member of the Missanabie Cree First Nation in Ontario, Canada, and living across the country from the wild, northern land where I was raised, a longing grew to document Native culture — the beautiful people and memories that I know.

I have lived and traveled across North America — experiencing connection with many First Nations people. My work tries to share the stories of everyday Native people. As I mature as an artist, my world expands. I seek to capture a variety of subjects as they inspire me — through both plein air painting and studio work.

Although I love creating varied art forms, my voice is found best through the medium of oil on canvas. I studied for two years at Grant MacEwan College and with various teachers including David Leffel at the Art Student's League in New York city.

I am now teaching art classes in my studio for all levels of students. I teach oil on canvas at 5012 50 Ave, Legal Alberta and run classes Tuesdays and Thursdays, days and evenings.

Along with winning a number of awards, I have been privileged to have my work displayed in the Provincial Museum of Alberta and with the Canada Council for the Arts, as well as with many private corporations and individuals. My paintings have been sold throughout Canada and internationally and have been featured by greeting card companies, and in calendars sold in the US and Canada.

I seek to embrace life and live each moment as fully as I can. Being able to share my feelings and the life and energy of others through painting is a gift I am so grateful for!

ARTIST'S STATEMENT
The Flute Player

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Keith Nolan

There are many stories about how different North American native Peoples discovered the flute. A common character in these stories is the woodpecker, who put holes in hollow branches searching for food. The wind would blow through and around these branches, creating sounds that the natives noticed and later sought to recreate. Over time, the instrument evolved into different materials being used in its creation but initially, virtually all types of woods were used for flutes. My personal favorite is cedar because of its smell.

Flutes had many different configurations, from 2 to 8 holes. These flutes were fairly easy to make and may have contributed to the design of what is commonly referred to as the plains style flute. This is the style of flute that most native flute players use today. The instrument was so advanced that little changes have been made in the last 150 years or so.

The flutes were used for different dances and spirit calling ceremonies. Flutes were also used for entertainment by many tribes while travelling. Some tribes would perform powerful prayer ceremonies with their flutes while others used the flute for courting and love songs. The flute was originally a very personal instrument — it was played without accompaniment in courtship, healing, meditation and spiritual rituals.

One of the most popular uses for the native flute was for courting — to attract a mate. The legend also says that once you got a mate, you were to put the flute away and never play in public again, because if you played it again, you might attract someone else.

In my painting, The Flute Player, the young native man is playing his flute. Is he playing in solitude or is he playing his flute to attract a mate? This painting is incomplete without your input. It is up to the viewer to complete the painting and make it their own personal story. Are there more questions than answers and why is this young man playing his flute?

Editor's Comments

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Warren Weir

Welcome to the 14th issue of the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*. Following the tradition of meeting the different needs of our readers, this issue contains community-based success stories and current research on the best practices in Aboriginal economic development. This is achieved by providing a critical analysis of the multi-faceted aspects of Aboriginal economies.

The stories and research papers examine many of the challenges and opportunities we face in this ever-changing global economy. The articles discuss the important and varied connections that the natural environment, culture, public and private institutions, civil society, and the social economy have with Aboriginal economies.

In our *Learning from Experience* section, we celebrate the success of individuals and communities including the 2010 Economic Developer of the Year Award Winners — Chippewa Industrial Developments Ltd., Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation, and Rodney W. Hester. We also illustrate an example of an effective Aboriginal community economic development initiative by featuring Neechi Foods, a Winnipeg co-operative.

Next, the *Lessons from Research* section offers six research papers. The papers deal with several aspects of sustainable economic development, reflecting the need to foster a set of attitudes and values that builds on economic and community development with Indigenous Knowledge and theory. In this section we are able to better understand how Aboriginal economies relate to corporate activities and government policy. These articles also remind us of the importance of women, children, the natural environment,

Traditional Indigenous Knowledge (TIK) and culture when discussing, planning, and promoting strategic Aboriginal community and economic development activities.

In our concluding section, *The State of the Aboriginal Economy*, we offer four papers that address critical economic issues that affect the well-being of Aboriginal communities across Canada. Through an examination of current economic ideas, statistics, and issues facing community development officers and change agents, the authors seek to identify opportunities for the enhancement of Aboriginal economies.

Through this journal, we seek to bring together ideas, research, and experience in ways that can inform and guide future Aboriginal economic development activities. On behalf of Cando, Captus Press and the editorial board, we hope you enjoy this issue of JAED. We also encourage you to become a contributor to the journal by sharing your own stories and research with us in the months and years to come.

Editor's Introduction

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Wanda Wuttunee

American athlete Stan Smith points out "experience tells you what to do; confidence allows you to do it." In this section, we share the experience of your peers as they outline their strategy for bringing their communities to self-sufficiency. Neechi Foods demonstrates that even in the inner city, bright ideas can prosper and grow. This worker co-op has strong survival instincts and is moving to a position of thriving with Neechi Commons. Their success will support other small business owners bringing prosperity to a place that is often bleak.

The 2010 winners have lots to share. Aamjiwnaang First Nation has built Chippewa Industrial Developments Ltd. over forty years on a vision of teamwork. Their industrial park provides employment and hope. Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation, 2010 winner of the Aboriginal Private Sector Business Award provides the means for Aboriginal businesses to finance their dreams. Finally, Rodney W. Hester, the 2010 Individual Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner shares his observations for inspiring growth in local businesses through Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company. He takes his role seriously and inspires commitment in entrepreneurs who have taken on the challenge of establishing new businesses.

We offer a window on the experience of these success stories so that you will have the confidence to move forward on the important projects in your own communities.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH NEECHI FOODS
Impact on Aboriginal Fishers in Northern Manitoba, Canada

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Durdana Islam
PHD STUDENT

Dr. Shirley Thompson
NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Neechi Foods Co-op located in the north end of Winnipeg, Canada is an ideal example of an Aboriginal community economic development initiative. This grocery store has been operating for over 21 years and is an associate member of the Federated Co-operatives Ltd. Neechi Foods is committed to providing quality products and services to ensure a high degree of customer satisfaction and retention, building a strong cooperative, and promoting community economic development and opportunities for Aboriginal peoples.

Neechi Foods Co-op sells freshly prepared bannock, wild rice, wild blueberries, freshwater fish, and other Indigenous specialty foods, 'home-made' deli products, conventional grocery items and Aboriginal crafts, books and music. The co-op has been commercially self-reliant and profitable despite severe economic crises in its surrounding neighbourhood. In 2009–2010 financial year, annual sales of Neechi Foods Co-op reached over $600,000. Neechi Foods Co-op is expanding its business and building the Neechi Commons Co-operative business complex which will start operation in 2012.

Neechi Foods Co-op's Objectives

1. *To foster entrepreneurial leadership, dignified employment, and healthy food consumption within Aboriginal communities and inner-city neighbourhoods.*
2. *To promote regionally harvested and processed foods.*
3. *To cultivate strong cooperative relationships and community spirit.*

Principles of Neechi Foods Co-op

- *Prioritizing the health and well-being of the neighbourhoods' children. For example, a worker-subsidized "kids only" fruit basket is provided where children can purchase fresh fruit for only 25 cents.*
- *Being accessible to low income families and all people. For example, food vouchers are accepted as payment for goods.*
- *Supporting an informal economy by exchanging crafts made by local women for in-store credits.*

Russ Rothney (Right), Neechi Foods Co-op Treasurer and Neechi Commons Project Manager with Chris Taylor (Left), a commercial fisherman and fish plant operator from Garden Hill, First Nation in Winnipeg on 9th May, 2011. Russ is discussing fish buying opportunities from First Nation fishers.

Below is an interview with Russ Rothney, Neechi Foods Treasurer & Neechi Commons Project Manager explores this successful co-op and its contribution to Aboriginal community economic development.

Interviewer: Please tell us about your background and professional career? And what made you interested in Aboriginal community economic development?

Russ: My academic background is Economics with a strong interest in History. I wrote a masters thesis on the impact of commercial trade on Aboriginal communities going back to the early commercial fur trade period right up to the 20th century. As a result, I developed a strong interest in what happened to these economies. When I wrote that thesis back in 1975, nobody was even using the word "economy" to talk about Aboriginal societies. I looked at it from a point of view of two different economic systems. So that was the starting point.

In 1975, I took a job as the planning secretariat of Cabinet with Manitoba specifically to work on northern economic development strategy and I was assigned a commercial fishery as part of my job. That is how I became associated with the northern fishers's association.

Interviewer: How did your work lead you to Neechi?

Russ: I had been involved with child and family support with the Métis Federation and was also working on a northern economic development project. Out of this, we were asked to create a special training program for economic development officers and I was one of the principal people who worked and created the training program. It was a very intense program of four weeks in-class training and four weeks of practicum. And the practicum assignments were real. There were two curriculum streams (1) accounting and business and (2) economic development and economic planning. I was leading the second stream. These two streams came

together with the final outcome being feasibility studies and business plans related to projects prioritized by community participants.

In Winnipeg, there were four economic development officers in training and each was sponsored by a community group. I remember there were 97 to 99 project ideas. The top ones were a housing co-op, a food co-op, a day care and an arts and crafts business. The arts and crafts business was ruled out as not being feasible at the time. The other three all became realities. So today we have the housing co-op that is Payuk Inter-Tribal housing co-op, the day care is located in Payuk and Neechi Foods. So that's where Neechi came from. It was the brain child of the Economic Development training program.

Interviewer: What are the social goals of Neechi Foods as a co-op?

Russ: From the beginning we have always had the mandate of promoting community economic development and promoting healthier lifestyles. Obviously, community economic development includes hiring people from the area, reinvesting profits back into similar activities; and Aboriginal pride is always been stated as one of the goals to develop people's confidence. The worker co-op model specifically is a way of getting people to develop a sense of business ownership and higher productivity. So even when the recession got bad in the early and mid-1990s Neechi could survive and do business. During that recession period, the workers at Neechi decided themselves to cut their wages to stay in business. The decision was not imposed from any outside sources. I was the treasurer at the time and I reported to the Co-op that the only thing that could save the co-op would be a 20% cut in wages. Everybody agreed. In the 1990s we simply broke even. This means we did not generate the profit needed to keep the building and equipment in good repair. We were only able to pay bills. Ever since the turn of the century we have been profitable despite the critical social and economic condition of the neighbourhood.

Interviewer: How many employees does Neechi have now?

Russ: About 12; the core is 8 employees and some part time backup.

Interviewer: After the expansion of Neechi foods, how many employees will Neechi Commons employ?

Russ: There will be a core staff of 60 plus there will be several part time professional managerial positions. There will also be about 15 staff working in compatible organizations that will rent offices. The total is around 80 jobs. We are retaining a few employees at the old store to maintain a smaller grocery. We will keep the bannock for the neighbourhood seniors.

Interviewer: We know that Neechi provides a market for products (blue berries, wild rice and fish etc) from northern Manitoba Aboriginal communities and fosters CED in these communities. What other products from Aboriginal communities could be marketed in Neechi?

Russ: Well, we sell wild berry jams and syrup from Lake Winnipeg. We are interested in products with value added processing. We often get asked about wild meats. Now the issue there is we would have to get it federally inspected. We sell a lot of bison from bison ranches. Food preparation at Neechi itself is another expression of our development strategy of encouraging retail links to regionally harvested and processed foods. We are getting to a scale where we can do it on a much more sustained basis.

We get our main wild rice from nearby Wabagoon. It doesn't use preservatives unlike wild rice with preservatives to make it shiny black for the restaurant trade. We also get wild rice from another Aboriginal worker co-op from north–western Ontario that is very conscience about all these issues. They send out traditional pickers in canoes to deliberately have seeds going back in. They do a sustainable harvest and they keep the chemicals out of it. We get hundreds and hundreds of pounds from them every year.

Interviewer: From your extensive work experience in northern communities how many dollars were drained out of the north?

Russ: In my thesis I did calculations up to the 1920s and it was staggering how much economic surplus and profits were drained out of the north during the main commercial fur trade, part of which fuelled the creation of the Bank

of Montreal and the Canadian Pacific Railway. They were all tied into the profit of the fur trade. So then the dollars mount if we start adding forestry, mining and hydro, all of which have featured raw resource extraction in the north that supports value-added processing elsewhere.

In the commercial fishery the price the fishers got was doubled by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) and then they would wholesale and the price was doubled again by the retailers. It depends on what type of fish it is. Whitefish have three classifications (export, continental and cutter). A lot of cutter whites, are processed into fish balls in Transcona and exported in France. There is a huge volume of fish going into Chicago and New York also.

Fishers sell most of the fish without processing or just headless. However if fish processing is done in the community (for example filleting) it creates value addition and generates employment as well. So when I say value added that means processing and manufacturing, not just raw materials. It's a huge distinction. The jobs and the higher wages and profits are almost always at the manufacturing and processing stage. So if fishers ship out fish before that manufacturing stage then the high profit leaks out.

When it comes to commercial fishing, there are other issues that need to be taken under consideration for small communities. There is a lot of pressure against commercial fishing from lodges and others with a vested interested in sports fishing. It is very hard for a small community to benefit in a real way from sport fishing. The victims often include young girls. The consumptive, affluent lifestyle displayed by rich sports fishermen from the US or southern Canada is not the sort of model the community needs. A fairly diversified economy can accommodate tourism, control it but it is tough for small communities to handle tourism and get real benefit out of it.

Interviewer: Do federal regulation and policies limit the number of northern fish processing plants?

Russ: No. Firstly, the whole idea driving the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC) was to get better returns for fishers as the middle men were taking a big profit but the merchants were also involved in processing so when they were cut out the merchants then the processing fell off too. Secondly, Fresh water Marketing Corporation (FFMC) allowed the establishment of large plants with a vested interest in maximising the raw fish coming to Winnipeg as opposed to processed fish which have big added value if processed to the north. So fishers are charged for the freight. However, if the fish is processed the weight of the fish is reduced to 60%–80% of the original weight which is a lot cheaper to ship to Winnipeg.

Interviewer: Was there a processing plant in almost every community then that employed a lot of local people?

Russ: There were several big ones. The biggest I think and the last to shut down was on Savage Island in Island Lake in 1976. This was six years after the establishment of the FFMC.

Interviewer: What are the early politics?

Russ: From 1975 to 1977 I worked with a provincial subcommittee on the "northern plan". Our plan showed how regional linkages can be made in the north to develop value added economic opportunities instead of just raw resources going out of the north. So the concept was very strategic. Lots of people in the north loved it. But it went up against the mining industry and other corporate powers. It was all about trying to undo the damage that has been done not just with fishing but in general; exports of unfinished natural resources and imports of finished products, along with missionaries, doctors, police and social workers.

Interviewer: As a part of our food security research in northern communities in Manitoba, we had opportunities to meet fishers in Garden Hill First Nation in northern Manitoba. *There are 100,000 kilograms of fish quota which are undeveloped, and the fishers are keen to sell their fish in Winnipeg. We are hoping that we could initiate a "fish buying club" to create a market for them through Neechi Foods.*

Interviewer: What kind of fish and suppliers are you looking for?

FIGURE 1
The Conceptual Diagram of the Proposed Fish Buying Club

The proposed "fish buying club" will create market opportunities for Garden Hill fishers.
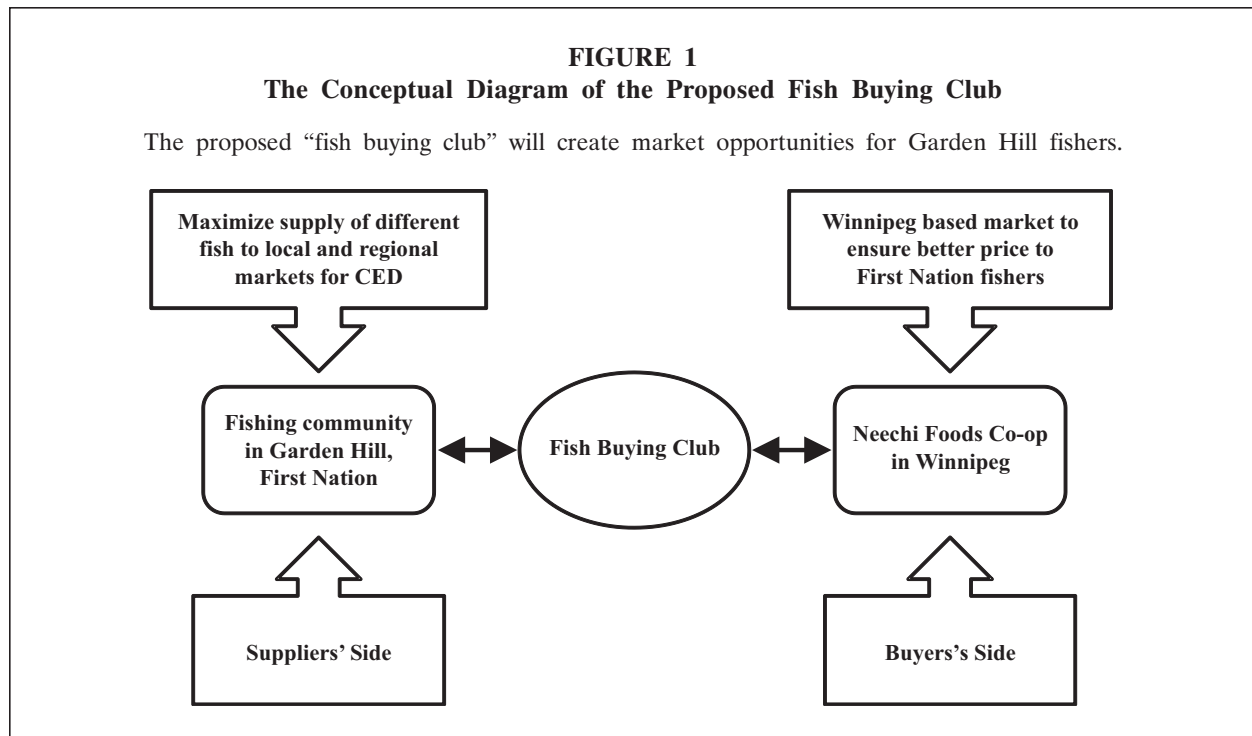
Russ: We are interested in a variety of fresh and frozen, whole, dressed and processed fish. We will have a fish market supported by a walk-in cooler and freezer.

Interviewer: Was it difficult to get a commercial vendors licence for Neechi?

Russ: No. It was not that difficult. We are able to buy directly from licensed fishers. We have often turned away people who are not licensed and we don't take fish out of season. We fill out forms and report monthly what we buy. It used to be the Fishery section of Natural Resources that made the call as to whether we could be allowed to buy direct from fishers or not and now the FFMC makes that decision. FFMC does not hesitate to give it to us.

Interviewer: So you think if we have a web based on- line system for a direct 'fish buying club' and provided you with all the commercial license numbers that would work fine?

Russ: I don't see any problem. It does not matter as long as we are getting it from licensed fishers or co-ops. We do that with other products too. For example, the student's union at University of Manitoba arranges Christmas hampers. Some of the things they buy gets delivered to Neechi and we assemble it or other times the supplier delivers direct to bulk customers.

Interviewer: So how is the fish market here in Winnipeg?

Russ: I think it is strong. At Neechi one of our goals is to support groups of Aboriginal fishers in the North. Although we don't have a huge market campaign for fish, we still sell a lot of fish.

Interviewer: Now that Neechi is trying to expand. Do you see prospects for this fish market?

Russ: Yes. We will sell in a way that looks authentic and fresh. It is different than how you sell it in a supermarket. It is going to be like a village atmosphere inside the Neechi Commons and so there will always be specialty food boutiques.

Interviewer: When you started selling fish in Neechi did you do a market survey to find out the demand?

Russ: No, because there are lots of people who eat fish. We started on a small scale which is in sharp contrast to big chain stores. In big stores the products have to get out in a mass scale and look the same. We don't spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on advertising. So we can take weather dependent seasonal products. It gives us a very good competitive advantage. That's why we own the store market in terms of wild blue berries in Winnipeg. We use local products as much as possible, avoiding transcontinental transportation. When food travels long distances, it adds expense, has more preservatives and is less fresh. So selling local products has been one of our strengths. We sell a lot of fresh bannock that we bake ourselves. Safeway did try to get into selling bannock about 10 years ago but that did not last. We are seen as authentic for this.

Interviewer: Do you think northern fishers have any barriers to making their living?

Russ: The hydro disruptions in term of the natural resource base are huge. Back in 1970s the mercury scare shut down the Lake Winnipeg fishery as well for 2–3 years. Arguments are still going on whether it was natural mercury or coming out of Lake Winnipeg River system. Certainly hydro developments, massive flooding and again tension with sports fishing are big barriers.

Interviewer: So until 1970s fishers had a sustainable livelihood from fishery?

Russ: It functioned but the only problem was these fishers got squeezed by the merchants who would go in and buy at very low prices. They always had the opening but the same thing has happened with wild rice and other things. The merchants were doing it and they were even tied in with land transportation or the planes and pilots. So the fishers strongly supported the idea of the marketing board but the benefit was far greater to the southern fishers. If you truck your fish to Winnipeg then you are not paying the high freight cost northern fishers must pay.

Interviewer: So creating more direct markets is only going to help Aboriginal fishers?

Russ: It could help others too. I should mention that at Neechi Commons there will be dozens of staff and most of them will be Aboriginal.

We are going to set up an interactive website. We have got a marketing group working on this. It is going to be fully interactive and you can easily link "fish buying club" at our site if you want.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time today.

Neechi Foods Co-op is an excellent example of an Aboriginal CED initiative in Manitoba, Canada. Now that Neechi is expanding to Neechi Commons Co-op this will create more economic opportunities for Aboriginal peoples in remote northern communities. From the interview it is understood that there is a huge demand of fish in Winnipeg. Therefore, the initiation of a "fish buying club" with association to Neechi Commons Co-op would create markets for northern fishers and help them earn a sustainable living.

To learn more about Neechi Foods Co-op please visit http://neechi.ca/

2010 ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

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Michelle White-Wilsdon

LEAD RESEARCHER & SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

There have been many philosophical moments of my time working with Cando where I have stopped to ask myself: What does Aboriginal economic development mean? I have been very fortunate that during my employment with Cando I have had the opportunity to engage with and learn from EDO's across Canada about the many aspects of Aboriginal economic development. For some people, economic development is about fostering an environment conducive to entrepreneurship. This might include encouraging a society to support private enterprise, or it could be reforming a governance structure in such a way that allows business development to thrive. For others, the priority may be about long term strategic planning that sets the parameters of how many businesses should be developed, where they should be located, and what types of businesses best reflect the identity of the community and the vision it is trying to achieve. Let's not forget that economic development can also be about maintaining traditional sustenance economies which are blended with Aboriginal rights movements to protect hunting & fishing rights, preserve our environment, and fight climate change.

Although the path of economic development may vary from one Aboriginal community to another, the goal is always the same. That goal is to improve the wealth, prosperity and quality of life for Aboriginal people and exert the right to do what is best for our own people, in our own unique way. Economic development is about forming a society that provides for future generations, maintains and preserves our identity as Aboriginal people, and builds communities that we are all proud to live in.

Certainly, Aboriginal economic development is not an easy feat. There are social stigmas, geographical challenges, legislative obstacles and resources required for development that are not readily accessible. It has been a long and tiresome road, but thanks to EDO's who are dedicated to their role and passionate about their communities, we are starting to rebuild our communities and overcome these challenges and obstacles each and every year. It is important for Aboriginal Economic Developers to get the recognition that they deserve for their commitment and dedication to improving the standards of living and prosperity in the communities which they serve.

It is my pleasure and sincere honour that I introduce to you this year's 2010 Economic Development of the Year Award Winners.

CHIPPEWA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS LTD., AAMJIWNAANG FIRST NATION COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR

40 Years Into Our Vision

Chippewa Industrial Developments Ltd. (CIDL) will celebrate their 40th anniversary this year and

is proud to be recognized as the 2010 Economic Developer of the Year by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers. CIDL is wholly owned by the Aamjiwnaang First Nation which is located directly south of the city of Sarnia, Ontario. The First Nation consists of 1,315 hectares with an on reserve population of just over 970. The total registered membership of the Aamjiwnaang is 1,929. It is the community of Aamjiwnaang that is deserving of this award and CIDL is proud to accept this award on their behalf.

It Started with a Vision

If you ask Tom Maness, General Manager of CIDL, there is no limit to the potential for CIDL. "Forty years ago, there was a vision that was understood and supported throughout our community." This vision ensured that economic development was a pillar equal in importance to every other aspect of First Nation operations. The vision of the Corporation is to create business opportunities and long term employment for band members. This simple, concise statement has driven every development decision that the community has made. Should the community partner? *Only if it creates business opportunities and long term employment*. Should the community invest money? *Only if it creates business opportunities and long term employment*. Political stability and a confidence in CIDL have ensured that development is able to continue towards their vision. There is no finish line for CIDL and as long as there are opportunities to pursue and jobs to create, CIDL will continue to prosper.

It Requires a Team

CIDL has enjoyed success based on a team mentality. No one person is responsible for success; however every individual is accountable to the success of CIDL. This organizational culture has led to a supportive team environment that involves management, staff, Board of Directors, community leadership and the community members themselves. The CIDL team has worked very hard to ensure that their corporate structure is sound and roles and responsibilities among team members are clearly identified. Add a unique element of client support to CIDL

and a unique and supportive environment for development is realized.

In 1991, the first phase of the industrial park was completed. It includes a small business plaza, a gas bar and hosts 17 tenants, some of which are large, multinational companies. Whether a lease is with a community member or a multi-national firm requiring access to international markets, all clients are considered a part of the entire development team in Aamjiwnaang. As a part of the team, their needs are considered to be of the highest priority and solutions to development issues result directly from the interaction of the clients and CIDL.

This unique team approach is best illustrated with the community's recent acquisition of Structural Tech Corporation. This award winning metal fabricator builds parts for Bombardier Transit Cars, trailers for Lincoln Welding and scaffolding for major US and Canadian equipment rental suppliers. The opportunity to purchase this successful company was the direct result of the partner-type relationship that CIDL takes with their tenants. When the time came for the previous owners to sell their business, the right of first refusal was presented to CIDL. This competitive advantage allowed CIDL to purchase the company and is now working on capturing market share in new, innovate markets. Overall, the team concept is working. In addition to creating 300 jobs, and generating approximately $60 million into the mainstream economy, the First Nation is moving forward with a youth complex and a second phase to the industrial park.

It Requires an Understanding of Markets

CIDL did not, forty years ago, understand the full potential of their community. Today, in 2011, CIDL fully understands what their competitive advantages are. CIDL provides companies the opportunity to locate their business where they are in a strategic geographic location, where they have access to an educated workforce, where they have access to a relatively low cost workforce. Add to this low employee benefit costs, access to a wide array of opportunities and low land costs and CIDL has developed, over time, a number of competitive advantages to offer their clients.

The low turnover of tenants at the industrial park is attributed to the competitive advantages that CIDL offers. By saving money on operations, businesses located in Aamjiwnaang are able to reinvest into modernizing equipment, expanding their market base and in turn increasing the number of jobs available within the community.

Don't Wait for the World to Come, Wait for the World to Catch Up

In the early years of CIDL, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation actively pursued ventures to secure revenues and employment for First Nation membership. The intent may not have been to become leader in the world economy. Forty years later and the word leadership is becoming synonymous with CIDL. CIDL is positioning themselves as leader in the way businesses, communities and the world operates within the world we live. Phase 2 of the industrial developments is a 235 acre Eco park designed to allow corporate development in a green space.

Structural Tech Corp. is also positioning to become a leader into the future. Structural Tech is completing a business plan for an expansion to include the manufacture of racking systems and solar PV modules. This expansion involves growing their current facilities by 10,000 square feet to meet anticipated growth in manufacturing from sales due to solar projects. This has also positioned Structural Tech to assist other First Nations in the development of their solar projects.

Direct sales to the solar industry are not the only area CIDL hopes to develop within the clean energy sector. The second phase of the industrial park will start with the implementation of a MicroFit solar installation to feature the benefits of the Polaris Tilt Tracker design. The new youth centre will also be designed to feature a non-bearing rooftop solar installation. CIDL will be seeking to add additional rooftop solar to the 120,000 square feet of space currently in the industrial park. All of these efforts have the potential for additional future expansion of ground mount solar in the community with the goal of becoming an energy exporting community. Not surprisingly, these efforts would again position CIDL as a leader in yet another sector of the economy.

The CIDL approach has positioned the community for future economic success. In our leadership role we have been able to create sustainable employment for members, provide a long term revenue base for the First Nation, develop expertise in partnership development and expand our understanding of internal business development processes. In our successes have been a lot of lessons learned and CIDL would be pleased to share these experiences with other First Nation communities pursuing their own vision.

Encouraging Youth Participation

CIDL and the Chippewas of Aamjiwnaang First Nation understand that the importance of youth and their contribution to economic success. With a vision that requires patience and persistence, it is important to understand that in most community development situations it will be the youth that must take the next incremental step in development. Today, the community is investing in multi-national corporations generating revenues for the future. Tomorrow, the community wants to ensure that it is the youth that are capable of managing, operating, and growing these businesses. For that reason, the community features youth development as an integral part of achieving their vision.

CIDL and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation support youth development in many ways. Whether CIDL offers cash flow friendly lease rates to youth members or the First Nation offers an apprenticeship program for community members, the community vision for development remains of primary importance. It is the hopes that the youth understand and maintain solid development principles and realize that community economic development is a never ending marathon. With proper training, the youth of the community will be fit enough to carry the development torch for another 40 years.

TRIBAL WI-CHI-WAY-WIN CAPITAL CORPORATION
ABORIGINAL PRIVATE SECTOR BUSINESS AWARD
Solid Leadership

Alan Park has been chief executive officer of Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation

(TWCC) since 2002. Mr. Park's family roots descend from the Pequis First Nation of Manitoba. Alan holds several academic credentials including a diploma in Business Management from Red River Community College, a diploma in the Management of Community, Economic and Organizational Development from the University of Manitoba and has also completed the Queens Executive Management Program. Prior to appointment as CEO of TWCC, Mr. Park held the position of National Youth Business Advisor for Aboriginal Business Canada, and held a succession of senior management posts connected with Aboriginal Economic Development for more than 24 years. In 2008, Alan Park became an Honorary Lifetime Member of the Selkirk Friendship Centre when I was inducted into the Hall of Honour in the Builder category for leadership, dedication and service to the community.

In 2007, Alan was the key lead negotiator in securing a $40-million, 10-year call centre service contract with a TSX-traded income fund — Resolve Corporation, now Davis & Henderson in support of a major government contract. This is just one example of how Alan's leadership has translated in a 240% increase in revenue for TWCC, and has grown to be one of Canada's largest Aboriginal Financial Institutions with more than 150 employees in three separate lines of business — all in just 5 years.

Diversification

TWCC is regarded as a model of diversification among Aboriginal Financial Institutions. In addition to lending to small and medium-sized businesses at First Nations, TWCC has a call centre division and ASKI Financial, a subsidiary that offers employee benefit loans as an affordable alternative to pay day loans. ASKI is now entering into distributorship agreements with AFIs across the country to offer alternatives to pay day loans for all Aboriginal people. It also plans to unveil the first registered education savings fund for Aboriginal people in the near future.

Challenges

Like all other Aboriginal Financial Institutions, we found ourselves in a situation in 2009 in which Ottawa was giving subsidies to our com-

petitors — banks and credit unions — but not to us. So we went to Federal Court to seek a judicial review. The case is not over yet, but Ottawa has agreed to review the subsidy program and we have accomplished wide support among Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike.

Aboriginal Based Partnerships

We like to do business with complementary Aboriginal groups, particularly other Aboriginal Financial Institutions. A recent example is an agreement we signed with Tribal Resources Investment Corporation of Prince Rupert, B.C., to act as a distributor of ASKI financial services products. Other such agreements are under negotiation.

Continued Success

In early 2010, TWCC was selected as one of *MANITOBA BUSINESS Magazine's 50 Fastest Growing Companies*. At the same time, TWCC gained ISO 9001:2008 certification as part of the financial institution's commitment to high management standards and service quality. The dedication and commitment of TWCC to become the financial institution of choice for Aboriginal people is paying off. To date, TWCC has provided $40 million in loans to small and medium sized business in 45 First Nations communities since its inception. TWCC is a fine example of what Aboriginal people can do with solid leadership, and dedication to a seeing a vision realized.

Youth: "It's Simple"

Get an education and live by the famous words of Barack Obama —

- "Yes we can"
- "Failing to plan is planning to fail"
- "Success happens when preparation meets opportunity"

RODNEY W. HESTER
INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPER
OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNER

Rodney is a member of the Cree Nation of Waskaganish, QC which is located on the shore of Rupert Bay, south of James Bay. Waskaganish was originally established in 1668 as a Hudson

Bay Company trading post and is one of the oldest settlements in Canada. There are approximately 2100 residents in Waskaganish, whom participate in both traditional and commercial economies. Economic activities are focused primarily in arts and handcraft, commerce and services, trapping, construction, transport and outfitters. The territory is home to many businesses, including: cleaning devices, arts and handicraft, bingo, commercial centre, boat factory, gas station, hotel, general store, furniture, hardware store, restaurant, bank services, consultants, taxi, clothing.

Rodney currently holds the position of Business Development Coordinator for the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company. He is held in high esteem by his colleagues who admire him for his perseverance, outstanding work ethic and unfaltering pursuit of higher learning. Rodney Studied at Cambrian College and Laurentian University, obtaining degrees in Business Administration and Native Studies. He is presently pursuing his Professional Masters Degree at Queens University that has an emphasis on policy development, human resource management, governance and law.

Champions Business Development with a Focus on Partnerships

Rodney is recognized for his positive contribution to the Cree Nation of Quebec and his commitment to promoting entrepreneurship, facilitating Aboriginal economic opportunities and new partnerships. Born from his determination to stop economic leakage from the Cree Nation of Quebec, Rodney has been instrumental in the creation of two major partnerships.

The first partnership resulted in the creation of a new Quality Inn and Suites in the city of Val d'Or, which opened for business in March, 2011. This hotel is owned and operated by Cree Regional Economic Enterprise Company and Trahan Holdings of Eeyou Istchee and Val-d'Or. As part of this agreement, CREECO has also gained exclusive rights to the Quality Inn and Suites brand in the Abitibi-Temiscamingue

and Northern Quebec regions. This partnership will bring many benefits to the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee through the transfer of hotel management skills and improved business relations with the city of Val d'Or. More importantly, this project will inspire pride in ownership for the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee and contribute to the economic base of the Nation that will benefit all.

The second major partnership agreement resulted in the establishment Eeyou Baril, a new construction supplies distribution company dedicated to supplying hardware, plumbing fixtures, tools and construction materials at wholesale prices for Aboriginal development projects. Eeyou Baril subsequently developed ties in various industries, including institutional markets and mining. The agreement combines the forces of two companies who have pooled their resources and expertise to capitalize and further develop the construction market in Quebec and other regions. This new partnership is poised to respond to the steady growth in housing, infrastructure, mining, hydro-electric and other development projects. Active in northern Quebec for over fifty years, the team has expertise to support such developments and is backed by more than one hundred employees working from multiple locations in Quebec and Ontario. This partnership contributes to the promising future for the economic and social development of Northern Quebec.

Strategically Oriented

Rodney W. Hester was the leader of the strategic five-year action plan for the Cree Regional Economic Enterprises Company, Air Creebec, Cree Construction & Development Company, Valpiro and Gestation ADC. This strategic plan has since been implemented, and like Rodney, will be instrumental in guiding the path to socio-economic success for all citizens of the Cree Nation of Quebec. Rodney W. Hester is a proud Cree and born leader, there is no doubt that Rodney will help to lead the Cree Nation of Quebec into a brighter and better future for years to come.

Editor's Introduction

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David Newhouse

As First Nation economies begin to take shape and grow across the country, efforts turn from start-up to sustainability. Ensuring that economies grow and are sustainable over the long term becomes an important undertaking requiring institutional development, public policy support, and the fostering of a set of attitudes and values that blend both economic and Indigenous Knowledges.

This issue of JAED explores several aspects of sustainable economic development: Thompson, Gulruk, Beardy, Islam, Lozeznik and Wong examine food sovereignty in Northern Manitoba; and Connelly, Markey and Roseland examine sustainable community planning at the Rolling River First Nation in Manitoba. Findlay and Weir examine aspects of development using the lens of Indigenous Knowledge (IK), proposing that a new accounting model that places IK at its centre will contribute to improved Aboriginal sustainable practices. Natcher, Allen and Schmid examine the low (3% vs. 80% for non-First Nation producers) participation of First Nations cattle producers in government financial aid programs during the 2003 Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease) crisis. Bullock highlights the importance and value of First Nation and Municipal Government collaboration using a case of forest-based development, and finally Berdahl, Beatty and Poelzer examine the critical, indeed required, associations with women and youth when addressing Aboriginal community development in Canada.

IS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PUTTING HEALTHY FOOD ON THE TABLE?
Food Sovereignty in Northern Manitoba's Aboriginal Communities

Shirley Thompson, Asfia Gulrukh, Myrle Ballard, Byron Beardy, Durdana Islam, Vanessa Lozeznik, and Kimlee Wong
NATURAL RESOURCES INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

ABSTRACT

Food-related community economic development (CED) is making a difference in northern communities where food insecurity rates are very high at 75% (n=534). People in northern Manitoba reported in interviews that hunting, fishing, berry-picking and gardening made them self-sufficient, in the recent past (25 to 50 years ago), but now many children and adults cannot afford to eat healthy. Presently many financial and regulatory barriers to country foods exist, which severely curtails food sovereignty and sustainable livelihood, while increasing food insecurity. The Nelson House Country Foods Program, which employs people to hunt and fish to feed the community, is related to better food security rates (p<0.001). The Northern Healthy Food Initiative's (NHFI) application of a CED approach is having an impact on community building according to observations which found 33 new gardens in 2009 alone, as well as 7 new greenhouses and hundreds of new freezers in the 14 communities studied. Northern Aboriginal communities were found to have unique food access issues that resulted in a new Aboriginal food access model to show the factors, including CED, that impact food access and food sovereignty. As well, Aboriginal food sovereignty and sustainable livelihoods model was developed to show how the vulnerability context created by colonial government and climate change has impacted community assets and food security, requiring CED to reestablish sustainable livelihoods and food sovereignty.

S. Thompson is the corresponding author and can be reached by e-mail (s_thompson@umanitoba.ca).

INTRODUCTION

Could food based community economic development (CED) help feed families in northern Manitoba where many families lack economic access to nutritious foods? Problems associated with food access in remote communities include limited selection of perishable foods, expensive food prices, escalating transport costs, uncertainty of travel with winter roads not freezing over, high poverty rates, and a decline in use of country foods (NFPSC, 2003). Many people have stated that to live a healthy life in a northern Manitoba community, individuals need to practice sustainable local food cultivation and harvesting practices. Community members recognize the need to improve food access and have requested the re-invigoration of local food production as a first priority (NFPSC, 2003). This request is a call for food related community economic development (CED) towards food sovereignty. This paper explores eight remote or semi-remote First Nation communities and six Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) communities considering the impact of CED and community level factors on food sovereignty. For CED, specifically country foods programming, food buying clubs and the Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI) and other government programming is considered. Following from the Northern Food Prices Report in 2003, the government of Manitoba created the NHFI, a pilot project, to implement priority recommendations made by the Northern Food Prices Report (2003) in 2005. The NHFI is coordinated by a multi-department government team led by Aboriginal & Northern Affairs and programs are implemented through a funding partnership with three northern regional non-government organizations (NGOs), a school division and a province-wide food security organization.

Food related CED is different than sustainable agriculture or anti-hunger campaigns (Winne, Joseph & Fisher, 1998), seeking local capacity building and empowerment to resolve issues of poverty, hunger and inequality (Shragge, 1997; 2003). Food-related CED decommodifies a portion of food production and/or distribution withdrawing it from the capitalist market. This reclaims food access by the community as a necessity and a right (Riches, 1999), rather than a privilege. Local food networks include food cooperatives, buying clubs, country food programs, community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer's markets, community gardens, etc. Community-based food programming is one policy response to tackle food insecurity; to complement food, health and social policies (Power & Tarasuk, 2006; Power, 1999). Manitoba's "CED lens" (Loxley & Simpson, 2007) incorporates CED principles into the government's policy-making practice. However, CED has been criticized as gap filling, providing limited government funding, for areas of social policy and welfare that governments have vacated (Sheldrick, 2007). Community food security initiatives depends on the ability of not for profit organizations to organize, command resources and generate support for measures that will improve local food access and nutrition for citizens, especially underprivileged ones. Unlike the standardization of universal social programs or food market chains these initiatives vary greatly from community to community. However, community organizations usually lack the resources and the authority to make significant changes in existing food regimes.

Food based CED offers a local solution to the prevailing corporate food regime (aka agrifood) (Sonnino & Marsden, 2006). Agrifood operates in a marketplace system that excludes access and control to the poor and underprivileged while creating a cycle of dependency, rather than self-sufficiency. Under corporate agrifood systems, consumers are separated from producers in terms of both distance (food can travel vast distances to places of consumption) and relationships (producers are separated by a chain of processors, shippers and retailers from consumers) (Shragge, 2003). Conversely, local food networks focus on establishing a direct relationship between producers and consumers with a positive social relationship that emerges from a sense of place (Selfa & Oazi, 2005). Also local food systems are explained with respect to geographic space: "local food systems are rooted in particular place ... use ecologically sound production and distribution practices, and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community" (Feenstra, 1997).

According to Winona LaDuke economic development in Aboriginal communities should be based on the Indigenous concept of Mino-bimaatisiiwin or the "good life". Winona LaDuke (2002: 79) explains how the alternative definition of this term is "continuous rebirth": "this is how

we traditionally understand the world and how indigenous societies have come to live within natural law." This good life requires cyclical thinking, reciprocal relations and responsibilities to the earth and creation. Continuous inhabitation of place with an intimate understanding of the relationship between humans and the ecosystem and importance to maintain this balance are central tenets. According to LaDuke (2002), economic development based on indigenous values must be decentralized, self-reliant and considerate of the carrying capacity of that ecosystem. Winona LaDuke states: "the nature of northern indigenous economies has been a diversified mix of hunting, harvesting and gardening, all utilizing a balance of human intervention or care, in accordance with these religious and cultural systems' reliance upon the wealth and generosity of nature" (LaDuke, 2002: 80). The resource management system for sustainable yield used techniques for domestic production and production for exchange or export: "Whether the resource is wild rice or white fish, the extended family as a production unit harvests within a social and resource management code that ensured sustainable yield" (LaDuke, 2002: 82).

Indigenous peoples around the world face challenges to traditional practice and food sovereignty. Kuhlein et al. (2006) list many Indigenous peoples' successful food system interventions from different case studies around the world, categorizing them into four areas. One priority area for CED identified is traditional food harvesting of wild/animal plants. Another CED activity is agricultural activities, such as, stimulating home or community gardens and local food production including livestock and fish harvesting. Also, education on traditional and other food production and nutrition in community and schools is deemed important. Finally, the need for a local steering committee of leaders to make linkages with business, health department, education, government and NGOs and to ensure activities lead to positive outcomes is noted.

BACKGROUND ON ECONOMIES IN NORTHERN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

Manitoba's northern Aboriginal communities are widely recognized as having mixed, subsistence-based economies in which the harvesting of country food for primarily domestic consumption plays a significant role in their food security and culture (Usher, Duhaime & Searles, 2003). The term "country food" or "traditional food" refers to the mammals, fish, plants, berries and waterfowl/seabirds harvested from local stocks. Until recently, northern Manitoba Aboriginal communities relied almost entirely on country foods for sustenance and health.

Food self-sufficiency is acknowledged to have existed in the recent past by government. A government document reports: "As late as the 1950s, northern communities were relatively self-sufficient, except for flour, sugar and similar products. It was not uncommon to have had market gardens, canning and other locally produced foods" (NFP, 2003: 19). This included wild game from hunting and trapping, fish, berries and gardening. Subsistence economies of northern Manitoba have been undermined and undervalued in terms of their provisioning of food security (Churchill, 1999). LaDuke (2002) describes how colonialism through Christianity, western science, eurocentrism, socioeconomic practice of capitalism and military-political practice of colonialism has resulted in indigenous economies characterized by dependency and underdevelopment. The appropriation of land and resources from Indigenous economies has created a situation in which most Indigenous nations are forced to live in circumstances of material poverty (LaDuke, 2002). Although Canadian laws restrict and allocate resources and land on reserves, the indigenous practice of "usufruct rights" is often still maintained and, with it, traditional economic and regulatory institutions like the trap line and family hunting, grazing or harvesting territories. However, environmentally destructive development programs often foreclose the opportunity to continue low-scale, intergenerational economic practices that have been underway in the native community (LaDuke, 2002). The decline of hunting for food has increased the reliance on store-bought food and adoption of characteristic southern dietary habits (Thompson, 2005) associated with obesity, dental caries, anemia, lowered resistance to infection and diabetes (Szathmary et al., 1987; Thouez et al., 1989).

There are jurisdictions in Canada that have worked to remove existing barriers to the access

and use of country foods in their communities. In the Yukon, licensing changes have improved conditions for the local use of food from trapping, hunting, and fishing, including provisions to ensure that local food can be served in a hospital setting (NHFP, 2003). Nunavut has assisted hunters through co-ops and through an income assistance program. Traditional food practices are proven practice in contrast to public health, which is science based. To address the safety of traditional food preparation has been processed in an approved facility for a head start program in BC and Kivaliq Arctic Foods Ltd which distributes traditional food using retail, whole sale and online stores. In Manitoba, the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN also known as Nelson House) made a very practical and culture-friendly plan to provide greater access to healthy and traditional wild food to community members. The importance of supporting traditional and wild food programs is mentioned in the Northern Food Price Report (2003): "Sustainable use of fish supplies and wild game ... [should] focus on providing food to local citizens."

First Nation reserves are typically Canada's most remote and poorest communities. Many of the communities without road access are reserves with 4% of the 491,000 FN people in Canada lacking road access. First Nation communities are economically marginalized lacking adequate infrastructure for food processing, food production, federal wharfs, road network and safe drinking water, all of which are factors that make these communities vulnerable to food insecurity. First Nations' peoples quality of life ranked 63rd, or among Third World conditions, according to an Indian and Northern Affairs Canada[29] study that applied FN-specific statistics to the Human Development Index created by the United Nations. Figure 1 provides a map of northern Manitoba that shows the remote nature of many northern Manitoba communities In Manitoba, four FN communities are not connected to the power grid and dozens of communities do not have all-weather roads. Archibald and Grey (2000) point to the underlying shortages of affordable, nutritious food, as well as infrastructure, and the lack of employment as the cause of the health 'crisis' among Aboriginal peoples: "Provide people with proper housing, water, sewage, jobs and the means to provide

adequate food and health statistics would improve" (Quoted in Kinnon, 2002: 12). Health is largely determined by social, economic, political, and environmental circumstances: "The social conditions in which people live powerfully influence their chances to be healthy. Indeed, factors such as poverty, food insecurity, social exclusion and discrimination, poor housing, unhealthy early childhood conditions and low occupational status are important determinants of most of disease, death and health inequalities between and within countries" (WHO, 2004: 1).

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY EQUALS SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

At the Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali in 2007, 500 delegates from more than 80 countries adopted the Declaration of Nyéléni, which says in part: "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems." The food sovereignty movement was initiated by peasant and Indigenous organizations (Altieri, 2009; Holt-Giménez, 2009). Actors in the food sovereignty movement consider the redistribution of land and protection of territory to be key (Torrez, 2009).

Food sovereignty considers that people have to both make a living and eat and links the two in sustainable livelihoods. A sustainable livelihood is defined as "the assets (natural, physical, human, financial and social capitals), the activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions and social relations) that together determine the living gained by an individual or household" (Ellis, 2000: 10). The five capital assets include: (i) Human capital (the skills, health and education of individuals that contribute to the productivity of labour and capacity to manage land); (ii) Social capital (the close social bonds that facilitate cooperative action, social bridging and linking to share and access ideas and resources); (iii) Natural capital (the productivity of land, and actions to sustain productivity, as well as the water and biological resources from which rural livelihoods are derived); (iv) Physical capital (items produced by economic activity including equipment and infrastructure);

(v) Financial capital (the level, variability and diversity of income sources, and access to other financial resources (credit and savings) that together contribute to wealth) (Woolcock, 1998). Natural capital, for example, can be transformed into physical and financial capital via economic activity, while financial, social and physical capital can be transformed into human capital by increasing access to education (Khan et al., 2009). Asset use, control and access of resources are influenced by institutional structures, processes, policy and programs. People choose livelihood strategies to provide the best livelihood outcomes in an external environment over which they often have little control. Structures (e.g., rules, customs and land tenure) and processes (e.g., laws, policies, societal norms and incentives) operate at multiple levels (individual, household, community, regional, government, powerful, private enterprise) (Scones, 1998; Carney, 1998; Ellis, 2000).

The paradigm of food sovereignty claims to represent authentic food security (Patel, 2009; Wittman, 2009). Food security occurs when people have consistent access to healthy, culturally appropriate food, according to the World Food Summit definition: "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 1996). Another component of food security is recognized as important to Indigenous peoples, namely the ability to harvest, share and consume "country foods" (Power, 2008). However the quantitative method of Health Canada, considered the standard and applied in this paper, limits food security to physical and economic access and does not consider country foods access.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is a consequence of inadequate or uncertain access to healthy food in terms of quantity or quality, and is typically associated with limited financial resources (Tarasuk, 2009). According to Health Canada (2007), compromises in quality and/or quantity or food intake indicate moderate food insecurity (MOFI) and reduced food intake and disruption in eating patterns indicate severe food insecurity (SEFI). Extensive compromises in food selection and total food intake have been documented in conjunction with severe levels of food insecurity (Li et al., 2009) and poverty (Health Canada, 2007; Tarasuk, 2009). Food insecurity is reflected in unhealthy dietary patterns such as low intake of fruits and vegetables (Chen & Chen, 2001; Schier, 2005).

Recognized as an important public health issue in Canada, household food insecurity is associated with a range of poor physical and mental health outcomes. Food insecurity is linked with broader food-related health problems, such as obesity and multiple chronic conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, distress, depression, low immunity levels, dental caries and anemia (Ford & Mokdad, 2008; Ledrou & Gervais, 2005; Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2008; Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003). Food insecurity may explain why Manitoba has the highest rate of pediatric diabetes in North America (Amed et al., 2010), particularly in the four Oji-Cree Island Lake First Nation communities surveyed, when diabetes was unheard of in these communities forty years ago.

Health Canada's national food security survey in 2004 (CCHS 2.2) excluded First Nation communities, which leaves a knowledge void. However, food security rates for a few FN communities across Canada (Rainville & Brink, 2001; Lawn & Harvey, 2003; Lawn & Harvey, 2004; Lawn & Harvey, 2004) reveal very high rates of household food insecurity that greatly surpass the Canadian average of 9.2% household food insecurity rates and those of sub-population groups such as the lowest income adequacy quintile (55%), social assistance recipients (62%) and off-reserve Aboriginals (33%) measured by the Canadian Community Health Survey 2.2; Nutrition Focus Study (CCHS 2.2) (Health Canada, 2007; Shields, 2005).

The food costs and poverty in northern Manitoba First Nations and Aboriginal communities are considered high. A 12 month inquiry was sparked at the Manitoba legislature by the question: "Why is alcohol priced the same at Churchill as in Winnipeg but milk is much more expensive?", which as milk is only a small part of food costs in the north, changed to "Why are healthy foods very expensive in the North?". This report acknowledged that (i) "there is an appreciable level of food insecurity in many northern Manitoba communities";

(ii) "a broad range of strategic options are needed to address the problem of high costs and improve nutritional health in northern Manitoba"; and (iii) "community capacity building and holistic solutions are essential to the success of any strategic option" (NHFP, 2003: 25), among other things.

COMMUNITY LEVEL FACTORS IMPACTING FOOD SECURITY

What food is on the table at home is the result of complex interactions between multiple factors operating at various levels of social organization including at the community level. While much of traditional nutritional health promotion focuses on individual eaters, decisions are made in socio-cultural and geo-economic contexts that have a profound influence on what food is actually available for people to choose from (Fieldhouse, 1995; 2003). Evidence in North America indicates that characteristics of the food environment may help explain racial and socio-economic inequalities in health and nutritional outcomes (Morland, Wing & Diez-Roux, 2002; Zenck et al., 2005). Living in a low-income or deprived area is independently associated with a poor food environment, the prevalence of obesity and the consumption of a poor diet. Exposure to poor quality food environments, coined as "food deserts", amplifies individual risk factors for obesity such as low income, absence of transportation, and poor cooking skills or knowledge (Cummins & Macintyre, 2005). The presence of supermarkets in a neighbourhood has been associated with a lower prevalence of obesity (Morland, Diez-Roux & Wing, 2002). This research finding regarding the impact of "food deserts" on health and food security is consistent across urban settings in the U.K. (Ellaway, Anderson & Macintyre, 1997; Shohaimi et al., 2004), the Netherlands (van Lenthe & Mackenbach, 2002), Sweden (Sundquist, Malmstrom & Johansson, 1999), Australia (Dollman & Pilgrim, 2005), the U.S. (Kahn et al., 1998) and Canada (Moffat, Galloway & Latham, 2005). The factors identified in the food desert literature that impact food security/access include income, price of food, transportation, food competitive market and physical design. Factors from the food desert literature as impacting food security are shown in Figure 1. What factors impact food access/food security in isolated Aboriginal communities is unknown and will be explored in this study.

LOCATIONS FOR STUDY

Fourteen priority communities in northern Manitoba were selected by four nongovernment organizations active in the north on food security to represent a mix of northern Manitoba rural com-

FIGURE 1
Impacts on Food Security Reported in the Food Desert Literature

FIGURE 2
Location of Communities Surveyed in Northern Manitoba
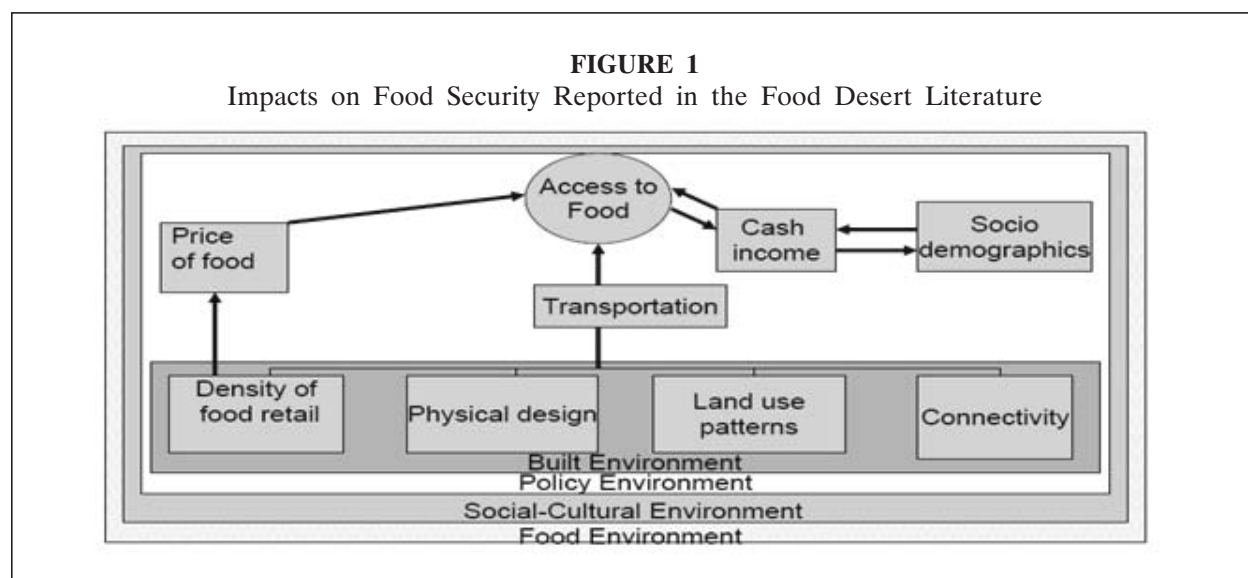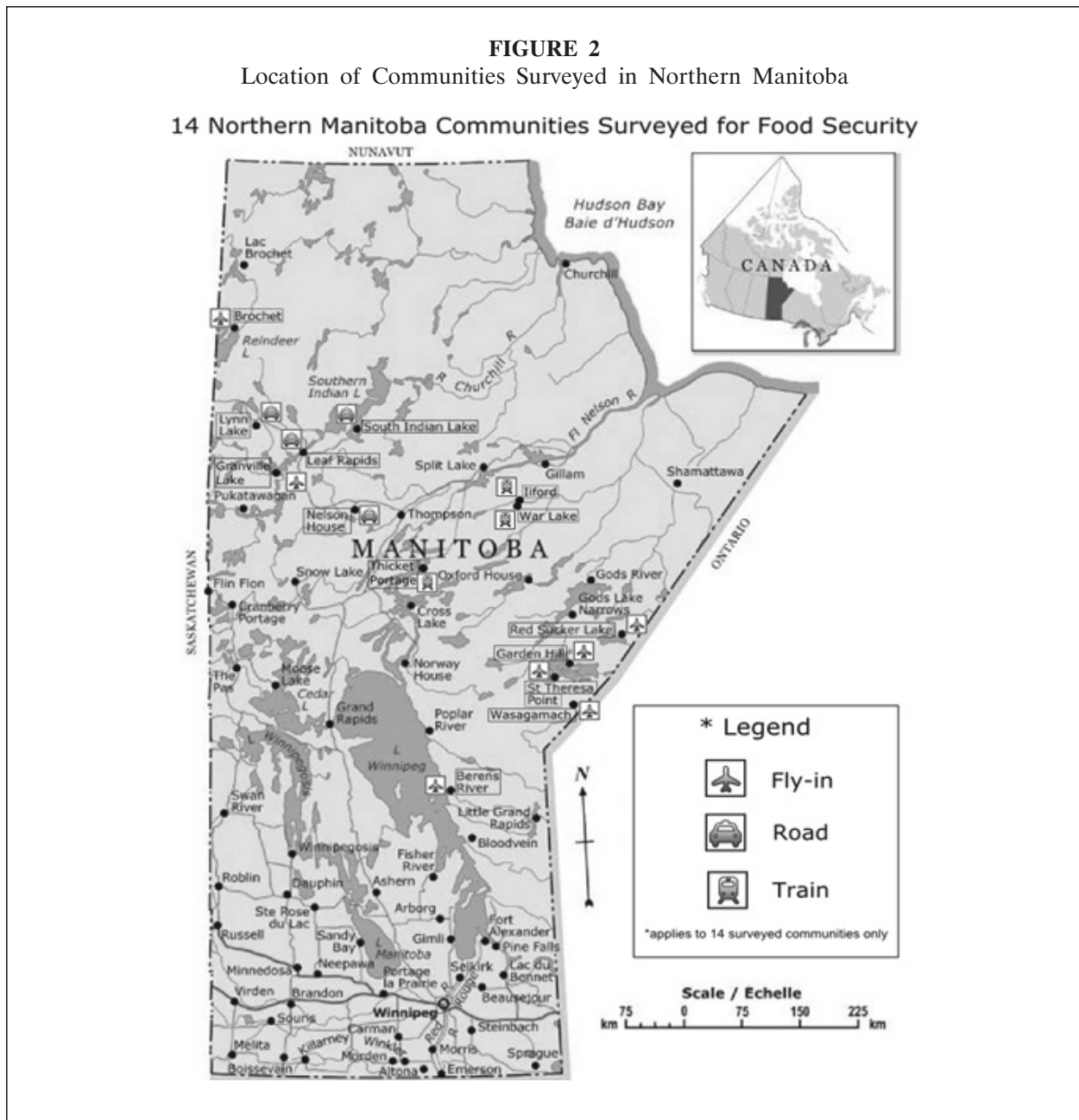
munities. Figure 2 shows that ten of the 14 communities surveyed do not have access to an all-weather road network, with seven having plane access only, namely Berens River FN, Brochet FN, Garden Hill FN, Granville Lake, Red Sucker Lake (RSL) FN, St Theresa Point (STP) FN and Wasagamack FN, and three having train access only.

METHOD

A number of research techniques were used to analyze CED and food sovereignty in the 14 communities, as summarized below:

1. Focus group with 25 people with community members from 15 communities but also NGOs, and government representatives.

2. In-depth interviews with more than 50 community members from 14 communities.

3. Community Food Assessment [CFA] was initiated with communities with meetings with South Indian Lake, Berens River, Leaf Rapids and St. Theresa, as well as with Four Arrows Regional Health Authority's (FARHA) and Frontier School Division teachers and students. With FARHA we had three different two day workshops with eight Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative workers and students.

4. National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) survey was undertaken in the stores in 14 NHFI communities in 2008/2009, as well as other northern and southern Manitoba communities for comparison.

5. Household food security survey was carried out with 534 people in 14 communities. This 18-item food security module of the CCHS 2.2 uses a simple and scientifically grounded measurement tool that was modified from the US Food Security Survey Module (Bickell, Nord, Price et al., 2000) by Health Canada (2007: 45–49). Data analysis was through descriptive and inferential statistics by SPSS version 17. The following factors were assigned yes/no status for analysis by chi-square and Pearson's correlation: road-access, plane-access, train-access, country food program, food security, MOFI and SEFI. An overall household measure of food insecurity was obtained as well as separate adult and child measures. For both adults and children, two or more affirmative responses indicated food insecurity, which was considered to be moderate (MOFI) unless it was above five affirmative responses for children and six affirmative responses for adults than it was considered to be severe (SEFI). If the household was food insecure for either adults or children the household was considered to be food insecure.

6. Participatory video recorded community peoples' stories in communities and produced an educational video based on repeated showings in community gatherings and revisions based on feedback. The quotes provided in this text are those

identified as important themes by people during community showings.

7. Observation and tours with community members of food activities.Detailed descriptions of these are available in Thompson et al. (2010).

FINDINGS

The findings are organized into four sections to reflect the key areas that arose from the research: (i) the importance of country foods to food sovereignty; (ii) factors impacting food sovereignty; (iii) food security rates in northern Manitoba; and (iv) CED and food sovereignty.

1. The Importance of Country Foods to Food Sovereignty in Northern Manitoba

Fishing, hunting, gathering and gardening in Aboriginal communities were the traditional sources of food. A female Elder reported how self-sufficient and healthy they were in the past:

> Growing up as a child, my father and mother did a lot of gardening, and so did my grandparents ... that's what we grew up on, and we were healthy! ... Dad did a lot of fishing and trapping and hunting, it was the way to feed the family ... muskrat, beaver, ducks, chickens, moose, whatever he could get, and that's what we grew up on, and we were healthy!

When a family gathered local food everyone in the focus group stated that the whole family played a part: "We would have the involvement of children being taught how to cut the meat to prepare the fish. It was a total family involvement." Not only Elders lived a subsistence diet but many middle age people did as children. One male of forty years old told us his story of growing up on the trap line:

> I lived most of the time on the trap line — six months out of the year we were taken to the trap line. My mother and father had their garden on the trap line. Majority of the time [we] didn't buy anything from the store, just flour and salt and little odd items that she [my mother] needed.... Most of the things she grew on her own, in our garden. We ate muskrat, we ate beaver, we ate moose meat and

fish. At lunch and at dinner — it varied from one wild produce to another.

Almost every community person from Brochet in the high north to the most southern community studied, Berens River First Nation, remarked that people were self-sufficient from gardening, fishing, gathering and/or hunting. According to in depth interviews, the door-to-door survey and a focus group of 25 community people from 14 communities, roughly 20% to 80% of the families in communities fish and/or hunt, depending on the community. Gardening was not as widespread, about 5 to 10%, although most people said their grandparents gardened most said they personally did not or had only started recently within the last few years.

As part of the focus group, seasonal calendars of food procurement were carried out by 25 people from 14 communities in five groups. These calendars showed that many local foods are still harvested. See Figures 3 and 4. The five seasonal calendars all had moose, ducks, geese, ice-fishing, muskrats, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, sturgeon and other diverse fishes, and rabbits. More than one calendar listed collecting medicinal herbs, caribou, bear and cranberries. Garden foods harvested included: potatoes, corn, pumpkins, cucumber, and squash. Although nobody reported harvesting wild rice in their community, as it was not native to northern Manitoba or Saskatchewan, participants were aware that First Nations in northern Saskatchewan make millions from planting and harvesting it. The seasonal calendar done by four community people from Red Sucker Lake First Nation (Figure 3) included when the winter road opened in February with mention of Kentucky Fried Chicken, pizza and shopping in Thompson and Norway House.

Many people lamented that young people were no longer hunting, fishing, and doing traditional activities to the same extent. A woman from South Indian Lake (SIL) stated: "My big wish would be to see our young people doing the traditional ways of preparing meat and hunting, gardening and berry picking — everything to do with our food chain in the north." As part of the participatory video, past Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and present day chief of Grand Rapids Ovide Mercredi was interviewed. He described how the treaty rights stipu-

FIGURE 3
Seasonal Calendar of Community Members from Red Sucker Lake First Nation, a Plane Access Community, with Timing of Winter Road Opening Impacted by Climated Change

WINTER:
Caribou, Rabbit, Moose, Ice Fishing, Beaver. Winter road access allows access to cheaper retail food from Winnipeg, pizza, fried chicken, shipping bulky garden materials, etc.

FALL:
Moose, Fish, Beaver, Cranberries. At this time people depend more on retail food but have no choices, only expensive food from Northern Store.

SPRING:
Geese, Ducks, Ice Fishing, Cranberries, Muskrat, Beaver. Gardening starts with limited access to equipment & plants.

SUMMER:
Fish, Wild berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, etc.), Garden vegetables (peas, lettuce, potatoes, etc.).

FIGURE 4
Seasonal Calendar of Community Members from Thicket-Portage and Leaf Rapids

WINTER:
Caribou, Ptarmigan, Moose, Ice Fishing.

FALL:
Seneca Root, Moose, Elk, Caribou, Deer, Duck, Red Top Mushrooms, Geese, Whitefish, Wild Grouse, Rabbit, Hazelnut.

SPRING:
Ice Fishing, Bear, Sturgeon, Mullets, Muskrats, Beaver, Morel mushrooms. Gardening starts.

SUMMER:
Fish (pike, etc.), Wild and planted berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, etc.), Garden vegetables (peas, beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, etc.).

late food sovereignty with agriculture and hunting and fishing clauses that outline funding supports for sustainable livelihoods and food security:

> Part of the problem with the treaty rights is that the federal government has abandoned its obligations. They have been hoping for the past century that we have forgotten about them. But we have not forgotten about them. Including the responsibility of the crown to get us involved in agriculture. We have a treaty right to agriculture.
>
> When it comes to the idea of food sovereignty we do have that as treaty people. What is an obstacle is the perception that the treaty rights cannot be used for commercial purposes. These are the old ideas that we have to break down and destroy. These are not only curtailing our treaty rights but also restricting the sharing of that food with other communities.

These treaties were meant to ensure access to sustainable livelihoods and country foods but a number of factors were identified in interviews as undermining this food sovereignty.

2. Factors Undermining Food Sovereignty

The ability of northern people to live off the land and be self-sufficient was compromised by development, according to many interviews, including one government representative:

> Historically people lived off the land but with development, the ability of land to support a livelihood has been altered. For example, commercial fishing is less economically viable then it used to be. People are looking at ways to protect their natural food sources.

Many people in SIL First Nation (FN) and other communities discussed how fluctuating water levels, particularly the levels during spawning season, decimated fish populations. Fishermen and their wives from SIL told how forty nets were now needed to get the same amount of fish as with four net, prior to the Manitoba Hydro damming. The Nelson River flows faster and the opposite way due to damming, with unnatural fluctuations based on a Manitoba Hydro regulated control structure. After the relocation of SIL due to the flood, the quantity and quality of SIL fish fell and were no longer considered the highest grade for the best price. A SIL woman explains how the relocation and environmental changes from damming impacted their food security and livelihoods

> The flooding of the lake really affected us. It affects our food chain and everything that we get off the land. It really damaged a lot of our hunting areas and our fishing areas and even our berry picking areas. It's a terrible thing to live with on a day-to-day basis.

Many northern communities are impacted by water level regulation. Other impacts of development include logging and mining. A fisherman from Berens River complained about logging ruining fish spawning grounds: he connected the lack of habitat protection programs and development with the demise of many fisheries:

> We used to have jumbos that big [three feet long]. We don't have northern pike anymore in Lake Winnipeg. We don't have the white fish anymore. There are no habitat programs. Nothing at all in the north. You have some at the south end of Lake Winnipeg, but nothing in the north. It's like they forgot about us people in the north."

Not only is the water flow impacted and regulated by hydro damming, the fish market is regulated and controlled by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC). Fisherman from SIL, Brochet, the four Island Lake communities blamed this FFMC monopoly, which sets prices too low for northern fisherman to make a living with the high cost of gas for boats and high freight costs there. To make an income most fishermen reported that they had to dump three quarters of the fish that come up in the net, which are non pickerel, as otherwise the fuel costs would be too high to haul this amount of fish that has no market value. Fishermen often live hand to mouth and can often not afford the money to put gas in their boat to fish and young fishermen cannot buy the nets, motor and boat required to fish. Without a vendor's license in these communities, commercial fishermen must export their fish south, typically to the FFCM's Transcona fish processing plant, near Winnipeg, to be processed and graded. In the mid 1970s with the opening of the large FFCM processing

plant, the local fish processing plants in most communities closed, which took jobs out of the communities and increased freight costs as the more weighty whole fish on ice was shipped.

The day-to-day government regulation's impact on country foods extends to their use for sustenance. For example, after videotaping an ice fishing net being put in place by a community member for local sustenance in Garden Hill it was pulled up later that same day and confiscated by Manitoba Conservation. Manitoba Conservation has jurisdiction of all waterways in Manitoba including those adjacent to First Nation reserves. Country foods use is also highly regulated. During a feast in the school, the cooks explained that public health officers would not allow them to cook wild foods for any feast or for school lunches. Stories were shared about how the public health inspector visits several times a month and how he threatens to shut the school kitchen down if he does not find boxes to show meat and fish were inspected and provided by the market. With so many youth with diabetes needing their lunch, the cooks felt they could not risk being shut down and fined. They explained how they would have preferred to serve moose stew or other wild game and fish to extend their limited budget and maintain culture but they were not allowed to. The cooks felt that the school lunch programs and feasts suffer from their limited budget: students and teachers mentioned being served a lot of high carbohydrate foods, like macaroni and spaghetti.

A further regulatory aspect of wild meat is it cannot be sold to recover costs of hunting and trapping. Community people complained about the high cost of getting country foods, for buying gas and boats or getting to trap lines are so far away from their residence that they require air transportation. These costs cannot be recovered, as wild game cannot be sold and the fur trade has been decimated by animal right campaigns. A woman explained that she was lucky that she could afford a plane to visit her trap line as she and her husband are employed, otherwise she could not. It costs her more than a thousand dollars to get to her trap line and back with game. Many Island Lake trap lines are in Ontario, hundreds of miles away from home. A community health worker stated: "High unemployment and corresponding rates of poverty not only make it more difficult to purchase nutritious foods, it also makes it much more difficult to get out on the land to harvest wild foods." Therefore both regulation and development are having a large impact on the availability and use of country foods as well as food security.

3. Food Security in Northern Manitoba's Aboriginal Communities

The survey (n=534) found that three out of four homes (75%) in northern Manitoba were food insecure, with either an adult and/or child experiencing food insecurity in each of these households. Only one-quarter (25%) of homes were food secure for both children and adults in northern Manitoba. Figure 5 shows that one-third of homes (33%) experienced SEFI while more than two in every five households (42%) experienced MOFI. Compared to overall household rates, the children's household food security rate is slightly better at 42% with 34% SEFI and 24% MOFI food insecure for a total of 58%.

Household food security rates vary dramatically across the 14 northern Manitoba communities. Household food insecurity (severe and moderate) rates were lowest in Nelson House FN (47%), which community members attributed to their country food program, and highest in SIL FN (100%) as shown in Figure 6. The

FIGURE 5
Household Food Security Status of Households in Northern Manitoba Aboriginal Communities Based on Sample of 534 Households in 14 Communities

Severely Food Insecure (Either or Both Adult and Child) 33%=/-1.7%

Food Secure (Both Adult and Child) 25% +/-2.4%

Moderately Food Insecure (Either or Both Adult and Child and neither Severe) 42%+/-2.0
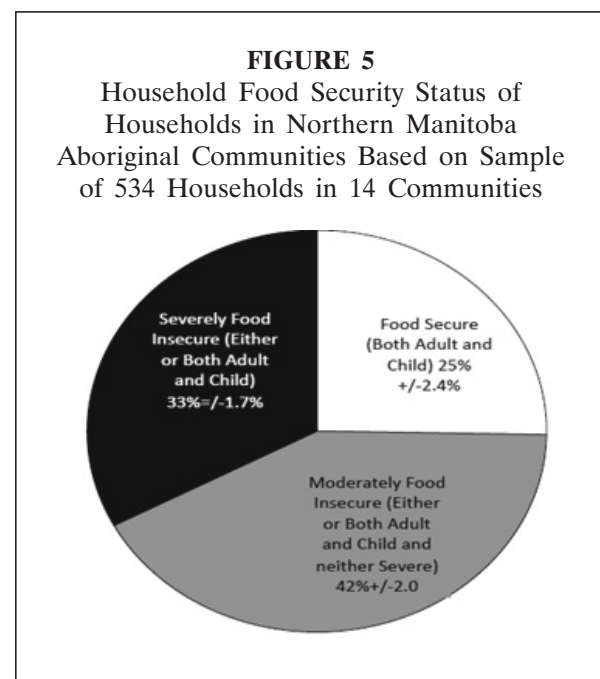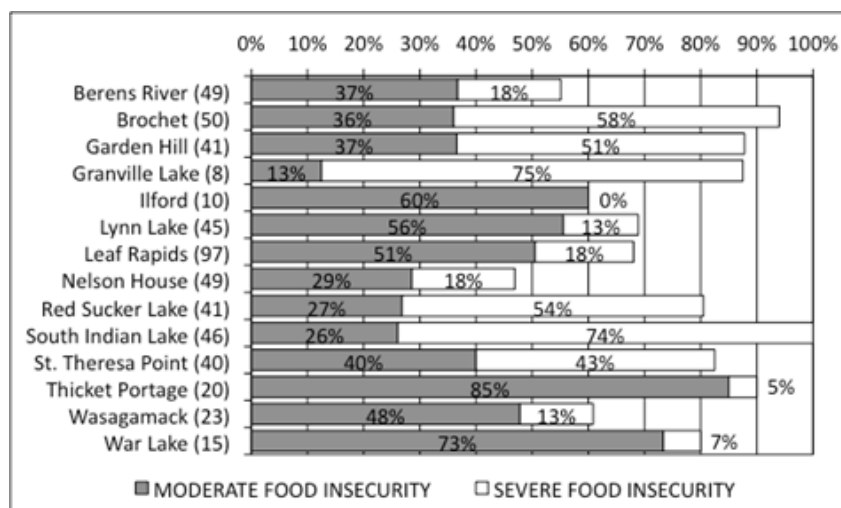
FIGURE 6
Rate of Household Food Insecurity in 14 Northern Manitoba Communities[1]

[1] Numbers in brackets represent the sample size of households interviewed (Community's Access to Urban Centres and Food Insecurity Rates)

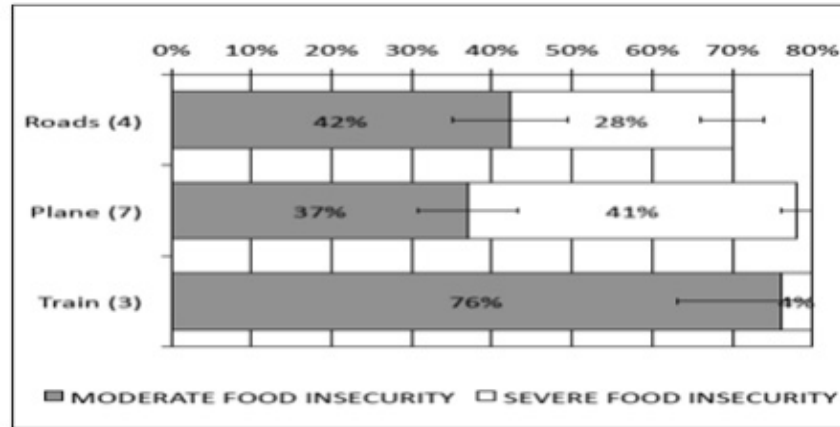country food program was significantly related to improved food security (χ^2 = 28.593, d.f. 2, p < 0.001). The highest rates of food insecurity were typically, with the exception of SIL, in plane access communities with overall household insecurity rate in Brochet at 94%, Garden Hill at 88%, Granville Lake at 88%, RSL at 81% and STP at 83%. All of these communities had SEFI rates above 50%, except STP. Small sample sizes in Granville Lake, Ilford, Thicket Portage and War Lake FN warrant caution in interpreting results but reflect the small number of households in these communities, with a census survey being obtained in some of these communities.

The overall household food insecurity rate of communities accessible by train and plane are similar, with slightly higher rates for communities accessible by train, however, the degree of food security is very different. Only 4% of those in train access communities are SEFI whereas it is roughly ten times that rate (41%) for those in plane access communities, as shown in Figure 7. Households in communities without road access had ten percent higher food insecurity (79%), than those with road access (69%)

for adults. Children's household food insecurity rates increased to 66% in communities without roads, which is 20% higher than communities with roads (46%).

Access (train, road or plane) was significantly related to food security rates (secure, MOFI or SEFI) (χ^2 (4) = 38.919, p < 0.001). Food security rates for households in communities with road access were 30.4% compared to 21.9% for plane access only and 20.0% for train access only. Overall MOFI household rates for communities were 41.8% for road access compared to 35.5% for plane access only and 75.6% for train access only. Severely food insecure households accounted for 42.6% of the households in plane access communities compared to 27.8% for road access and 4.4% for train access only. The likelihood of household members experiencing SEFI increased when the only access to communities is plane (r = 0.155, p < 0.001, 2-tailed). Households having train access were more likely to be MOFI (χ^2 (1) = 23.077, p < 0.000) but less likely to be SEFI (χ^2 (1) = 18.083, p < 0.000) and food security status was not significantly different than that of other com-

FIGURE 7
Comparing Community Food Security Rates for Households (Children and Adults)
by Their Access to Roads, Train or Plane

	0%	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	60%	70%	80%
Roads (4)			42%			28%			
Plane (7)			37%			41%			
Train (3)				76%					1%

■ MODERATE FOOD INSECURITY □ SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY

munities. The need for CED programming is large with the "food access crisis" finding of a 75% food insecurity rate across Northern Manitoba and even higher rates in communities without road access. Could CED meet this challenge to reduce food insecurity?

4. Food-related Community Economic Development Programs

A focus group of people from the 14 communities undertook an exercise to prioritize community food CED projects. This exercise showed that the highest priorities for food CED were: (i) helping people get access to boats/motors, skidoos or gas to support trapping and hunting; (ii) starting community gardens; (iii) increasing access to the healthy and affordable food in stores; (iv) holding traditional foods preparation classes that included hands-on teachings of cultural food harvesting; (v) getting policy makers and community members to see food security as an overall well-being issue; (vi) having community buying or shopping excursions; and (vii) training on chicken and livestock production. The priorities considered the easiest to accomplish were cooking classes and gardening with schools, which are occurring in many communities. The items considered the most difficult

to accomplish were changing healthy food access at the store, getting support for hunting, fishing, trapping as well as chicken and livestock production for local sustenance.

The CED programs identified by community visits and interviews include many of the priorities identified in the list above. Three programs are divided into the following sections: (i) the importance of food buying clubs in northern Manitoba: (ii) the Nelson House Country Foods Program; and (iii) the Northern Healthy Food Initiative.

The Importance of Food Buying Clubs in Northern Manitoba

Food buying clubs and individual food mail provide an alternative to the corporate monopoly in northern communities, allowing the buying of food in bulk at reduced prices. Food buying clubs exist in many fly-in communities and often use a federal program, which helps subsidize the hefty freight charges to fly food into fly-in communities. In fly-in communities all retail goods must be flown in, except for the few weeks when the winter-roads allow trucks and cars to travel on the frozen lakes at the very reduced speed of 15 km/h. With climate change, the duration of the winter road is increasingly uncertain and of shorter duration. A federal government program

previously called the "Food Mail Program" and now called "Nutrition North Canada" (effective April 1, 2011) subsidizes freight of food flown into commercial stores and to individuals in plane access communities.

Bulk food packages are ordered from Winnipeg stores by social assistance workers in the four Island Lake First Nation communities, to ensure healthier foods and better prices for their clients. For example, in St. Theresa Point First Nation the social assistance worker reported ordering about $60,000/month of mainly meat packs, which comes off as a deduction from the client's next social assistance cheque. This effort is necessary to stretch the small food budget welfare recipients receive. The social assistance office takes a financial risk as if the client has been cut off social assistance they cannot recoup the cost.

Also many schools serve a lunch or snack program to ensure children have something to eat and buy in bulk to ensure better pricing. For example, the principal of the school at Garden Hill orders in bulk ($1200/month) from Winnipeg stores to provide a healthy lunch and snack program that the students each pay $15.00 per month for. Other school lunch programs shop at the local store rather than using Food Mail. For example, the cooks at the high school in St. Theresa report that typically they do not have funding far enough in advance to order from Winnipeg as it takes time to get the food and so have to shop at the Northern Store there.

Northern Stores are not local co-operatives or locally owned but are the latest reincarnation of the Hudson Bay Corporation. A typical store is 7,500 square feet in size and offers food, family apparel, housewares, appliances, outdoor products and special services like cheque cashing, catalogue ordering, money transfers and fast food outlets but the cost and quality of food is often inadequate to support healthy dietary choices. Thirteen of the 14 communities studied have one store which stocks mainly high-calorie, high-fat, low-nutrient food, supplying little in the way of fruits and vegetables or no store. Berens River FN is the only fly-in community that has not one but three grocery stores, as this more southern community has a ferryboat to ship food at low cost. Although stores in many fly-in communities in northern Manitoba benefit from this government subsidy they do not have to pass it

along to the consumer and often do not, according to our price survey. A review of the price transfer to consumer was recognized as needed for the new program, which may result in better pricing. Although food mail subsidizes freight of food to commercial stores in fly-in communities, food prices remain high. A food costing survey of 18 stores in northern Manitoba found that fruit and vegetables were two and three times higher in the northern communities as in southern communities and much higher in fly-in communities than even the other northern communities. According to one community member, the quality and selection of food items in the Island Lake region stores is inadequate: "The existing Northern Stores selection is very limited and costly. After shipping, the produce is often damaged".

To add to the high cost of buying food — the food store is often located in a hard to reach location. For example both at Garden Hill First Nation and Wasagamack, the Northern Store is on an island that requires you use multiple modes of transportation to get there: a boat in the summer, car or skidoo during winter road and skidoo or helicopter in spring and fall during ice break-up. A large part of people's food budget either goes to taxi fees to get across by boat, skidoo or car or if they have a car or skidoo, to gas, which is about $0.50 higher per litre in these communities, to reach the store.

A number of communities, including Thicket-Portage, Ilford and War Lake FN, along the Bayline Railroad have no grocery store or all-weather roads. They also lack a commuter train travel to Thompson to get groceries takes several days. Travel for hotels and travel for these trips costs about $250. Community members discussed how the conductor used to sell vegetables from market gardens in Cormorant, Thicket-Portage and other places along the railroad — all the way to Churchill. Community members would like to see a boxcar store again. Granville Lake is not on the Bayline Railroad but faces the same problem of having no store and no road. People from Granville Lake must use winter roads or a boat to reach a food store that is more than an hour boat ride away. To help residents of Granville Lake get healthy food boxes, members of the Leaf Rapids Co-op are recommending that their store sell healthy food boxes to Granville Lake, and to other communi-

ties with unaffordable food prices such as South Indian Lake. Prices at Leaf Rapids and Lynn Lake Co-op are slightly lower than South Indian Lake for many healthy foods.

Nelson House Country Food Program

With financial support from the Nelson House Trust Office through the Northern Flood Implementation Agreement, a wild food distribution program was started on the NCN reserve called the "Nelson House Country Food Program". The Nelson House Country Food Program is an innovative project that provides community members with access to healthy foods, while creating jobs and building community. The program employs seven local people including a program coordinator, a technician, and five workers who hunt and fish year-round. The food brought in by the workers is distributed for free among community members. The food program prioritizes sharing the food with elders, the sick, and low-income, single-parent families. Ron Spence, a councilor for NCN, that was interviewed for the participatory video described the program. "Country foods is a program that is created by the community. Every community, northern community, Aboriginal community does what we do. Our culture is sharing, giving...." Charlie Hart, the past Program Coordinator for the Nelson House Country foods program describes what a great success the country foods program is: "We are providing food to 1500 people out of 2500 [people in the community] and all of them are happy getting fresh meat and fish. It's a good way to maintain traditional culture in a healthy manner and others should try to implement that too." This program deeply connects traditional with the school and other organizations. This program, according to a community member: "Applying the culture and traditional aspect, like the smoking of fish and meat.... We promote the teaching of cultural values and traditional skills."

As a past Manitoba Conservation officer, Ron Spence was very aware of the need for wildlife conservation, he stated: "With the growing human population and industry we have to protect our own resources. By doing that we can regulate and govern ourselves internally and locally and still work with [Manitoba] Conservation. They are a part of setting up the policies." As part of this food program, NCN recently re-

established caribou near their reserve to enhance conservation. He goes further to say; "If we were government funded then we'd be regulated. There would be a lot of things we couldn't do. That is why we are keeping this internally and locally operated."

NCN has a country food processing centre, to cut the meat and freezers to store it in. The workers keep track of the foods and weigh them to ensure all reporting requirements are observed.

Although country food harvesting and sharing occurs in every northern Aboriginal community, no other community visited has infrastructure or funding to support an organized distribution system for hunting or fishing or support hunters or fisher outfitting. However, some Island Lake communities lend out ice fishing nets to community members. An ice fishing net can each feed 20 families or about 150 to 200 people. The nets were purchased through the health centre from Manitoba's Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI) in Garden Hill for families but also to engage the school in teaching about country foods. The Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI) provides $2 per person in the community if the health centre submits a community CDPI action plan to prevent chronic disease through healthy activities and eating. CDPI supports gardening initiatives and nutrition education. The funding often goes towards country feasts, which basically funds a hunter or fisher to provide for the community, as that is what the community identifies as important in their action plan. CDPI will provide support for country foods as it meets healthy, active living objectives and nutrition objectives, however, the Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI) does not provide any support for wild foods, other than freezer loans for food storage.

Northern Healthy Food Initiative

The Northern Healthy Food Initiative (NHFI), a provincial program to increase food self-sufficiency, has achieved some notable successes in its gardening, greenhouse, poultry and freezer loan projects. NHFI provides funding to NGOs to run workshops on gardening and cooking and to buy materials for community to share, including, seeds, soil amendments, rototiller and shovels for the community to share. People commented on how important it was for seeds and

plants to be provided in these communities as no nearby stores provide this material: "Definitely these folks for transportation reasons can't go to town to a plant or grocery store because of economics." Perennials were the focus of much of the outreach by NGOs in some communities: "Going to receive $1,000 worth of fruit trees through NHFI to give away. Workshops will be given on how to care for them and will encourage people to share produce." The timing of these provisions can be critical: "The gardening materials arrived last year too late, which limited the success of gardening". Some communities only recently began to benefit. Leaf Rapids, Granville Lake and Lynn Lake, for example, did not receive a rototiller or seeds until 2009 when Frontier School Division hired a gardening co-

ordinator to work out of Leaf Rapids to replace a less effective NGO.

At the community level, local capacity building varies as communities receive very different quality and quantity of programs based on what NGO they are assigned to, as shown in Table 1 with some offering only gardening and others a lot more. The most successful NGOs offered local part-time employment and built community capacity through training programs in schools or community health centres. For example, a train the trainer program was developed by the Bayline Regional Roundtable (BRRT), which provided each of their seven communities with a paid part-time agriculture technician advisor. Other NGOs did not offer this train-the-trainer model, which limits any NGO activity in their community to one or two days a year due to

TABLE 1
Programming and Materials Provided by Non-government Organizations (NGOs) in 2008 and 2009

Non-government organizations (NGOs) Northern Programming	Bayline Regional Roundtable (BRRT)	Northern Association of Community Council (NACC)	Frontier School Division (FSD)	Four Arrows Regional Health Authority (FARHA)	Food Matters Manitoba
Gardening Programs for Youth			+		
Supportive Programs for Hunting					
Train the Trainer Workshop for Agriculture Technician Advisors	+				
Newsletters		+	+		+
Conference Presentations	+	+	+	+	+
Walk-In Community Refrigerator				+	
Poultry Production Kits	+				
Paid Local Agriculture Technician	+				
Provide Plastic for Greenhouse	+				
Strong network in their northern communities around food	+		+	+	
Organize Northern Harvest Forum	+				
Freezer Loans	+			+	
Provide Gardening Materials	+	+	+	+	
Gardening or canning workshops	+	+	+	+	
Provide Ready-Made Community Greenhouse to each community	+	+	+	+	
Seeds & greenhouse design research			+		
Build Northern Greenhouses with local northern labour	+		+	+	

+ Provide materials or expertise, assistance in this area.

TABLE 2
Gardens and Greenhouses in the Northern Manitoba Communities Studied

| Community Name | Number of Gardens and Greenhouses in 2008 | | | Number of Gardens and Greenhouses in 2009 | | | Supportive NGOs |
	Home Gardens	Community Gardens	Greenhouse	Home Gardens	Community Gardens	Greenhouse	
Barren land & Brochet	5	1	1 C	25	1	1	NACC, FSD
Garden Hill	54	0	1 (P)	30	0	1 (P)	FARHA,
Granville Lake	0	0	0	5	1	0	NACC, FSD
Lynn Lake	15	1	4	17	0	5 (4P+1C)	FSD
Leaf Rapids	15	1	3 (2P+1C)	25	1	4 (2P+2C)	NACC, FSD
Nelson House	8	0	0	3	0	0	BRRT
Red Sucker Lake	0	0	0	10	0	1 (C)	FARHA
St. Theresa Point	10	1 (C)	1 (C)	12	1 (C)	1 (C)	FARHA
South Indian Lake	5	0	0	5	0	1 (P)	FSD, NACC
Wasagamack	10	0	0	15	1 (C)	0	FARHA
Berens River	9	1	0	14	1	0	NACC
Cormorant	10	0	0	15	0	1 (P)	NACC
Ilford	0	0	0	0	0	0	BRRT
Thicket Portage	5	0	0	5	0	0	BRRT
War Lake	0	0	1 (P)	0	0	1 (P)	BRRT
TOTAL	146	5	10	181	6	16	

Note: These numbers were gleaned by touring communities and discussions with community members and NGOs in 2009.

Legend: P=personally owned, C=run by school or nursing station or other community institution

difficult logistics, limited funding and lack of experience with outreach and agriculture in the north. The least effective NGOs were based in Winnipeg without a good network in the north and only $30,000/year funding for both staff and travel, which severely limited the hands-on activities of these NGOs. This may explain why in a number of communities the local people see the NGOs as distant government rather than their community representatives, due to a lack of NGO involvement at the community level. For example, some community members called NGOs "paper shufflers in Winnipeg who come to the north for photo opportunities rather than to help, and leave the same day".

With no greenhouses, freezers or gardening tools in most communities prior to NHFI, the NHFI gardening inputs have resulted in noticeable changes and enthusiasm at the community level. Due to NHFI inputs, an increasing number of gardens are being cultivated and greenhouses built with the plastic provided. Table 2 enumerates the garden and greenhouse projects in each community studied. Although some of the 181 gardens were in existence pre-NHFI most were precipitated by NHFI provisions, with 33 started in 2009 alone. Initially only a few people were interested in gardening but then after a couple of years of NHFI, people who had never gardened started gardening: "This program has been

going on for four years, at the beginning there were a few people doing it [gardening] but because of this funding and really encouraging the idea of gardening it has skyrocketed." Not only gardens were being grown but the expertise of gardeners: "NHFI has been operating for four years and we now have a couple of local experts in gardening.... I can see progress."

In most communities, gardening programs were taken up by the school or health centre and gardens through the homes of employees, students, relatives and friends. A Frontier School Division conference, funded by NHFI, has promoted gardening to teachers and youth since 2007. Teachers expressed their support for gardening at school and in the community but would like more assistance, as gardening work was very time and resource intensive. In many communities, gardening was promoted by the health center with competitions, community gardens or workshops providing an opportunity to distribute gardening supplies. For example, the health centre at St. Theresa Point had a competition between staff for the best row in their community garden to get all employees involved.

As well as being popular, gardening was reported to be increasing community cohesiveness, community capacity and healing. One community member described its popularity: "The program is really popular in the communities.... I think that it brings a lot of community development." The process of gardening is also described as healing and motivating community economic development: "Doing gardening is very healing for the community ... it gets people motivated and working together" A health worker describes the impact of Island Lake training program where Elders taught youth about gardening: "One of our communities invested employment dollars to help young people, youth to learn how to do gardens ... taught by the Elders ... to have the youth and the Elders interact. Because we're always being told that our teachings come from the Elders." Educating youth about gardening was reported to have three benefits: bonding between youth and elders, promotion of healthy living, and giving youth a constructive pastime.

NHFI funding also assisted the freezer distribution and food-preservation training, recognizing that food preservation is an important element in the food system. The freezer program allowed the preservation of seasonally produced and harvested vegetables, berries, wild meat and fish. This program increased the ability of community members to store country foods, according to many community members including one person who stated, "In the freezer loan program, families were taught how to keep food for winter that they caught in summer". In the beginning the freezer loan program received seed funding of about $700,000 from Science Technology Energy and Mines (STEM). This freezer loan program is set up as a revolving, self-financing fund within each community: after receiving a freezer, participants in the program make small monthly payments to replenish the fund, which allows for additional community members to participate in the program. A social assistant recipient would pay $250 with the other $250 covered by the special needs social assistance fund. This program has served a number of remote communities (e.g., Oxford House, Brochet, St. Theresa Point, SayisiDene, Northlands FN, Shamattawa and Wasagamack) where concerns for food security are great. There remain a number of remote communities that have not benefited from loans. BRRT writes "This March 2008 we purchased 56 more for purchase by families in BRRT road accessible communities. We also purchased the financial program from our bank to allow us to make collections directly through a pre-authorized debiting process, which should improve both the ease and success of repayments" (BRRT, 2009: 4).

The NHFI team has accomplished a lot with a little funding according to most interviews with the NHFI government team. Almost all NHFI team members in interviews and focus groups commented on the initial "small" or "shoe-string" NHFI budget and its steady growth year to year with comments that included: "Despite its small size, NHFI has been effective at making change. Its budget is pretty modest at $750,000, which is small in government terms. Proud of the difference it is making. We took this $750,000 and multiplied it with in-kind investment. Even at $750,000 per annum budget the NHFI budget is considered modest but effective."

However, lack of multi-year and shoe-string funding is not seen as sustainable by others. NGOs were critical about the ad hoc funding that was spread unsustainably thin:

Sprinkling small grants perhaps $5,000 to $10,000 across many communities does not work well in First Nations for two reasons. One — continuity of funding is essential to slowly implement change. And two — insufficiency of funding considering the high prices.

Another NGO member commented about the lack of multi-year funding creating uncertainty: "Sustainability is a concern at the community level.... NGOs don't know how long the funding will continue." Sustainability of funding is essential to retain NGO staff, which is needed to build expertise and trust in communities. In the words of another NGO representative: "Unstable funding, a lack of continuity, etc. has led to a great deal of turnover of good staff at the regional project level." Ensuring continuity of

funding for NGOs or alternatively a community based organizations is required for sustainability.

DISCUSSION

There are many factors that impact food security that were identified, which are shown in Figure 8. A statistically significant relationship was found between the following factors: access route (e.g., by road, rail or plane) and food based CED, specifically country food programs. Qualitative research provided further findings. Many food access factors differ from those identified in the urban food deserts literature, considering the large role of country foods in Aboriginal and transportation issues that is not limited to distance by road network to the retail store. Factors impacting retail food access in remote com-

FIGURE 8
Aboriginal Food Access Model: Factors Influencing Food Access, Security and Sovereignty in Communities
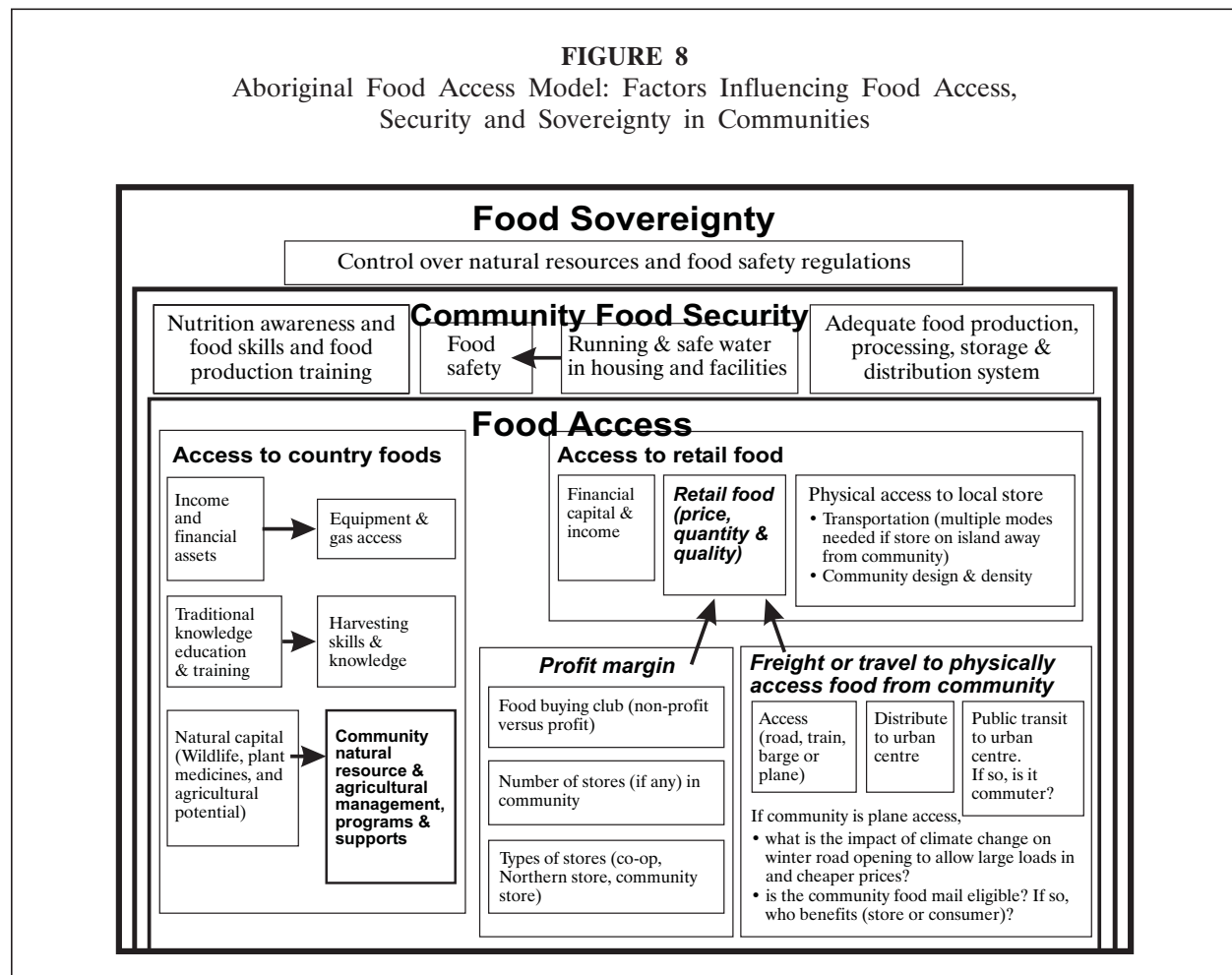
munities also include getting the food to the community, which incurs large freight costs for long distance travel over gravel roads, winter roads or no roads, the phenomenon of the island store reachable only by boat or skidoo, freight subsidies for retail food but not country foods, availability of public transit to the community, and climate change reducing winter road access. Factors impacting country foods was related to food sovereignty including external regulatory regimes, outside development destroying habitat, policies and ecosystems, as well as climate change making the winter roads unreliable.

Country foods, including caribou, moose meat, berries and fish, are an important component of food security in Aboriginal and northern communities. These country foods contribute to a healthy diet and can be supplied independent of southern production, distribution and economic systems. Community people see the revival of hunting, trapping, fishing and gathering activities as greatly needed to improve the food security status of northern communities and to foster cultural pride and food sovereignty. The Nelson House Country Foods Program is related to statistically significant better household food security and provides a model that could be replicated in other communities but funding is needed as most communities cannot afford to employ workers or to buy community freezers. While the NHFI freezer loan provides some household storage ability, access to country foods requires further support to outfit hunters and fisher people with boats or skidoos and other necessary equipment and gas, as many people cannot afford the gas to go out on the land. Farmers but not fisher s or hunters receive a subsidy for gas shows a bias towards agrarian societies. The larger issue that restrict country foods are the policy and regulatory barriers including public health restrictions that do not allow wild fish or meat to be sold in local restaurants or stores or even provided free to public facilities (i.e., hospital, health centre, schools, band) for institutional or public use as it has not been processed in a federal food facility, as no federal food facility exists in northern Manitoba. Also, regulations curtailing any sale of wild meat or fish without a vendors' license means that few people can afford to go hunting and fishing.

Food buying clubs and NHFI are also improving food access. Bulk food buying ensures school children have food to eat and extends people's incomes. By promoting gardening activities, NHFI is improving access to healthy, fresh and affordable food. Increased food security from gardening in the north will take time and increased inputs and is not the only benefit of the gardening programs. Contributing to the popularity of gardening projects is their community-building and active living aspects.

The qualitative data collected with communities allowed for the determination of a sustainable livelihoods framework and food sovereignty model for Aboriginal communities in north Manitoba based on the livelihoods framework developed by DFID (2008), which considers assets, vulnerability context, structures, processes and livelihoods. Assets for northern Aboriginal Manitoba communities were limited in most categories. Human capital is poor as most community members have low education levels, limited technological abilities, higher rates of chronic diseases, while at the same time having rich traditional teachings held by Elders. Social capital has many positives in the bonding category with strong links with family and friends and traditions of reciprocal exchange but these have been eroded by residential school, reserve settlements and non-Aboriginal education and political systems. As well, few bridging aspects exist to influence Canadian society. Financial capital is very low as the great majority of northern Manitoba people do not have jobs, with high chronic structural unemployment but high costs for food and fuel. On First Nation reserve, community members do not own the land, which is the property of the crown, or owns the government housing they reside in. Without this collateral, First Nation's people have limited credit ratings. Physical capital is very low with most communities having gravel roads, no hospitals, and no food production facilities. However, infrastructure in Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (ANA) communities is slightly better as they have paved roads, infrastructure for wharfs, greenhouses and transportation access. For example, public Greyhound buses run to ANA communities but bypass First Nation communities, dropping Nelson House community member off on the highway intersection for their community 20 km away from their reserve. Although natural assets are high with many communities having abundant fisheries, forests and non-timber products, communi-

FIGURE 9
An Aboriginal Food Sovereignty and Sustainable Livelihood Model
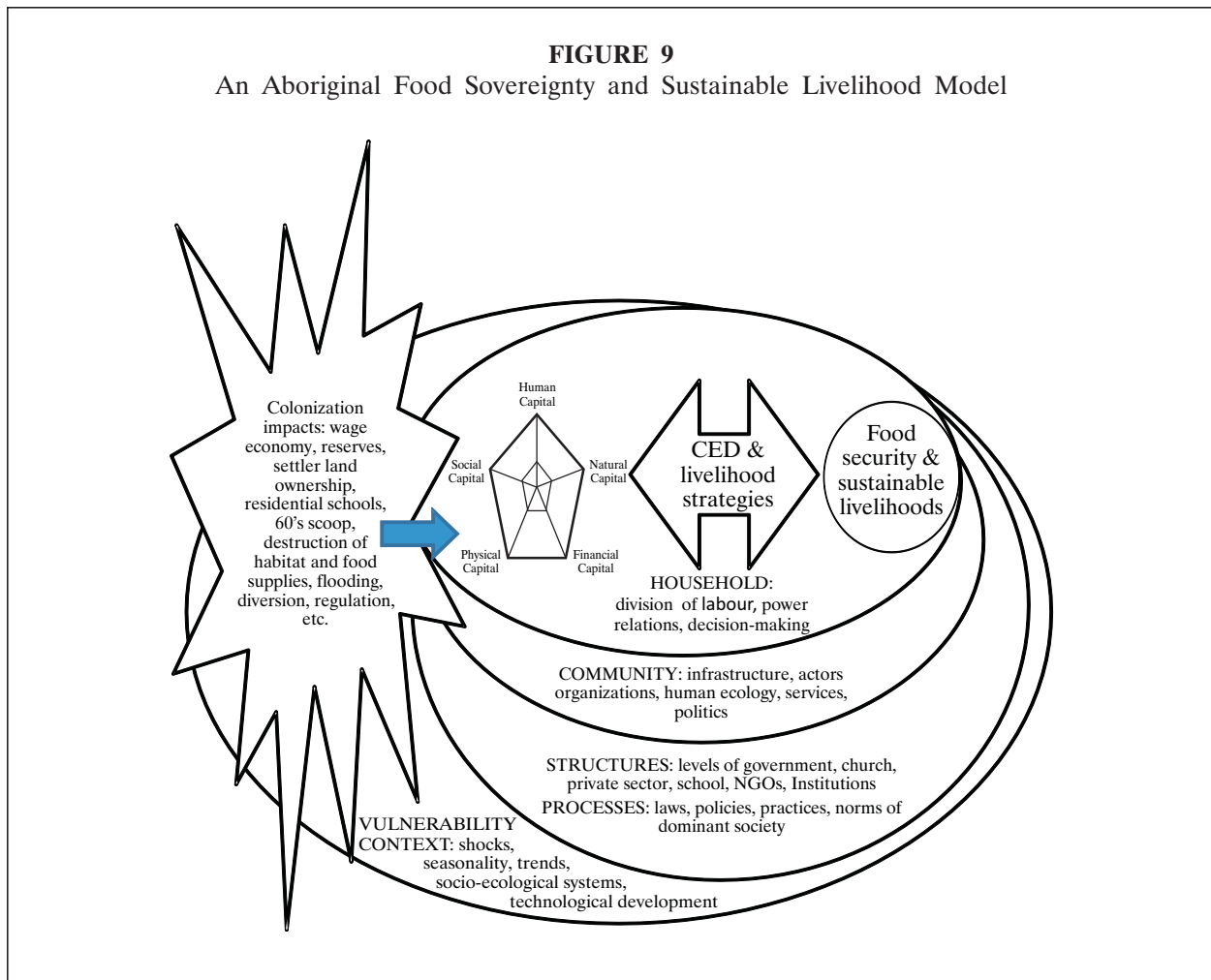
ties in remote areas have no markets and have no regulatory role to govern the resources in their territory. This review found an overwhelming impact of Canadian government policy on Aboriginal communities despite their remote physical locality.

The Food sovereignty and sustainable livelihoods model in Figure 9 shows the large impact of government on food security and sustainable livelihoods in Aboriginal communities. The government's colonial social and environmental policies have created a large vulnerability context that is made larger by climate change. Today's structures (government, business, church, educational system, etc) and processes (policies, laws, practices, etc) act counter to remote communities' food sovereignty to reinforce colonialism

and vulnerability. For example, the barriers to country foods providing food security in northern Manitoba are many and include: regulations related to the sale of wild foods; lack of infrastructure for the processing of wild foods for local and non-local markets; lack of programs to support the preservation of fish spawning grounds and moose and caribou calving or other wildlife habitat; lack of wharfs for commercial fishers in northern Manitoba; the high cost of gas in northern Manitoba due to freight costs, which is unsubsidized unlike for agricultural producers; high cost of equipment (boat, skidoo, rifle, nets, traps); and, the lack of training in public education programs on hunting, fishing, berry picking and medicines or even Aboriginal culture.

CONCLUSION

Community economic development is putting some food on the table in northern Manitoba where it is needed most due to high food prices and low incomes. But much more is needed. Remote communities are "food deserts", as they lack a supermarket offering fruits and vegetables at affordable prices. Regulation of country foods and the outfitting costs to obtain them make these inaccessible. As poor quality food environments amplify individual risk factors for diabetes and obesity the literature on food deserts help explain many inequalities in health and nutritional outcomes in northern Aboriginal communities. However, remote food deserts have many factors limiting food access not found in the food deserts literature, including difficult logistics to get food to communities [e.g. foods to plane access communities are subject to air freight charges or uncertain travel on winter roads that operate for only a few weeks or not at all with climate change] and the large role of country foods, despite environmental impacts and regulatory regimes that restrict their use. This Aboriginal food access model was useful to show the complex nature of accessing food in remote communities, as well as to show that both country foods and retail food access can be impacted by CED to improve food access at a variety of points.

By all accounts, food sovereignty existed in the recent past in northern Manitoba. Northern communities were self-sufficient a generation ago but are no longer due to colonial factors including environmental change, school system and market forces impacting sustainable livelihoods, assets and food security. As food sovereignty is a treaty right, high rates of food insecurity at 75% average and 100% in one community contravene these treaty rights. Government policy is counter to remote communities' food sovereignty thereby reinforcing colonialism, food insecurity and vulnerability. The barriers to country foods providing food security in northern Manitoba must be dismantled and CED supports put in place. Currently, for food to be either given to public, through a feast, school or hospital, or sold locally, meat and fish must be inspected in a federal food facility according to the Manitoba Public Health Act's Food and Food Handling Establishment Regulations, which

is unavailable in northern Manitoba. Schools presently are restricted from serving local fish or meat in their lunch or breakfast programs, but are trying through school lunches and bulk buying to provide a healthy, balanced lunch. Other regulations limiting the local sale of both wild meats and fish, even when caught by commercial fishermen and/or treaty people need to be reviewed, as without money people cannot afford to hunt and fish.

An Aboriginal food sovereignty model was developed that shows how CED is needed to counteract the large vulnerability context that is destroying sustainable livelihoods. Food related CED is needed for food security and to move to food sovereignty but this should be part of a broader CED plan that considers underdevelopment in this region and the importance of country foods and sustainable livelihoods. Road access was found to have a significant impact on food security but road access is not seen as an immediate or complete solution, as illustrated by SIL, which has road access but suffers from 100% food insecurity with 74% of households at a severe level according to our food security survey. SIL community people attribute their high food insecurity to their relocation due to Manitoba Hydro flooding. This flooding increased SIL's vulnerability context by ruining their commercial fishing and their subsistence economy without providing adequate infrastructure. They lack safe drinking water, without running water to many houses, food processing facilities, healthy housing, etc.

The Nelson House Country Foods Program works around all the many systems that restrict country food use to recreate sustainable livelihoods and to build traditional cultural awareness in a way that is significantly statistically related to improved food security. This program is revolutionary and connected to food sovereignty. This program should be extended and supported across northern Manitoba and Canada enhancing conservation in the same way as NCN, which may take funding inputs. This program builds community self-reliance in the midst of government regulatory regime which works against food sovereignty, traditional activities and sustainable livelihoods. Also, other CED programs were found to improve food access. Buying southern Manitoba food in bulk for schools and welfare recipients improves food access, with

a few schools employing workers part-time to prepare the school lunches and to purchase the food. However, with the restrictions on buying country foods in place this program is not building food sovereignty. As retail food is purchased, the money flows one way out of the community, without building a sustainable local food economy. If food buying clubs bought from local hunters and fishers, it would be a great first step towards addressing food sovereignty without any increase in funding required, but this would require a change in regulation.

The NHFI has achieved some notable successes, including the gardening, greenhouse, poultry production, and freezer loan projects, as well as the Veggie Adventures school programming. With no greenhouses or gardening materials in most remote communities prior to NHFI, the CED initiated by NHFI has resulted in noticeable changes and enthusiasm at the community level. However, without permanent infrastructure change and with the limited community capacity building NHFI's impact could be transitory without further funding and greater capacity building at the community level. Although there have been initial successes these are relatively small compared to the challenge of a northern food system that needs a major overhaul to reduce the high rate of food insecurity. Enhanced levels of funding, programming, networks and supports are needed to bring about sustainable change and improve food security on a population level. To help meet this challenge, NHFI needs to scale up and diversify its projects portfolio. Areas where NHFI have not made much headway include provincial/federal collaboration, prioritizing remote communities, documentation, on-going evaluation, food enterprises, and promotion or support of traditional country food. The mandate to develop food self-sufficiency requires that supports for hunting, fishing and traditional gathering of medicines and berries be funded, considering commercial enterprises and the great potential for country foods programming. Clearly the gap is large between the high rates of food insecurity and food sovereignty. Much work has to be done. Most of that work should focus on country foods to build sustainable livelihoods as well as food security. As well as food related CED, regulatory regimes, which restrict the use of country foods despite treaty

rights, have to be challenged to achieve food sovereignty.

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CULTURE AND COMMUNITY
Sustainable Community Planning in the Rolling River First Nation

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Sean Connelly
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

Sean Markey and Mark Roseland
CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

Urban, rural and First Nations communities across the country face a growing infrastructure deficit. Sustainable community planning processes provide an opportunity to address this deficit in a way that both improves the quality of life for citizens and reduces environmental impact. However, there remains a gap between planning processes infused with sustainability principles and implementation. The purpose of this article is to explore this 'implementation gap' from a First Nations perspective. First Nations communities face particular capacity barriers and opportunities to conducting innovative and integrated planning. Using data drawn from a case study of Rolling River First Nation in Manitoba, the article illustrates how the community identified cultural traditions and the land base as critical components of their planning process. Both served to build the social infrastructure that provided the necessary capacity to bridge the planning — implementation gap.

INTRODUCTION

Recent studies by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) indicate that Canadian municipalities are facing the dual problem of declining infrastructure investments and aging infrastructure, resulting in an infrastructure funding deficit that is estimated at $123 billion and growing by $2 billion each year (Mirza, 2007). The infrastructure deficit raises concerns about potential declines in overall quality of life in communities as a result of deteriorating transpor-

tation systems, water and waste systems and public services. For Canadian First Nations communities, the challenge is even greater. First Nations communities lack adequate education facilities, all weather roads, housing and over one hundred communities are under drinking water advisories (AFN, 2010).

The infrastructure deficit is further complicated by the need to integrate planning for global issues (e.g. climate change and trade agreements) into systems that are already struggling with increased infrastructure costs, dwindling natural resources, and land-use development conflicts. As a result, many communities are turning to sustainable community development as a means to integrate planning priorities, improve public participation, leverage resources, and generate creative and practical solutions to shared economic, environmental, and social problems. However, despite adding sustainable development principles to planning and decision-making processes, few communities have succeeded in translating high-level sustainability goals and objectives into tangible projects. Barriers to implementation are many. They include a lack of connection between sustainable community development ideals and planning practices that result from the failure to mobilize support for sustainability (Berke, 2008), difficulty with merging institutional processes with grassroots initiatives (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005), jurisdictional challenges associated with First Nations governance (McNeil, 2007), and problems generating effective citizen engagement and social capital (Dale & Onyx, 2005; Rydin & Pennington, 2000). These barriers are aggravated by the tendency to focus exclusively on the environmental elements of sustainable development instead of capitalizing on the economic and social benefits of integrated decision-making (Anand & Sen, 2000).

The purpose of this paper is to address the planning–implementation gap from a First Nations community perspective. Drawing from a two-year project that investigated sustainable community planning processes, this paper relays broader findings from the project and looks specifically at lessons learned from working with the Rolling River First Nation, Manitoba, Canada. The Rolling River community is successfully navigating the multiple implementation gaps related to capacity, resources and jurisdiction to develop

a planning process that advances self-determined priorities and outlines an integrated and holistic development plan for the future. We hope that their story provides lessons for other communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, that are struggling with sustainability planning.

In the following sections we outline the conceptual underpinnings for sustainable community development and identify specific nuances of First Nations sustainability. This is followed by a presentation of our research design for the project as a whole and contextual information about the Rolling River First Nation. Finally, we present findings from the research and discuss their relevance to the discourse on advancing sustainability at the community level.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND FIRST NATIONS

Sustainable development is a concept that has achieved widespread recognition following the publication of *Our Common Future* (Brundtland, 1987). While the report galvanized and elevated attention to matters of the environment, economy, society relationship, it did little to provide direction as to the appropriate balance between sustainability on one hand, and development on the other. Despite the diverse and contested meanings attached to concepts of sustainability, they all fundamentally begin with the recognition of the mismatch between increasing human demands on the earth and the ability of finite natural systems to cope with those demands (Williams & Millington, 2004). In very broad terms, the diverse perspectives of sustainable development and related responses to environmental problems can be placed along a continuum from weak to strong sustainability (Hamstead & Quinn, 2005; Williams & Millington, 2004). Weak sustainability views the environment-economy challenge largely as an issue of supply. It prioritizes the economy and economic growth over ecosystem integrity, while seeking to meet sustainability objectives through technological efficiency. Conversely, strong sustainability challenges the material intensity of demand and views a healthy economy as fundamentally dependent upon ecosystem integrity and carrying capacity.

The variability of interpretation concerning sustainable development leads some to question the utility of the concept altogether (Robinson, 2004). If sustainable development means everything to everyone, then it ultimately means nothing and simply delays needed intervention or leads to cosmetic environmentalism. However, other researchers view the discourse surrounding sustainability as the inevitable and necessary politics of sustainable development, where societies wrestle with understanding and seek to define the specific values and priorities associated with their development (Scott et al., 2000; Newman & Dale, 2005).

An extension of the literature that seeks to apply the principles of sustainability at a manageable scale, and to localize the politics of sustainability, is found in discussions of sustainable *community* development (SCD). SCD applies the concept of sustainable development to the local or community level. The challenge facing communities is one of integration — how to integrate principles related to sustainable development, a commitment to long-term planning and specific community priorities. The Centre for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD) at Simon Fraser University uses the community capital framework as way to illustrate the need for integration and as a way of understanding and implementing sustainability (see Figure 1). The goal for SCD is to adopt strategies, structures and processes that mobilize citizens and their governments in the quantitative and qualitative improvement of all six forms of capital (human, natural, economic, physical, cultural, and social). Community mobilization serves to coordinate, balance and catalyze the values, visions and activities of various community actors through democratic processes, resulting in outcomes that strengthen all forms of capital (Roseland, 2005).

While sustainability has proven to be successful at integrating environmental and economic concerns at the local level (i.e. green jobs, eco-efficiency), it has largely failed to adequately address social justice issues (i.e. struggle for distributional and procedural equity and quality of life) (Agyeman & Evans, 2004; Jones 2008). Social and environmental justice is of critical concern for Canada's First Nations communities (Booth & Skelton, 2011a), providing a different

context within which to explore and implement sustainable community planning processes.

First Nations Context for Sustainability — Challenges

In order to fully grasp the context of sustainable community development in Canadian First Nation communities it is important to recognize that while Canada was ranked first on the UN Human Development Index (1998), calculations by the Federal government Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development determined that First Nations communities were ranked 63rd.

The 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) found that First Nations communities in Canada suffered from higher levels of poverty and health issues, lack adequate housing and schools, have higher rates of unemployment and incarceration rates and a lack of community services (water, Internet access, all-weather roads, etc.) (RCAP, 1996). In the decade and a half since that report, little progress has been made (Paradis, 2009). Many communities suffer from a physical environment that is detrimental to health and safety as a result of resource exploitation, contamination, persistent organic pollution and climate change.

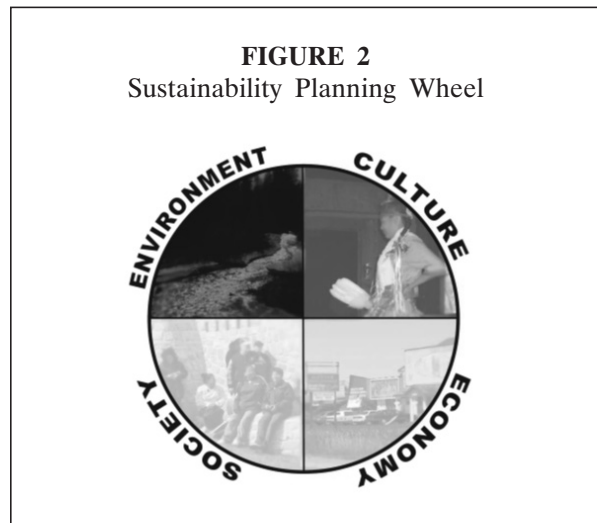**FIGURE 1**
Community Capital Framework
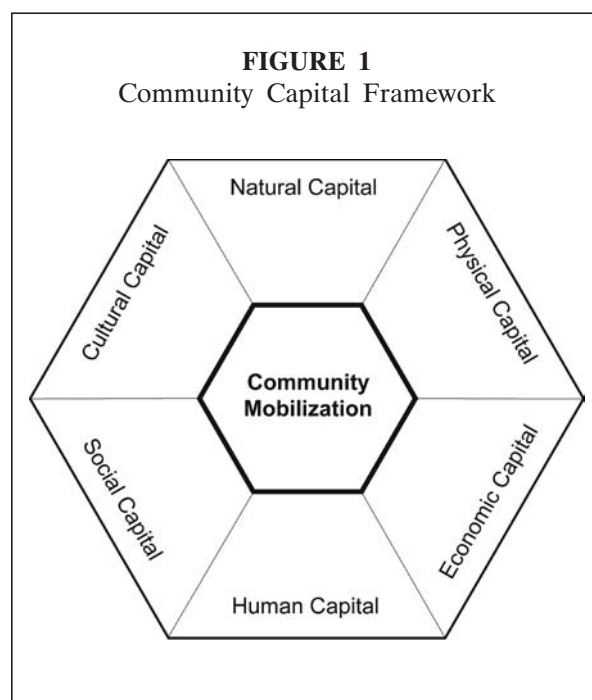
Federal government responses to these concerns through the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development have been focused on capital investments for physical infrastructure in communities to address:

- Demands for adequate housing for the existing population, in particular to address overcrowding, and housing demands stemming from projected on-reserve population growth;
- Need for educational facilities;
- Evolving or emerging infrastructure needs such as long-term care facilities for the elderly; and
- The extraordinary or 'one-off' infrastructure needs such as flood protection, all weather road and electrification of some remote communities, remediation of contaminated sites, and broadband access, etc.

However, First Nations engaged in comprehensive community planning (CCP) initiatives are more focused on what has been referred to as soft infrastructure (e.g. social development, health and healing, capacity building, employment and economic development (see for example CIER, 2005). The meaning of sustainable community development for First Nations[1] is more often an approach that at its core involves embracing and reinforcing the culture and unique identity of the community, community empowerment and stresses the physical relationship with the environment. Traditional knowledge forms the basis of community planning. Sustainable community planning in First Nations communities is best thought of as a process that recognizes the shared responsibilities between individuals, communities, nations and the environment. It embraces social and environmental justice, not just for humans but also for all living things, past and present. Environmental injustice, therefore, "is not only inflicted by dominant society upon Aboriginal peoples, people of colour and people in low-income communities but also upon Creation itself" (McGregor, 2009, p. 28).

For example, the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER) uses the sus-

FIGURE 2
Sustainability Planning Wheel

tainability planning wheel (see Figure 2) to illustrate the holistic approach to comprehensive planning based on social and environmental justice based on pillars of the environment, culture, society and economy. This cultural pillar and explicit connection to holistic approaches to justice is often overlooked in traditional urban and rural sustainability initiatives.

Despite the values and cultural traditions associated with sustainable community development, planning in First Nations communities is often equated with resource planning and resource conservation rather than community development (see for example the special issue of Plan Canada, 2008). The result is that planning initiatives are often reactive to external development pressures, highly technical, reliant on external expertise and one-off resources for planning. Planners often give little attention to the potential role of SCD planning to develop social and cultural capital or build capacity in communities, despite calls in the sustainability planning literature for building community capacity to engage in and actively participate in the implementation of sustainable community development planning initiatives (Rydin & Pennington, 2000; Dale & Onyx, 2005; Bulkeley, 2006).

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[1] It is important to stress here that First Nations in Canada can not be thought of as a homogenous group — there is a rich diversity of traditions, culture, language and concerns.

Limitations to Sustainability Planning Tools

In an effort to tackle issues of complexity and to incorporate sustainability principles into community planning processes, researchers have developed a variety of guiding planning frameworks and tools (Robert et al., 2002; Seymoar, 2004). These frameworks (e.g. The Natural Step, LA21, PLUS) incorporate best planning practice and essentially move through a variety of steps associated with strategic planning:

- Development of a multi-stakeholder and shared decision-making process designed to be cross-sectoral that will provide guidance for the overall process;
- Assessment of baseline conditions to determine the current state of environment, economic and social conditions and identify key indicators;
- Development of a sustainability vision and objectives to provide set the goal of where the community wants to be and to set long term targets;
- Creation of action plans and priorities to designed to achieve intermediate targets; and
- Monitoring and review of progress to track progress and hold participants accountable to the long-term objectives and goals.

Planning frameworks can provide a mechanism to manage the complexity of sustainable community planning. However, the reliance on planning tools can also mask the politics of power relations and social justice necessary to implement sustainability, with the assumption being that sustainability is necessarily a "win–win" for all involved (Marcuse, 1998). In addition, despite attempts to modify the process of sustainability planning, these frameworks still present barriers to use in First Nations communities. First, the tools still require considerable capacity to use effectively. Second, the processes advocated by the frameworks may be lengthy, making it difficult to sustain interest and commitment over time. Third, the guided implementation of certain process can be expensive,

consuming limited resources. And, finally, while the frameworks offer generic process steps that may be adapted to different settings, they are not inherently sensitive to the First Nation context. This may make their adaptation to the First Nation setting difficult or make their blind application completely inappropriate to First Nation communities.

CASE DESIGN AND FIRST NATIONS CONTEXT

Case study research provides an appropriate methodology for investigating the dynamic and real-time processes of sustainable community planning (Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995). In addition to the flexibility and place-sensitive advantages of case studies, we also hoped to address the need for more systematic case study research related to the implementation of SCD initiatives, a stated gap in the literature (Portney, 2003).

The results presented here are drawn from a larger research project that focused on the decision-making process involved in moving from sustainability planning to implementation (Connelly, Markey & Roseland, 2009). The research was based on four case study communities that were chosen out of an analysis of award winning sustainability initiatives and in consultation with our research partners.[2] Further case selection criteria included: degree of community impact, the comprehensiveness of implementation, and the relationship to public infrastructure. Care was also taken to ensure that the chosen case studies were representative of different regions and provided a diversity of community contexts. These criteria resulted in the selection of projects from two urban areas (the development of the East Clayton neighbourhood in Surrey, British Columbia and The Better Building Partnership in Toronto, Ontario), a rural case (The Sustainable Living Project in Craik, Saskatchewan) and a First Nations study (the Comprehensive Community Plan for Rolling River, Manitoba).

By focusing on the decision-making processes involved in sustainability planning, we

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[2] Research partners included the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (www.cier.ca), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (www.fcm.ca) and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability (www.iclei.org).

were able learn from specific community contexts while also drawing more general cross case comparative conclusions. The investigation explored the elements of decision-making, including the actors involved, their motivations and values, the specific decision-making structures and the policies and strategies that were used to achieve sustainability outcomes in moving from planning to implementation. Data collection relied on multiple sources (key documents and semi-structured interviews) and occurred during intensive week-long visits to each community to interview key stakeholders involved in the community's sustainability plan implementation and follow-up telephone interviews as necessary. Our case study research was guided by a central proposition: that barriers to implementation are not a result of a lack of known and viable sustainable development options or access to sustainability planning tools; rather they lie elsewhere in the decision-making processes, the knowledge base and capacity of planners and decision-makers, and in mobilizing the institutional resources of local government and community-based organizations to take action. Research questions to guide the implementation of the case research were as follows:

- What were the key elements, processes, decision-making tools, actors and roles that allowed for moving from planning to implementation?
- How do communities identify and prioritize activities, policies and programmes to advance sustainability? and,
- What are the linkages between communities, sustainability and community infrastructure?

The following discussion builds from our literature review on sustainability in a First Nations context and presents our findings exclusive to our case study in Rolling River First Nation, Manitoba. Rolling River was selected as a suitable case study for a variety of reasons. First, they had engaged in a comprehensive community planning process that had demonstrable implementation results. Second, Rolling River is a community with an approximate on reserve population of 500 located 80 km from Brandon (pop. 40,000) and is broadly representative of rural First Nations communities given its experience of out-migration, reliance on their land-base

for economic development and the pressing need to address housing, health, education and employment opportunities for members.

## Rolling River First Nation Comprehensive Community Planning Process

Rolling River First Nation is located 250 km Northwest of Winnipeg, near Riding Mountain National Park (see Figure 3). The community has an on reserve population of 500 (2009), with approximately another 400 members living off reserve. Rolling River FN comprises 7,500 hectares of land that includes the main settlement area near the Town of Erickson, agricultural land and natural areas. The focus of the Rolling River case study was on the comprehensive community plan that was initiated in 1998. The plan is treated as a living-document, constantly being modified to reflect changes in the community, new challenges and new opportunities. The main priorities of the community plan are economic development initiatives designed to create employment within the community, generate revenue, and reduce the reliance of the community on funding from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Some of the initiatives from the community plan that have been successfully implemented include the new health centre (see Figure 4), gas bar, restaurant, Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) centre and new farms. Projects that are still underway include the modular home plant, community sawmill (see Figure 5) and a local wind energy project.

The primary focus of the community plan is to improve the socio-economic conditions of community members. Members of Chief and Council felt that the key to local development was to increase self-reliance and decrease dependency on the Federal government for funding. The main challenges identified by the group were to identify appropriate and viable economic development initiatives, and learn how to link existing capacity for economic development with opportunities presented by acquiring new reserve status land.

The first step in creating the community plan was to generate community interest and engagement. Chief and Council announced that they were unveiling the community plan at a special meeting, knowing that their members

FIGURE 3
Rolling River First Nation
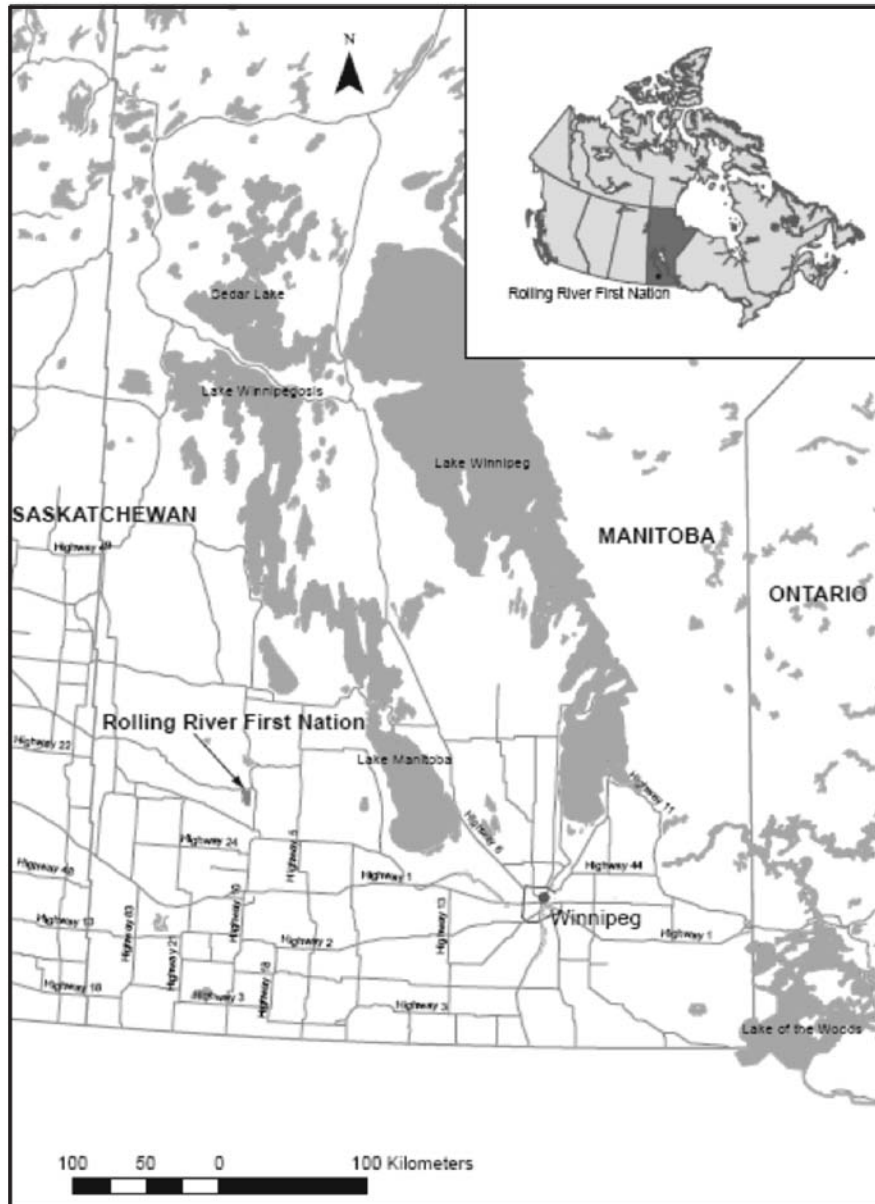
Map: Courtesy of John Ng.

would react with criticisms if they were pre-
sented with a plan that was already completed.
In fact, they did not have a plan, but community
members were so concerned about not having
any input that the turnout at the open commu-

nity meeting was exceptional. People came with
the intention of criticizing whatever was going
to be presented but ended up engaging in a
community meeting to establish the vision and
goals for the community. The meeting was highly

constructive and established a precedent for engagement that greatly assisted the sustainable community planning process going forward. From that initial meeting, the foundations for the community development plan were created that identified the vision and goals of the community and the economic development projects and strategies to accomplish them. Next, they took an inventory of the community's human resource capacity. The community decided to focus on opportunities that could be carried out with existing resources and available funding programs.

The community established a series of community roundtables to ensure ongoing and productive participation from community members. The roundtables identified key issues, proposed projects, addressed challenges and discussed solutions, values, ideologies and decision-making structures. Each family group was able to nominate one person that would represent the family in the community roundtable process. The community roundtables began in 1998 with seven families participating and have since grown to over twenty. The community roundtables proved instrumental in laying the foundation for the 10-year community development plan that was refined by the community economic development officer and approved by Chief and Council later that year.

Success Factors and Lessons Learned

Leadership, decision-making processes, community engagement and capacity building are four factors identified by interview respondents that contributed to the success of the comprehensive community plan. Chief and council were committed to economic development as the foundation for future activities in the community. This political leadership and the financial support associated with it served to support individual initiatives that had the potential to become self-sustaining businesses, where the viability of the business over the long-term was the key to making strategic decisions between initiatives. Chief and council were able to rely on a strong commitment and mandate from residents over a prolonged period (beyond election cycles) that allowed for a longer-term view of success for economic development initiatives.

> The continuity of governance is a very, very important factor because if you are changing leadership every 2 years you are not going to get a lot done because what you are doing is having a competition within your own community. But if everyone can work together and you can come up with a plan — I said give me 10 years and that's good. And I've done my ten years and now I'm going to move on as much as I'd like to stay. (Member of Chief and Council)

FIGURE 4
Rolling River First Nation Health Centre

FIGURE 5
Portable Community Sawmill

For example, land acquisition decisions were made based on economic development opportunities and capacity building programs were established to drive economic development. The political leadership in Rolling River was able to obtain long-term support from residents through decision-making processes, such as the community roundtables, that ensured that activities of the leadership were open, transparent and accountable. When the Chief was first elected, he asked specifically for a mandate for a community plan that would take ten years to implement. He made it clear that there would be no quick fixes, but that incremental progress would be made over time for the plan to be fully implemented and that a longer time frame was required to take a more comprehensive approach. This provided the leadership team with the security to take more risks, to innovate and to plan for the longer term.

Decision-making processes were critical for engaging the community around economic development opportunities that could improve the socio-economic status of all residents. In order to reach these different internal constituencies, the community roundtables directly engaged the youth, elders and the broader community.

> These tables were deemed as our consultation table, people get to report back to their families and bring it back to the table. The youth, we were still meeting with them, and you'd go do a power talk with them and encourage them and they'd clap when you left and say right on Chief. The adult tables on the other hand were practically booing you when you walked in. But now things are going better and there is capacity development money available at INAC we're going to apply for to make sure the roundtable knows good negotiation practices and good terms of development. (Member of Chief and Council)

Decision-making structures were based on a model of self-government that starts in the home and works out to the community.

> A lot of the information you guys are looking for it's in the heads of the elders. So it's a holistic thing for us, looking at it from all angles. That's why it's so important to talk to the elders because they might know it. Somebody might know it ... they might remember it. (Band staff)

The high level of community engagement contributed to the success of the comprehensive community plan and subsequent economic development initiatives and provided the necessary support to the political leadership. Including community members in the decision-making process and structures ensured broad community ownership of activities.

> The roundtables deal directly with families and the band meeting that's basically the reps from the round table and they hash it out there. So there are 2 levels of compromise before a decision is made. And if there's counter opponents it will go back and forth until they reach a compromise. Particularly for buying new land through the TLE [Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement] where we select people voted from our community to represent our trust. So there's lots of different levels of support. (Band staff)

This sense of ownership of activities nurtured a "can-do attitude" and created a positive vision for the future. In the early stages, the community focused on initiatives that could be implemented immediately to demonstrate success and to engage residents in community change — again, a by-product of their efforts to match economic development possibilities with existing community capacity and resources. Over time, capacity building contributed to the success of the planning initiative and the development and expansion of subsequent economic development activities. Prioritizing options was based on a clear understanding of the difference between visioning and capacity to implement. It was important to understand the difference between what you want to do in terms of development and what you can do.

> So what we had to do was after we had all the wish list packaged together we had to bring in our council and human resources person and say lets see which ones of these we can tackle immediately and start seeing results. I got 2 years here and I asked for 10. How are we going to do this as a council? We always talk about youth and say youth are our future leaders but what are we actually doing for them? So we developed a gym for them to hang out and people using key words to keep in their mind like business. How are we going to pay for that gym? Who's going to

cover the expenses, the lights the hydro everything? We have to start putting a fee to these things so they can look after themselves. So the bingo looks after that and the youth look after that. (Member of Chief and Council)

Challenges

Interviewees identified self-awareness and a lack of resources and capacity as two key challenges that limited the success of previous community economic development initiatives. The residential school legacy was identified as a significant barrier to developing a positive image of the community, both internally and externally.

> It was the women a long time ago that selected our leaders because the men would have long days where they would have to be providers for the community and the women naturally stayed back and kept homes and the camp, and they watched the children. So they knew exactly how every child acted, they knew which ones were going to be the little scrapper guys, which ones were the good speakers, and helped create those friendships that kept the community intact. And a long time ago it used to be the women who said that's who's going to lead us. Today we use this democratic system that's really screwed up and it creates in-fighting, it creates division on the reserve. So I'd like to get back to that old style where our women can actually come together, but again because of residential school some of our old people can't even look at each other let alone say hi. And when you decipher everything and take everything apart you realize we are still carrying this on from a family feud between your grandfather and my grandfather. But that's how it is ... (Community Elder)

For example, the societal conditions in the community created a sense of dependency that made it difficult to move beyond day-to-day survival and address the visionary change that many in the community thought was necessary.

> Some people come to a band meeting just to be negative and just to say no to it. And then I ask why would you turn down such an idea? And they say it's just not going to work ... because we got so used to things not going to work. (Community Elder)

There was also the perception within the community that recognition of traditions and cultural heritage and pursuing economic growth were not compatible, a perception that was closely related to the generation gap between elders and youth. The challenge for the community planning process was to identify opportunities that intersected with both and created further opportunities for interaction and learning between youth and elders. For example, the log-home building project employs youths in the community and is supervised by an elder who educates the participants about traditional heritage and, more specifically, about traditional approaches to forestry. A final challenge related to self-awareness was the difficulty of integrating multiple worldviews, ways of thinking with economic development. Community members understood the connection between making claims for a holistic and comprehensive approach to community development, but at the same time wrestle with opportunities that prioritize economic development and growth above all else. Interviewees also identified a challenge of incorporating holistic views with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development management requirements and broader economic and social systems.

As a second main barrier, the lack of resources and capacity was in part related to the socio-economic conditions in the community. Graduates from high school, trades and universities tend to not locate in the community because of a lack of opportunity. This makes it difficult to cultivate leadership and leadership qualities among the next generation.

> I guess it's up to us to make the youth aware of what exactly is needed in our community. Because right now, some of our youth that are in school, they want to come home but they don't have anything to come home for. And if they do come home, they end up sitting at home waiting for a job that they are over qualified for, you know, pumping gas. So, those are some of the economic things that we have to address. We have to start creating jobs that our youth can do. (Member of Chief and Council)

Professional training, skills and trades are needed that can be put to use within the community. The implementation success associated with prioritizing economic development initiatives

for which capacity exists comes with the associated cost that development becomes much more opportunistic (i.e. doing what is possible rather than what would best serve the interests, needs of the community). The lack of capacity for planning limits the outcomes of comprehensive planning processes to a wish list for the community. The lack of training and capacity for planning fosters a sense of the community being dependent on government hand-outs, something that is reflected in the relationships between the band and federal government agencies.

> Maybe we do go about it the wrong way, maybe we shouldn't be so head on, maybe we should learn to negotiate, to do better planning. But when you really go into these meetings with our local MPs, with people in power they still see us as a 3rd rate nation who can't take care of themselves and that's sad because I know in my heart, in my mind, this community could flourish if they'd just give us a chance but they don't. (Community Youth)

In addition, that lack of financial resources forces the community to rely on government grants for implementation and therefore the community is placed in a position where funding from external sources directs the planning outcomes rather than having the planning outcomes come from the community.

> And a lot of times we end up trying to embarrass them [Government agencies] first before they release any funding. It's not a good way to live. We had said we wanted to set one of these homes as a model home built from our forest and cut from our logs. And we asked the department does this qualify for funding under your special homes funding and they said well it's a log home, it's not special. We said 'wait a minute it's made from logs from our reserve, from our own land that we cut and harvested. What do you mean that doesn't qualify?' ... The department used to set us up for things that aren't going to work ... they'd take a $10–$20,000 dollar business proposal and look at it and say oh great ... here's $5,000. They set you up for failure right away. (Member of Chief and Council)

Chasing government funding results in decision-making based on short-term opportunities

and makes it more difficult to recognize the long-term synergistic initiatives that could result in transformative change for the community. The challenge for the community is to how best to "bend" the funding programs to meet their pre-determined community planning priorities (Connelly, Markey & Roseland, 2009).

DISCUSSION

The Rolling River First Nation community planning process highlights the tensions inherent in sustainable community planning. Those tensions exist between the community and external actors and also within the community. Due to substandard social conditions, the community has prioritized an approach to comprehensive planning that is focused on social justice concerns, yet has struggled with accessing the necessary resources and capacity to address those issues without emphasizing their reliance on limited mainstream economic growth opportunities. Moving the Gas Bar and Video Lottery Terminals to new locations on the highway has opened the community to greater trickle-down revenues from passing tourists, but these approaches do not address the underlying lack of opportunities to build community capital based on the community's expressed values of holistic linkages between the community and the land.

The development pursued by Rolling River may be defined, in part, by a weak sustainability approach, giving priority to economic development issues over the environment. However, unlike the other case study communities we examined (Connelly, Markey & Roseland, 2009), there was an explicit focus on the linkages between economic development and improving the social conditions for both individuals and for the broader community, for the elder population and for youths. In that regard, a focus on social justice, with strong linkages between the economy and society, moderated by a worldview that placed emphasis on the importance of the land base may also be considered a strong sustainability approach.

> We had talked about creating a self-sustaining eco-village. Something that was all green, cabins would be made from natural resources or local materials using solar panels, geothermal heat. We have that in our health building right now. So that was

the whole concept, and we talked about even looking at wind energy back then. Just being a couple of native guys talking about this stuff without really knowing what was going on or involved in it. (Member of Band administration)

The turtle is knowledge, the beaver is wisdom, you need both to be effective. Knowledge without wisdom or wisdom without knowledge is incomplete understanding. The relationship between people, the land and resources are important. It is through working on the land that you can understand yourself and your place in the world. (Community Elder)

The key to navigating the internal tensions between social dynamics, the economy and the environment was the Chief and Council's commitment to community engagement and participation. While there was conflict between views and approaches to economic development and its relationship to traditional ways of life, there was also an explicit focus on trying to define and moderate the economic growth imperative with a focus on improving the quality of life for community members. For example:

Well yeah it is because when we look at economic development we look at, well, what's the cultural impact. Is it negative or positive and we try to make it positive. Like yeah, we're going to make money but we're going to be putting that into language classes, hiring an elder in the evening to come in and sit with the youth or anybody that wants it. (Youth member)

With the creation of the comprehensive community plan, Chief and Council were concerned about generating engagement with the community about ideas, opportunities and capacity for pursuing specific economic development opportunities. This was particularly important to the Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) agreement[3] that allowed the community to purchase land anywhere in the province and obtain reserve status for it.

As a community member, I know that before land is bought it's approached at a roundtable meeting and then at a band meeting and approval is reached through consensus and then back to the TLE guys and they buy it. If there's not quorum and consensus in the band meeting the land doesn't get bought. (Youth member)

The community roundtables played a central role in facilitating community engagement. They provided a forum to all of the families in the community to be engaged in the decision-making process.

Go ahead, here is your chance, come sit at the roundtable. We had 33 members that eventually sat on the roundtable, and for a while it was used as a bitch session ... you're not doing this you're not doing that. Well now you have a chance to participate. And this table will be deemed as our consultation table, they get to report back to their families and bring it back to the table. (Member of Chief and Council)

Rolling River also displays a strong sense of community. The community drew upon strong cultural beliefs and traditional ways of doing things based on consultation and deliberation with all community members. Putting particular emphasis on the cultural capital of community allowed the planning process to proceed from perceived strengths and was a means of addressing internal awareness and perceptions about the potential for the community. Despite the strong cultural traditions that reinforce common views, values and approaches, the legacy of residential schools has eroded some of the ties that link individuals to their community. Cultural traditions, languages and shared values were all disrupted with the removal of children from the community and that has had a lasting legacy on the strength of community ties.

It is important to know where you come from, your ancestors, and your traditions to understand who you are and how you fit in. Cultural context is very important.

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[3] Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement provided Rolling River with an addition of reserve land as a result of previous unfulfilled treaty obligations. As part of the agreement, Rolling River has been allocated over $8.5 M to purchase up to 44,745 acres of land from private landowners, providing a number of possibilities for development.

> This is why the impact of the residential schools has contributed to the problems for First Nations. They taught us that who we are, our traditions and values were useless and we were sinners. Those lessons stay with you and it is hard to have pride over self-identity. (Community Elder)

Participants view the culture of the community as a particular strength in moving forward with their development agenda. There are strong cultural linkages between social and economic development and the relationship to the land. Residents recognize that the key to sustainable community development is to strengthen community ties, to bridge the gap between youths and elders and to provide opportunities for community members living off-reserve to return home.

For Rolling River, cultural development is equally as important as economic development, Cultural development provides the ties that bind the community together based on shared history. It is the cultural component that bridges the other components (social, environment and economic) of the community planning wheel.

> Those ceremonies told us what we were going to do with the land and to pursue wind energy. Tradition has to be a part of it. That's core. It keeps us ethically there on our goals of what we want to achieve. (Member of Band Administration)

CONCLUSION

The Rolling River comprehensive community plan served to catalyze community engagement around economic development opportunities that could address existing socio-economic conditions in the community. The planning process and decision-making structures established for implementation reflect a commitment to consensual decision-making, cultural values and a holistic way of thinking that has served to improve the self-awareness of both individuals and the community. Rolling River engaged in a broad visioning exercise, yet they were conscious of the need to provide tangible results. They were ultimately successful in identifying specific priorities for action based on evaluating their capacity for implementation over the short term. The outcomes of the planning process served to reinforce the need for local self-reliance, to build

community capacity and to create a sense of community ownership over the various projects. They also ensured that the risks associated with going forward were shared and not associated with one individual leader.

Unlike the other case study examples in sustainability planning that use the "plan" as a means of resolving economic and environmental tensions to implement sustainability (Portney, 2003), Rolling River's comprehensive community plan relied on linkages between cultural, social and economic development based on a worldview that links all decisions to the land to guide implementation. It was assumed that existing community values towards the environment and the land base would ensure that any community development initiative would result in sustainable community development. This approach to sustainability fits with the way community mobilization and participatory processes are presented in the literature. The sustainability literature suggests that it is through participatory processes that sustainability solutions to community problems can be identified and implemented (Berke, 2002; Bulkeley, 2006; Conroy & Berke, 2004; Roseland, 2005). However, much of the research and practice is focused on how sustainability planning can be used as a means of engaging citizens. The Rolling River case focused explicitly on establishing processes for community decision-making as a means for sustainability planning.

The communal decision-making and communal resources that are at the foundation of the Rolling River First Nation contributed to a strong sense of place that has been reinforced through culture and traditions that emphasize collective responsibility. The community identified the land base and cultural traditions as their greatest strengths and both are collective resources that contribute to and reinforce the strength of community and shared sense of place. Rolling River did not have the capacity to undertake sustainability planning processes based on sophisticated planning frameworks, tools and expensive consultants. However, they had the more critical capacity to openly address conflicts in a community setting based on a history of collaborative and consensus-based decision-making; and, they were able to use political conflicts creatively to address community problems.

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ACCOUNTING AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLES
From the Bottom Line to Lines of Relation

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Isobel M. Findlay
EDWARDS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Warren I. Weir
DEAN OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, NICOLA VALLEY INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ABSTRACT

According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, rebuilding Aboriginal economies and nations will require "radical departures from business as usual." In the interests of such radical change, this essay traces the role of accounting in obstructing and obscuring Aboriginal peoples' opportunities, achievements, and contributions and explains how Aboriginal thinking and institutions are helping redefine success measures and increase choice by making visible alternative paths and promoting sustainable development for all. Building on ongoing efforts to think and act outside colonial conceptual boxes and celebrate culturally meaningful, holistic Aboriginal economic performance, this essay recommends a double strategy to address the historical impact of traditional accounting on Aboriginal peoples and economies by (a) displacing old paternalistic models that constructed Aboriginal "problems" and (b) respecting and learning from Aboriginal powers, achievement, and measures of success. Only when Indigenous knowledge and values are put at the centre of authoritative practices will accounting do justice to the specificities of Aboriginal experience in Canada, support and sustain Aboriginal aspirations and economies, help Canada live up to its treaty promises to Aboriginal peoples, and forge a truly post-colonial Canadian.

INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), the most extensive and expensive commission in Canadian history and the most comprehensive and credible account of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, there is an urgent need to support self-government initiatives in Aboriginal communities by rebuilding and strengthening Aboriginal economies historically disrupted and deprived of land, labour, and resources:

Self-government without a significant economic base would be an exercise in illusion and futility.... Under current conditions and approaches to economic development, we could see little prospect for a better future.... [A]chieving a more self-reliant economic base for Aboriginal communities and nations will require significant, even radical departures from business as usual. (RCAP, 1996: 775)

Such rebuilding can be achieved only by some radical rethinking of current practices and

indices of value — including accounting ones — that sustain "business as usual." Measured by the standards of the United Nations Development Index, the status quo means that Canada performs conspicuously well: from first place rankings to a low of eighth, while the Aboriginal population would rank 68th out of 174 nations (Graydon, 2008). The status quo means that the poverty gap between First Nations and mainstream Canada remains daunting, while only 82% of federal funding ever reaches First Nations who since 1996 have lost 23 cents in every dollar to funding caps (AFN, 2007). The costs of maintaining the educational and socio-economic gaps, according to a 2009 Centre for the Study of Living Standards study, are estimated at $6.2 billion in 2006 and $8.4 billion by 2026. By contrast, if these gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are closed, the combined savings are estimated at $115 billion between 2006 and 2026. Between 2001 and 2026, the estimated cumulative effect of $401 billion on GDP would benefit all Canadians (Sharpe, Arsenault, Lapointe & Cowan, 2009). In the interests of change, this essay traces the role of accounting in obstructing and obscuring Aboriginal peoples' achievements and contributions and explains how Aboriginal thinking and institutions are helping redefine success measures and make visible alternatives obscured by mainstream metrics while promoting sustainable development for all.

Changing the status quo requires alternative approaches, new concepts and discourses, new ways of thinking and talking about Aboriginal economic development and performance in Canada. In tracing Indigenous peoples in the accounting literature, Buhr (2011) argues for a change in the discourse from peoples oppressed by accounting to a "more complex and nuanced accounting history" and a place for Indigenous peoples' "agency and power" (p. 141). Dowling (2005) gives useful direction in unpacking the Western ideology and individualism embedded in the "common sense" of the influential Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2011). Established in 1987 by Stephen Cornell and Joseph P. Kalt, it encourages or even requires imitation of dominant economic and business models. Equally helpful in rethinking Aboriginal economic performance are Newhouse's (2004) critical resistance to the "inevitabilities" and repetitions of the same old

(economic) stories of progress, his work on National Aboriginal Benchmarking Committee of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, and the Wuttunee (2004) commitment to the balance of the medicine wheel coordinates (physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental).

In this context, current efforts to rethink accounting models and practices need a double strategy to address the historical impact of traditional accounting on Indigenous peoples and economies by (a) displacing old paternalistic models that constructed Aboriginal "problems" and (b) respecting and learning from Aboriginal powers, achievement, and measures of success (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). They need to integrate Aboriginal values and views on governance, markets, community development, and social, human, and other capital as well as the overriding importance of "All my relations," a respectful and responsible understanding of relations between humans and their environment. Only when Indigenous knowledge and values are put at the centre of authoritative practices will accounting do justice to the specificities of Aboriginal experience in Canada, increase choice, support and sustain Aboriginal aspirations and economies, help Canada live up to its treaty promises to Aboriginal peoples, and forge a truly post-colonial Canadian. Only then will accounting help address "two serious handicaps" faced by First Nations: "We are paying effectively 'triple' for our infrastructure and receiving only one quarter the economic payoff per piece of infrastructure. The net result — wealth is roughly ten times harder to create on First Nations lands than elsewhere" (FNFII, 2011a).

ACCOUNTING AND THE DISPOSSESSION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Building on ongoing efforts to celebrate culturally meaningful, holistic Aboriginal economic performance (Newhouse & Peters, 2003; Loizides & Wuttunee, 2005; Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007; Wuttunee, Loustel & Overall, 2007) means renegotiating the theory and practice of accounting. It means recognizing that, for all its authority and much-vaunted independence and objectivity (Everett, Green & Neu, 2003), accounting is neither natural nor neutral (Chew & Greer, 1997;

Collison, 2003; Findlay & Russell, 2005). It is as culturally coded as the work of the Harvard Project. Despite discourses of "reality" and an over-investment in quantitative or "hard" data, meanings and identities are not out there waiting to be discovered, but are actively produced and reproduced by those with the necessary authority and symbolic power to define those realities. As a system of symbolic signs and "social technology," accounting is never merely descriptive; it actively intervenes in and constructs "realities" (Boyce, 2000; Chew & Greer, 1997; Gibson, 2000) — with enormous consequences for the perception of opportunities and choices, decision-making and planning. It is ironic that an empiricist system so invested in observation as knowledge, in the value of quantifying, verifying, standardizing, and predicting, should render so much invisible. Those invisibilities range from "non-economic costs that are not directly quantifiable in money terms" to "the technological invisibility of bads, and ... downplaying ecological impacts" (Boyce, 2000: 27–28) to the economic contributions of "nonmarket work" that the United Nations Human Development Report (1995) estimates at $16 trillion worldwide, while the official global output is $23 trillion (Quarter, Mook & Richmond, 2003: 1).

If some things are rendered invisible, some are rendered unusually visible. For instance, accounting has a habit of producing demands for "increased accountability" and intense scrutiny directed at those represented as "problems" and dependent on the public purse (Quarter, Mook & Richmond, 2003: 10). Such has been the fate of diverse Aboriginal organizations, whose social, cultural, and economic achievements are obscured, especially in the face of paternalistic bureaucracies and public scrutiny of accountability and transparency issues and demands for better governance (Gibson, 2000; Ivanitz, 2001; Jacobs, 2000). Such accountability systems put the (**economic**) bottom line before lines of relation, while diverting attention from the accountability of mainstream institutions for undermining Aboriginal economic development by reducing land and resources so that "the land base" was "steadily whittled away over time, to the point that little more than one-third of the acreage remains" (Wien, 1999: 113). Meanwhile, such accounting systems reward mainstream profit-maximizing that adds to the "growing list of

social, ethical, environmental and political problems" (Gray, Owen & Adams, 1996: 2).

Accounting is a system, then, that encodes the western individualist assumptions of neo-classical economic theory and what counts for success and happiness. As Smith (2000) has argued, neo-classical economics has been especially threatening to Indigenous ways of knowing, turning "thinking from the circle to square boxes" and promoting an "emphasis on competition rather than on cooperation, on the individual rather than on the collective, on regulations rather than on responsibility" (p. 211). The result is that it puts Gross National product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) above systems of value that others might prefer. Gross National Happiness, for instance, coined in 1972 in Bhutan has promoted in turn new measures of wellbeing such as the Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) developed in 1995 by Redefining Progress, the San Francisco think-tank (Bakshi, 2005); Atlantic Canada's Genuine Progress Index; and Alberta's Genuine Progress Indicator and Sustainability Circle (Anielski & Winfield, 2002; Findlay & Russell, 2005). And neo-classical thinking ignores too Aboriginal understanding of land not as an exploitable commodity but rather as something "possessing man" — a notion closer to "the western notion of custodianship" (Gibson 2000: 294–95).

In the context of mainstream accounting, Aboriginal organizations and communities are subjected to a double standard of unusual scrutiny and inappropriate economic indicators at the expense of all other considerations and at great cost to those organizations and communities. The effect is redoubled for those organizations whose mission is as much social, cultural, and ecological as economic and who remain accountable not only to governments and the public purse but also to community members — and to the land and the Creator (Ivanitz, 2001). Thus, financial reports become "at best misleading" and at worst represent a cover-up of ongoing Aboriginal disadvantage (Gibson, 2000: 302). What is worse, such restrictive accounting measures leave the public feeling Aboriginal groups are unusually advantaged as well as insufficiently accountable (Gibson 2000), even though, an AFN (2004) report shows that the average Canadian gets services worth two-and-a-half times more than those received by First Nations, while only three

percent of 557 financial management audits of First Nations, 2002–2003, required remedial action. The Auditor General of Canada, Sheila Fraser, has argued in successive reports that an undue reporting burden on First Nations (and a lack of outcome based performance measures) means that resources are used that "could be better used to provide direct support to the community" (Canada, 2002).

Adding to work elaborating accounting's "production of a calculative knowledge of imperialism" (Davie, 2000: 331), Neu and Therrien (2003) show how accounting "was central to maintaining the imbalance of power between settler society and Indigenous peoples, while allowing bureaucrats to govern from afar. This is a power that in the end may rival even tanks and heavy artillery" (p. 31). Such work witnesses the devastating impact bureaucratic practices and quantitative methods have had on Aboriginal communities, isolating them geographically in the interests of settlement and commerce, destroying communal and co-operative practices, representing them as a "problem," and imposing mainstream institutions without relevant tools.

These and other writers are exposing the historical privileges of mainstream logic that benefited Western capital and economic individualism, legitimating settler claims to land and resources while both depending on **and** dismissing Aboriginal people and knowledge as inferior and in need of western civilization (Gibson, 2000; Gallhofer, Gibson, Haslam, McNicholas & Takiari, 2000). They underline that, in order to reconstruct the value of accounting, we must consider those sites where

- Indigenous knowledge was devalued and suppressed;
- Indigenous peoples and communities were subjected to assessment and valuation by outside "experts";
- Indigenous political and socio-economic systems were marginalized and destroyed in the name of Western economic ideologies and accounting practice.

These sites are not only sites of dispossession; they are also sites of resistance and contestation: theoretical and real places where Indigenous people can reclaim their historical stories and make real their place and power in the colonial

and post-colonial processes — and make a difference in Western accounting. They provide sites of renewal, where stories of dispossession may be replaced with hope and ideas for change that will benefit Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike — a post-colonial realm of possibility governed not by an exclusionary and hierarchical Western "either-or" logic, but an inclusive "both-and" perspective that learns from best practices in each culture.

CHANGING ACCOUNTING MODELS

> Enlightened business leaders recognize that their reputations and even their bottom lines are intimately tied to good corporate citizenship. (Then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, cited in Frost, 2004: 1)

The time is right to indigenize accounting indices, socializing further accounting models that have been under pressure over the past 70 or more years. If accounting has never been "socially neutral," social accounting and auditing within the broader domain of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate citizenship have emerged to underline and make visible "social variables" (Quarter, Mook & Richmond, 2003: 3). Despite the diversity of size, shape, and structure of organizations, many have an interest in social accounting, reporting, and auditing to assess performance because they confront the same challenges of "reputation and legitimacy" (Raynard, 1998: 1471). Macfarlane (2004) argues that as recently as a generation ago, "few people would have had a very clear idea of what you were talking about had you mentioned corporate social responsibility (CSR)." In fact, many would have seen such formulations as oxymoronic as "socialist efficiency." They would have limited the responsibilities of a corporation to philanthropic gesture subordinated to "one thing: profit" (p. 45). Today more businesses are recognizing in a social audit two important functions: "an accountability mechanism and a management tool for learning about and responding to stakeholders, to see if what a company is doing measures up to its values" (David Simpson cited in Arnot, 2004: 6).

If businesses used to think in terms of ethics **or** profits and some currently offer little more than window dressing — "a public relations

device designed to throw sand in our eyes" (G. Monbiot, quoted in Frost, 2004: 1) — or clearly subordinated supplementary information in complying with new social accounting measures, many are increasingly recognizing that their own interests cannot be separated from those of other stakeholders. In short, they recognize that ethics **are** profits. Some also recognize that clean water and air are "not strictly 'environmental' issues. They are *business* issues" (Manning, 2004: 9). In this context, taking care of the triple bottom line (Elkington, 1998) — economic, environmental, and social performance — "is key to success, even survival, in today's competitive business climate" (Manning, 2004: 9). The result is that businesses have been moving in CSR and sustainability reporting from a fragmented to an integrated strategic approach, from a cosmetic approach involving charitable deeds to an innovation opportunity (Porter & Kramer, 2006; Kramer & Kania, 2006).

Today, prompted by increasingly diverse stakeholders demanding transparency and accountability in a global risk society, accountants realize that is important to make visible all of the "externalities — the consequences of economic activity which are not reflected in the costs borne by the individual or organization enjoying the benefits of the activity" (Gray, Owen & Adams, 1996: 1). On a large scale, these externalities include pollution, discrimination, the destruction of natural habitats, employee layoffs or illnesses, and the exploitation of natural and human resources, including Indigenous knowledge and land (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). On a smaller but no less significant scale, they may relate to the cost of losing a family business in the community, or the closing down of a family farm in a prairie province.

Thus, social accounting has importantly added to discursive space for debate opened by the crises and contradictions in dominant institutions, making for new understandings of Aboriginal peoples' struggles and shared interests in ecological and other survival (Blaser, Feit & McRae, 2004). Meantime, businesses are noting the ways that consumers view the impact of business activities on the natural and social environments, realizing that there is profit and a benefit to being socially accountable — especially when the consumers make socio-economic choices that affect the corporation's bottom line. GlobeScan's annual Corporate Social Responsibility Monitor, for instance, shows 83 percent of Canadians believe that corporations should go beyond their traditional economic role, while 51 percent claim in the previous year to have punished a socially irresponsible business (cited in Macfarlane, 2004: 46).

Responding to CSR considerations, social accounting and social auditing work to make a broad range of actions and contexts visible by expanding the ways in which organizational financial accountants address interests other than those of shareholders or other financial investors and value the non-financial costs and benefits — the externalities — of an organization's interactions with stakeholders, including customers, employees, governments, interest groups, and the larger natural and cultural environment. In short, social accounting is "what you get when the artificial restrictions of conventional accounting are removed" (Gray, Owen & Adams, 1996: 11), bringing into the equation that which is excluded by economic reductionism or the "truths" of mainstream accounting.

Despite such advances in thinking and practice, the good news is by no means universal. A 2004 Conference Board of Canada (CBC) study registered only 68 percent of 300 companies reporting. In addition, of the possible 60 factors across 5 categories — human resources, environmental issues, community issues, human rights issues, governance issues — listed by CBC, the average company reported on only 12 percent of the factors, a figure underlining a marked discrepancy between claims about CSR actions and public reporting. The most comprehensive reporting was to be found in industry sectors like mining, forestry, and chemicals facing public pressure to act and in sectors like banking facing regulatory incentives (McFarland, 2004).

Still, Savitz (2004) commends the reporting so necessary to public debate as "a necessary condition of being sustainable — it holds companies accountable." Candid reports merit our support, he argues, while we should remain alert to hypocrisy hiding regulatory violations and fines in overly positive comparisons with the competition or in acts of omission that ensure infractions do not even register (pp. 1–2). In sum, communication of CSR should itself be subjected to such CSR reporting principles as balance, comparability, accuracy, timeliness, transparency, clarity, and

reliability (Global Reporting Initiative, 2011) or the "four capital model" — human, social, financial, and environmental — promoted by the U.K. think tank New Economics Foundation (Raynard, 1998). In addition to the social audit's lessons about the interdependencies among staff, producers, and consumers, the latter model has resulted in the "culture audit" demonstrating internal factors affecting organizational performance (Raynard, 1998: 1473–75). To ensure diverse participation, open dialogue, cultural commitment, and effective measurement, the New Economics Foundation has established principles of good practice — Inclusivity, Communication, Embeddedness, and Comparability — that have been adopted by the Institute of Social and Ethical Accountability (Henriques, 2000). Most importantly, these enhanced accounting practices critically "remind us what matters and focus attention upon what is of value to us" (Gallhofer et al., 2000: 392).

And it is not only consumers and employees who are rewarding or punishing corporate citizens. A recent development in CSR is Socially Responsible Investing (SRI), showing the "'hidden,' yet increasingly tangible benefits of environment performance" (Manning, 2004: 13). The Corporate Knights, a Canadian magazine dedicated to CSR, launched its SRI guide in 2003: "Making investment decisions based on social/ environmental criteria be they punitive to laggards or beneficial to leaders, and/or using investor influence to engage companies to operate in a more sustainable manner that is in everybody's interest" (p. 16). Investors can use information on a corporation's performance to 'engage' companies to continue to do what they are doing, or change the way in which they do business. Corporations are evaluated through negative and positive screens. Negative screens describe corporate activities that are anti-social and anti-environmental, such as the promotion of tobacco or alcohol, the use or production of weapons, human rights abuses, and participation in nuclear activities. Positive screens describe corporations that promote environmental sustainability, employee relations, gender equity, animal welfare, and community (including Aboriginal) relations.

However, analysts argue that while "negative screening might make you feel good" (Corporate Knights 2003: 17), and "positive screening relies on directing capital to the good guys," negative

and positive SRI screening "exert, at best, a passive influence on corporate practice. Screening makes a statement, but shareholder action makes a difference" (p. 21). They argue that "[f]or every dollar that is withheld by socially responsible investors, there are seven ready to pick up the slack" (p. 17), noting the exceptional impact that SRI investors had on South Africa's economy and ending Apartheid. In addition to screening, the impact of SRI comes primarily from shareholder activism in the boardrooms of corporations in need of change.

In a less visible but equally meaningful way, the understanding of accounting is also broadening as a result of changes occurring in the Indigenous world, and especially an Indigenous renaissance and growing participation in the economy spawned and supported by educational initiatives (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). States and corporations need to recognize Aboriginal rights and relevant laws and regulations (Blaser, Feit & McRae, 2004) and build on the Maori successes in making Treaty obligations auditable (Jacobs, 2000). Not only do accountants now have to grapple with the valuation of items included in land claims negotiations, but they also have to take into account the value of the traditional, treaty, and social economy, of self-government and self-determination, the use and so-called misuse of government funds in Aboriginal organizations, forms of dependency (or the welfare economy) produced by government funding. They also have to assess the costs and benefits of public-private partnerships; of dams and flooding; of tourism, recreation, and gambling; of forestry, fishing, and mining; of resource regulations and traditional ecological knowledge; of volunteer contributions and personal, organizational, and community advancement; and of an emerging and youthful Aboriginal population.

And there are those who celebrate how much environmental accounting can learn from Indigenous cultural practices and perspectives, especially contextual and holistic understandings of complex realities, even if their discourses of exploration, discovery, and recovery are jarring in this regard (Gallhofer et al., 2000). Meanwhile, those involved in Aboriginal economic development are looking to the opportunities afforded by social accounting and social auditing to escape the "one size fits all" models imposed by the Indian Act (Wien, 1999: 112) and to

acknowledge and value Indigenous knowledge and traditional views of the use of land and community involvement (Wuttunee, 2004). This information, in turn, assists those involved in business ventures, particularly when discussing assets and negotiating partnership agreements. It provides, for those involved in Aboriginal political, community, economic, and business development practical and Indigenous alternatives to "business as usual."

ACCOUNTING FOR THE INDIGENOUS HUMANITIES/REENTERING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

> This conflict between the principles of self-determination and the bureaucratic requirements of financial accountability arises because Aboriginal organizations often have culturally derived goals which may be difficult to quantify ... [and] conflict with accounting rules that are based on economic rationalistic principles. The conflict between accounting and Aboriginal culture may be expressed in terms of conflict between accountability to the principal and to what Laughlin (1996) calls "higher principals." (Chew & Greer, 1997: 283)

Accounting continues to play a major role not only in the way in which governments and corporations interact with Aboriginal businesses and communities, but also in the way Aboriginal business, political, educational, and economic development initiatives and programs are evaluated and promoted. Indigenous knowledge (IK) provides a central point of departure from current practices of economic and business development and accounting in Aboriginal communities. Like Battiste & Henderson (2000), Greaves (1994) highlights a history of IK appropriations for profit and the need to protect IK:

> Indigenous knowledge, historically scorned by the world of industrial societies, has now become intensely, commercially attractive. Indigenous societies find themselves poked, probed and examined as never before. The very cultural heritage that gives indigenous peoples their identity, now far more than in the past, is under real or potential assault from those who would gather it up, strip away its honored meanings, convert it to a product,

and sell it. Each time that happens the heritage itself dies a little, and with it its people. (p. ix)

He also suggests, however, that IK can be used by Aboriginal economic development officers and institutional leaders and managers to benefit the entire community, and not just individuals or corporations:

> to seek intellectual property rights (IPR) for indigenous people is to seek a legally workable basis by which indigenous societies would *own* their cultural knowledge, *control* whether any of that knowledge may be used by outsiders, and for permitted uses, require acknowledgement as its source, and a *share* of any financial return that may come from its authorized commercial use. (p. 4; italics in original)

Looked at from this perspective, IK can expand the accounting discourse, so that Indigenous businesses and managers can "see" opportunities and value in their communities and institutions that are hidden from sight when viewed from a mainstream perspective. In this work, accounting can usefully build on the First Nations Financial Management Board (FMB) on financial management and accountability. The FMB is working toward developing financial management standards and administrative capacity within First Nations to support economic and community development (FMB, 2011). It is but one of four institutional innovations — a finance authority, a tax commission, and a statistical institute are the others — associated with the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (FSMA), which received Royal Assent on 23 March 2005 (Buhr, 2011). Working with the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association Canada and the Tulo Centre of Indigenous Economics, the FMB is identifying and delivering opportunities for capacity development (FNFII, 2011b). It can learn too from Aboriginal think tanks like the one that produced an economic blueprint for the Anishinabek Nation (Tarbell et al., 2008) and Aboriginal institutions and organizations like the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada and its *Journal of Aboriginal Management* which shares tools such as comprehensive community planning (Wade, 2008) and the Aboriginal performance wheel as a performance reporting mechanism that supports First Nations

self-governance (What is Performance Reporting, 2008).

Accounting can also learn from initiatives across disciplines and professions (Chew & Greer, 1997; Gallhofer & Chew, 2000, for example), including the interdisciplinary, intercultural, and international practices of the Indigenous humanities (Battiste, Bell, Findlay, Findlay & Henderson, 2005; Findlay, I., 2003; Findlay, L., 2000) articulated and animated by colleagues at the University of Saskatchewan. With a critical mass of internationally renowned Aboriginal faculty and a 10-percent Aboriginal student population, the Native Law Centre of Canada, Aboriginal Justice and Criminology programs, the Aboriginal Education Research Centre and Learning Knowledge Centre, and Indian Teacher Education Program, Aboriginal Initiatives in the Edwards School of Business, and the Indigenous Peoples programming in the Extension Division, the University is uniquely well placed to advance this work. The Indigenous humanities underline the value of (inter)relationships and the increasing importance of cultural categories in contemporary societies: in conceptualizing social, political, and economic processes; in reconceiving identities, markets, governance, citizenship, and human and social capital; and in rethinking the value of different ways of knowing. In the context of globalization, resource depletion and environmental degradation, and other such threats to shared commitment, those associated with the Indigenous humanities are not undone by cults of individual or collective impossibility. Instead, they offer cultures of possibility and co-operation that build much-needed capacity to respond to crises, while encouraging others to develop their own versions and add dimensions of which we have as yet no inkling.

Instead of "exploiting" Indigenous knowledge for the profit of the same old beneficiaries, workers in the Indigenous humanities (whether Aboriginal or not) work collaboratively, dismissing neither mainstream learning nor Aboriginal ways of knowing, but bringing them into dialogue and critical relationship in interdisciplinary and intercultural practice. We do so understanding how we have all been disfigured (though not in the same way or to the same extent) by a colonial history that has taught us how to reproduce hierarchy and disadvantage, how to show deference to highly specialized "experts," and how to commodify and compartmentalize so as to rationalize the most irrational of beliefs and behaviour.

In the Indigenous humanities we refuse to be confined by the old colonial categories of identity and relations that would keep us behind walls of ignorance. Instead of overvaluing the distance, disinterest, and "hard" skills associated with expertise, we value relationships, local and experiential knowledge and work to reconnect that which has been disconnected or fragmented by colonial thinking (Battiste et al. 2005). Through our work in and with Aboriginal communities and institutions, it is clear that many of the valuable human resource practices, features of organizational culture, Aboriginal traditions, and relationships with their broader communities need to be brought to the heart of accounting practices to support and not subvert their vision. We work together to respect, learn from, and **internalize** lessons from theory and practice, from Indigenous knowledge in all its diversity, recognizing the specificities of different histories and seeing value where others may not even have looked — in the lines of relation and not only in the bottom line. Only then can we give more than token respect to different knowledge with different measures of value and success, deriving strengths from them and giving real meaning to diversity in work and other places.

PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

Putting theory into practice means building on best practices available — there is no empty territory or terra nullius here — and "seeing" value where few have looked before whether they are Aboriginal organizations or corporations working with/in Aboriginal communities. It is as important to articulate commitments and investments in practical, accountable behaviours as it is to monitor the communication or rhetoric of reporting. For Manning (2000), this means commitments at the heart of corporate culture, having policies known and valued inside and outside the organization, partnering with environmental groups, and anticipating and exceeding regulatory requirements.

It is clear, from a reading of corporate and not-for-profit websites, annual, sustainability, and other reports, speeches and press releases, that a large and increasing number of organizations feel

it is important to highlight and showcase the positive impact that they are having on Aboriginal peoples, institutions, and communities. Among those organizations are those in mining industries, forestry companies, government departments and corporations, churches, fisheries, banks, wholesale and retail outlets and stores, police forces, educational institutions (including K-12 and colleges and universities), health providers, research consultants, chemical firms, and other organizations required to do business according to federal government procurement policies. However, as Manning (2004) suggests too, many of these organizations are highlighting their participation in Aboriginal communities to meet reporting requirements, public pressure, and other incentives (TD, 2009). Or, like those claiming sustainable development commitments, they are motivated by "morality, compliance, or opportunity" (Willard, 2002: 11). In particular, it seems as if a number of the organizations citing CSR in Aboriginal communities and relations are doing so in order to

- sell goods and services (including education) to a growing Aboriginal market;
- access and exploit natural resources located on or near Aboriginal lands;
- redress past wrongs of their industries/institutions to Aboriginal peoples;
- meet diversity targets in their organizations
- hire Aboriginal employees to replace aging and retiring baby-boomers;
- attract Aboriginal workers to jobs located in places where Aboriginal people make up the majority of the population, saving on recruitment and turnover costs.

Not all of the organizations and corporations that report they are doing good things in Aboriginal communities, with and for Aboriginal peoples, actually do what they say. Many corporations enter into relations with Aboriginal communities to control the way socially responsible activities are planned, described, defined, and operationalized. News stories and first-hand accounts often contradict their Aboriginal-CSR corporate communiqués. Often the benefits of corporate activity within an Aboriginal community are directed to certain individuals or leaders within the community, while the rest of the community membership loses out on the business

partnership. Often the benefits of the business partnerships end when the business activity at hand comes to an end. Corporations continue to promote their CSR activities within Aboriginal communities weeks and even years after they have left the community. If resource-rich areas can derive economic benefit from employment and services (Hilson & Murck, 2000), Cheshire (2010) has traced in a very relevant Australian context the increasing power of mining companies to impact community well-being and a relationship characterized more by patronage "inspir[ing] deference and dependence" than the "autonomy and empowerment" promoted in the rhetoric of partnerships (p. 14). The result of a growing reliance on "fly-in, fly-out" practices (together with reduced state support) is a failure "to become part of the economic and social fabric of the regions" or to live up to the "sustainable development" claims of CSR (pp. 15, 19). Aboriginal communities and institutions often lose in multiple ways as a result of such corporate CSR activities. For example, large corporations aggressively recruiting Aboriginal employees and managers may actually headhunt and lure valuable Aboriginal employees and managers away from their jobs in their own communities, leaving vacancies communities and Aboriginal organizations find difficult, if not impossible, to fill (Loxley, 2010).

Such companies can learn from the practices of one Aboriginal business — Pat Turner's ET Development — and its legacy in Aboriginal communities in Manitoba. Before ET Development leaves a community, Turner ensures that at least two community members are trained to operate the equipment. Though such a practice is uncommon within the industry, ET Development takes pride in its relations and its reputation for modeling entrepreneurial behaviour for the young people, for training and making opportunities available to unemployable people, and for leaving a community with newly developed expertise and resources — all of which are important qualitative indicators of success (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007).

WINNING AWARDS

For those corporations and institutions that claim to participate in Aboriginal communities in socially responsible ways, legitimacy and reward

await. Corporations are evaluated for their corporate social responsibility in a number of ways, but three major sources of investor information include the FTSE4Good Global Index, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI), and the Jantzi Social Index (Jsi). The FTSE4Good Index Series is "designed to measure the performance of companies that meet globally recognized corporate responsibility standards, and to facilitate investment in those companies" (FTSE The Index Company, 2009). The DJSI assesses 64 industry groups in 33 countries, choosing the top 10% of the 2500 largest companies in the index. The Jantzi Social Index (Jsi 2009) represents the behaviour of a portfolio of stocks in companies in Canada that a socially responsible investor might purchase. In addition, the Corporate Knights (2009) rank the Best 50 Corporate Citizens in Canada based on scores in seven categories including product safety and business practices, international stakeholder relations, environment, employee relations, community (Aboriginal), financial, and corporate governance. The Corporate Knight's 2007 study of Aboriginal Relations ranking resource industries found that, despite policies for positive relations, many companies betrayed "a dated frontier mentality" (cited in TD, 2009). Of 28 companies, only three had an Aboriginal member on their boards. Suncor ranked first was the only oil and gas company with an Aboriginal board member (TD, 2009).

Aboriginal organizations and organizations that support Aboriginal economic development in Canada also recognize corporations for acting in responsible ways. For example, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB), a not-for profit organization funded entirely by the private sector, has created a Progressive Aboriginal Relations (PAR) program with "performance benchmarks to assist in the development of mutually beneficial relations with Aboriginal people" (PAR, 2011) that recognizes and rewards leaders in understanding and accessing the fast-growing Aboriginal sector of the Canadian economy (CCAB, 2011). Its February 2009 report, *Achieving Progressive Community Relations*, analyzed relations among 38 companies and Aboriginal communities with mostly positive findings.

There are dozens of corporations that work in and with Aboriginal communities that rank highly on the Corporate Knights, DJSI, Jsi, and

other lists. Despite the obvious self-interest of corporations developing and promoting socially responsible activities within Aboriginal communities, a growing number of the major corporations are working to enhance their corporate social responsibility by learning from and respecting Indigenous knowledge.

For example, the Cameco Corporation, the world's largest, low-cost uranium producer providing almost 20 percent of the world's uranium demand, was ranked 29th in 2004 by the Corporate Knights, for the active role it plays in Aboriginal employment, education, and community relations. In 2002 it was recognized by PAR, enabling it to use the PAR hallmark on all of its corporate communications for one year. In 2009 it was ranked second behind Suncor Energy by Jantzi Research (TD, 2009). Expectations have risen with the hiring of Gary Merasty, former grand chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council, as Vice-President Corporate Social Responsibility.

Nexen Inc., a Canadian-based global energy and chemicals company, has as one of its primary goals "creating mutually beneficial relationships with Aboriginal people in communities located near our Canadian operations." Nexen's "guiding principle is to encourage and harness the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in our operations and share the economic benefits of development near their communities" (Nexen, 2011). It does this by pursuing and supporting Aboriginal employment and education opportunities through, for example, its Aboriginal Educational Award Program and by partnering in the Aboriginal Leadership and Management Program at the Banff Centre and sponsoring the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Already in 2011, it has been recognized by Corporate Knights as one of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations as well as by Mediacorp Canada as one of Alberta's top 50 Employers. In 2010, Nexen received seven reporting and other awards. Still, as of 2011, it has no Aboriginal board member and only one woman (Nexen, 2011).

The Bank of Montreal (BMO) began taking a serious interest in Aboriginal relations in 1992 with the release of its Aboriginal employment report to employees, reissued in 2004. According to Tony Comper, President and CEO of BMO, the report "prompted a series of direct and

ongoing initiatives aimed at recruiting and preparing Aboriginal candidates for employment at BMO, and undertaken in close partnership with Aboriginal educators and counselors" (2004: 2). The bank's activities include the formation of sharing circles designed for learning and sharing ideas related to diversity, and sponsorship of Aboriginal programs at universities and other educational institutions. Linking diversity and business strategy, the BMO leadership tracks the success of their Aboriginal initiatives with "business plans [that] include goals for hiring, retaining and supporting Aboriginal people; and meeting these goals became part of a quarterly reporting system and a factor in annual performance reviews" (p. 3).

Still, we need to bear in mind Yakabuski's (2008) warning that CSR can be "more theory than reality" and "a tool for green-washing" used by BP and Encana among others (p. 68). Despite a 2005 Texas explosion killing 15 and injuring 180, a 2006 lethal oil spill, charges and fines, BP still managed to be celebrated by *Fortune* as the most "accountable" company. Despite its lofty claims in its 2006 CSR report, Encana sent "a menacing letter" to beneficiaries of its financial support demanding favourable input into public consultations on oil and gas drilling (Yakabuski, 2008: 68).

If some are rewarded that do not deserve, we need to ensure visibility and reward for deserving CSR activities among Aboriginal organizations who are developing their social accounting and reporting practices, adding qualitatively, and redefining accountability in their own terms so as to enable their own and other Aboriginal organizations. In resisting mainstream performance measures, they are putting community values at the centre of things (Blaser, Feit & McRae, 2004). It remains to be seen how helpful the Common Government Reporting Model (effective January 1, 2009) will be to First Nations in that regard, even with significant Aboriginal input in the First Nations Study Group (2008).

An important example of compelling measures is Neechi Foods, a worker co-op in Winnipeg, which since 1989 has been balancing commercial viability with social responsibility, helping stabilize community by reducing income leakages and dependence on external markets. If some argue that such social responsibility is a

luxury that only big business can afford, Neechi shows otherwise (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). Operating according to these principles, Neechi promotes healthy living, nourishes a supportive workplace, encourages member participation, and strengthens Aboriginal pride:

1. Use of locally produced goods and services
2. Production of goods and services for local use
3. Local re-investment of profits
4. Long-term employment of local residents
5. Local skill development
6. Local decision-making
7. Public health
8. Physical environment
9. Neighbourhood stability
10. Human dignity
11. Support for other CED initiatives

Such has been the impact of Neechi that the general Manitoba CED community and the government CED secretariat have adopted the Neechi framework to assess their own initiatives (Findlay & Wuttunee, 2007). In revising practices and sharing their initiatives, they are helping others see values that had remained invisible within mainstream measures and begin their own journey to sustainability.

The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada's annual Aboriginal Youth Financial Management Conference Awards is another step in the right direction. One 2008 winner, Geordy Marshall of Eskasoni High School, Nova Scotia, puts cultural values at the heart of things. He lists Mi'kmaq immersion as his top priority in a plan to turn his "community green" and establish a "center of possibilities" to encourage youth to see diverse futures beyond the too narrow options of nursing, teaching, and trades (Marshall, 2008: 41).

CONCLUSIONS

This essay has documented the ways that mainstream accounting has undermined and oppressed Aboriginal peoples and their economies, rendering invisible both their contributions that do not fit narrow economic indices of value and persistent disadvantages Aboriginal peoples face compared to the average Canadian. And accounting has achieved as much while placing unusually

onerous reporting burdens on Aboriginal organizations constructed as unduly advantaged and insufficiently accountable. If critiquing mainstream business and accounting practices is an important first stage in departing from "business as usual," the next stage means providing concrete alternative solutions. In this task, Aboriginal thinking and institutions are importantly helping theorists and practitioners revisit and rewrite commonly held views of our natural, cultural, and social environments and begin the process of redefining indices of value to make clear where "the real waste" lies: "in maintaining the status quo and ignoring the benefits that can be derived through investment in self-government" (AFN, 2004).

If accounting has undermined Indigenous peoples and communities, an Indigenous renaissance and increasing participation in the economy is changing the way we do business and how we measure success. New accounting tools attuned to Indigenous and local knowledge are assisting those involved in Aboriginal economic development adopt alternative economic strategies — such as a co-operative approach — and make clearer "what counts" (Quarter, Mook & Richmond, 2002) in social, environmental, and cultural terms. This is the double strategy of Indigenous thinkers in Canada and elsewhere, of the Indigenous humanities, and of the AFN 2004 report — a strategy based on an inclusive "both-and" logic rather than an exclusionary and hierarchical Western "either-or" logic.

Although the task of dispelling the myths that have obscured Aboriginal successes and sufferings is "a cruel and unjust blow" further burdening Aboriginal people, "the need exists." In dispelling the myths that have sustained "400 years of discrimination" and "conditions of poverty beyond the imagination of most Canadians" (AFN, 2004), social accounting and social auditing offer another set of tools. Those tools allow community development 'change agents' a way to value and bring into the equation 'externalities' that would otherwise be left unaccounted for — including the environmental, social, and cultural costs and benefits of doing business in Aboriginal communities — factors that "literally count for nothing in the GDP. Can't we find a better measure?" (Cameron, 2005).

In the interests of better measures, Indigenous knowledge together with the aspirational goals of post-colonial thinking is already expanding the capacities of social accounting and auditing by enabling Aboriginal communities to engage new ways of telling their stories and arguing for change and development of policy — based on time-tested, cultural and spiritual ways of seeing and knowing. And we know, "in theory and in reality," that success happens when "communities are allowed to develop the institutions and ways of operating that reflect the community's own intrinsic values and when people feel part of the ongoing development of the community" (AFN, 2004). In this work, accounting can usefully build on the work of Newhouse (2004), Wuttunee (2004), and Jacobs (2002), the AFN (2004), and the First Nations Financial Management Board (FNB) on financial management and accountability and other institutions of the First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (Buhr, 2011).

Only when Aboriginal values are at the centre of accounting practices will Aboriginal communities be better able to assess the costs and benefits of the partnerships (with corporations or government) they are often encouraged to enter. Only then will accounting do justice to the specificities of Aboriginal experience in Canada, increase choice, support and sustain Aboriginal aspirations and economies, and forge a truly post-colonial Canadian future with nurturing relationships, healthy people, and vigorous economies. Only then will the economic, social, cultural, and environmental costs of an unsustainable status quo become clearer to all.

The social accounting and auditing process, when controlled by a community or co-operative, or Aboriginal community-based enterprises, can be enhanced by local and Indigenous knowledge to the benefit of all. Social accounting and auditing, thus transformed, can offer a potent means of thinking and acting outside colonial conceptual boxes that have a habit of entrenching comfortable forms of dependency. Local knowledge and IK can combine for an enhanced analysis of the value, role, and impact of an organization or business within a community and its larger social and environmental systems. This is particularly important to communities — Aboriginal or otherwise — that are concerned about the way in which business has impacted on their lifestyles, and are interested in clarifying the value of business and economic alternatives related to freedom of choice, happiness, self-worth, community

vitality, and safety — in building lines of relation and not only the bottom line.

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CANADIAN POLICY INTERVENTIONS DURING THE MAD COW CRISIS
Cause and Consequence of First Nation Exclusion

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David C. Natcher
THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Tom Allen and Trina Schmid
INDIGENOUS LAND MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the results of policy research to determine the extent to which First Nation cattle producers in Saskatchewan, Canada applied for and received government financial support following the 2003 Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease) crisis. Findings indicate a 3% participation rate among First Nation producers compared to 80% participation rate for non-First Nation producers during the same period. It is argued that if the federal and provincial governments of Canada continue their policies of indifference towards First Nation agriculture, it is unlikely that agricultural will ever serve as a viable economic opportunity for First Nations in Canada.

INTRODUCTION

On 20 May 2003, a single cow in Alberta, Canada tested positive for Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or what is commonly referred to as Mad Cow Disease. The announcement of this discovery caused shockwaves through the cattle industry. Almost immediately more than 40 countries closed their borders to live ruminant animals (cattle, sheep, goats, bison, elk, deer), meat products, and animal by-products originating from Canada. With international markets closed, the Canadian market became flooded with more supply than demand. The result was a 33% decline in farm cash receipts

for cattle (Mitura & Di Pietro, 2004) and an estimated total loss of more than $7 billion to the Canadian economy (Leiss & Nicol, 2006). With two-thirds of Canada's cattle farms located in western Canada, farm families in Saskatchewan and Alberta felt the impacts of the BSE crisis most directly (MacLachlan, 2004).

Seen as one of the worst farm crises since the 1930s, Canada's federal and provincial governments responded swiftly by introducing a number of financial intervention programs to aid cattle producers during this time of uncertainty. In total, more than $2.5 billion in federal and provincial aid was made available to struggling producers (LaBlanc, 2008). Although by the

beginning of 2008, market prices for cattle had still not returned to pre-2003 values, government support programs proved successful in enabling Canada's cattle industry to weather this financial storm.

While cattle producers from across the country took advantage of various federal and provincial support programs, anecdotal reports emerged that First Nation cattle producers in Saskatchewan had not benefited from government programs. In fact, through our collaboration with First Nation Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan we were told that most First Nation producers in the province failed to even apply for government funding despite potentially qualifying for millions of dollars of government aid. These anecdotal reports led to research to determine the actual extent to which First Nation cattle producers in Saskatchewan applied for and received government support during the BSE crisis. This paper presents the results of that research and explores both the causes and consequences of First Nation exclusion from government agricultural support programs.

BOVINE SPONGIFORM ENCEPHALOPATHY (BSE) AND CANADA'S RESPONSE

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) is a fatal disease that causes neurological degeneration in cattle. BSE is among a group of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE's) that includes scrapie in sheep and goats and chronic wasting disease in mule deer and elk. Caused by abnormal protein build-up in the brain and nervous tissues of infected animals, BSE is spread through the feeding of meat and bone meal from infected animals. Since first being discovered in England in 1986, which resulted in the infection of 135 people with its human variant Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease and the subsequent slaughter of 18 million cattle, the global spread of BSE has emerged as one of the most highly profiled issues of food safety and animal health in decades (McLachlan & Yestrau, 2008: 300).

In Canada the discovery of BSE, and the subsequent international trade ban, had severe financial impacts on Canada's cattle farm families. Within the first year of the ban, Canada's cattle industry experienced direct and indirect losses exceeding $6 billion. For Canada's rural communities these losses are equivalent to the total equity of more than 4,412 family farms (SMCI, 2003). Such significant losses led to concerns that the long-term viability of Canada's rural farm communities was at series risk through accelerated farm exit, succession, and farm consolidation (Broadway, 2008), increased stress among farm families leading to heightened incidents of suicide, depression and domestic abuse (Mitra et al., 2009), and Canada's livestock industry losing its competitive 'Canadian' branding advantage (McLachlan & Yestrau, 2008).

To avoid financial and social ruin cattle producers responded in a number of ways. For example, many producers sought off-farm temporary employment or sold off enough land and/or farm assets to maintain a foothold in the industry (Broadway, 2008). Others chose to hold back cattle and graze them on grass until market prices became more stabilized (MacLachlan & Townshen, 2008). This particular strategy led to a surplus of hundreds of thousands of cattle and a record high herd size of 17.1 million by July of 2005 (Statistics Canada, 2007). Canada's banks also contributed during this time by providing more flexible terms for loan and mortgage payments, restructuring debt, and adding to personal and business lines of credit. Many banks also made available their own agriculture specialists to work directly with producers and farm families to help manage personal finances (RBC Financial Group 2004: 5, 20).

While all of these strategies proved beneficial in helping to stabilize the industry and avoid widespread farm foreclosures, these strategies alone would have been insufficient without BSE support payments made available through Canada's federal and provincial governments (MacLachlan & Townshen, 2008). As chronicled by LaBlanc (2008), the government of Canada and the provinces made available more than $2.5 billion in financial support to aid cattle producers during this turbulent period. To qualify for government support, applicants were generally required to prove ones place of residence and operation, be 18-years of age or older, and have livestock eligible for application. For example, the Canada-Saskatchewan BSE Recovery Program was established in 2003 to provide assistance payments to eligible livestock exports and to encourage the slaughter of eligible live-

stock. In this case, eligible applicants include individuals who were: (A) a Saskatchewan resident; (B) 18 years of age or older; and (C) owned, prior to May 20, 2003, eligible livestock that are the subject of an application; or (ii) a corporation, co-operative, partnership, communal organization or Indian band. "Saskatchewan resident"includes: (i) an individual who is a resident in Saskatchewan; (ii) an individual who or an entity other than an individual that: (A) filed an income tax return respecting farm income in Saskatchewan in the year preceding the year for which an application is made; or (B) filed or will file an income tax return respecting farm income in Saskatchewan in the year for which an application is made; (iii) an Indian band whose reserve lands are in Saskatchewan. These qualifying criteria were more or less applied consistently across all government programs.

METHODOLOGY

To determine the extent to which Saskatchewan First Nation cattle producers participated in government support programs interviews were conducted with a sample of First Nation producers. In total, 33 producers were interviewed. This sample represents 50% of the total number of First Nation cattle producers operating in the province. Through a set of targeted and open-ended questions First Nation producers were asked: whether the cattle they managed were privately or Band-owned; the total number of cattle under their management; whether they applied for government support programs and if so, which programs; whether or not they received funding from any government support programs; and whether they held membership(s) in any professional organizations, such as the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association or the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association. Information regarding government program descriptions, application processes, and participation rates of non-First Nation producers in government programs was gathered from provincial and federal agricultural departments.

RESULTS

Based on the results of 33 interviews we learned that only 1 First Nation producer applied for government program support. That individual applied to the Canada Feeder Calf Set Aside program and received $2,000 in financial aid. Compared to an 80% participation rate among non-First Nation producers (Statistics Canada, 2007), this lone producer represents a 3% participation rate for First Nation producers in Saskatchewan. When the remaining 32 First Nation producers were asked why they had not applied for government support, 18 respondents said that they *were not aware of the programs* while 12 respondents said that they were told by government representatives they *were ineligible to receive program payments*. Only 2 respondents indicated that they were unable to complete the application forms.

PROGRAM AWARENESS

The majority (18/33) of individuals interviewed indicated that they had not applied for government support programs because they were not aware of them. The communication strategies used by government to announce support programs included: the distribution of the Department of Agriculture's Newsletter to all rural Saskatchewan post office boxes that contained extensive information about BSE programs, application instructions, and other relevant news; BSE program announcements in print media, including the Western Producer and rural local newspapers; mail-outs to individuals who had applied to government programs in the past; and by working closely with community (Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities) and industry organizations (Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association) to distribute program information and application forms to eligible producers. The use of industry organizations in particular was thought to be one of the more effective strategies given that organizations like the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association have direct contact with those members of the public who were most likely effected by the BSE outbreak. These organizations also have a mandate "to serve, protect and advance the interests of the beef industry in Saskatchewan through communication, education, research and advocacy to help ensure a prosperous, viable and healthy future for individuals and the livestock industry" (Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association website) and to "enhanc[e]

the growth of Saskatchewan's cattle feeding industry, through representation, provision of training, supply of information and liaison with other industry organizations" (Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association website).

Despite these efforts, BSE program announcements failed to reach First Nation producers for several reasons. For example, while mass mailing of the Department of Agriculture's Newsletter to rural post offices was likely an effective means of communicating with rural farm households, this strategy is ineffective for reaching First Nation members due to very few having rural post-office boxes. Rather mail delivery is most often sent via General Delivery to the First Nation Band Offices. In cases of mass-mailing, or when there is no specific recipient identified, mail tends to be discarded before reaching the desired recipient — in this case First Nation cattle producers. Targeted mailing lists comprised of former program recipients also had limited success due to the very low participation rates of First Nations in past government programs. While this was likely an effective form of communication for individuals who were involved in previous government programs, it does little to increase general awareness of new programs for those who historically have not been involved. Last, the targeting of professional agriculture organizations as a avenue for communicating program information also missed reaching First Nation producers because of the limited involvement of First Nation producers in these organizations. Among the 33 First Nation producers we interviewed none were members of any professional agricultural organizations. According to the Saskatchewan Cattle Feeders Association and the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association — the two largest beef producer groups in Saskatchewan — they too noted the underrepresentation of First Nation producers in their membership. While there are no official statistics kept on the ethnicity of members, it was their general sense that perhaps 5 of the 160 Cattle Feeders and as few as 2 out of 300 Stock Growers were of Aboriginal decent. This limited professional membership may in part explain the low participation rate among First

Nation producers in BSE programs and calls into question why more First Nation producers are not involved industry organizations.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

The second most (12/33) identified factor limiting First Nation involvement was uncertainty associated with program eligibility. Common to all the programs reviewed was the definition of an eligible applicant — a Saskatchewan tax payer and a Canadian citizen who is at least 18 years of age, or a co-operative, communal organization, or corporation where the majority shareholders or members are Canadian citizens and Saskatchewan taxpayers or an Indian band whose reserve lands are in Saskatchewan. While it is clear that 'Indian bands' are eligible to receive program support, not identified are individual First Nation producers whose operations are located on reserve lands; a category that each of the 33 First Nation producers we interviewed falls under. This ambiguity created considerable uncertainty for First Nation producers who are registered First Nation members, who are at least 18 years of age, are residents of Saskatchewan and Canadian citizens but are not Saskatchewan taxpayers[1] nor manage a Band owned herd. Based on these qualifying criteria 12 of the 33 producers we interviewed believed they were ineligible to receive program funds since they had not paid personal income tax and managed privately owned herds on reserve.

Uncertainty concerning program eligibility was also shared with some government representatives. On several occasions First Nation producers were told that because they were private operators located on reserve they were in fact ineligible to receive program funding. In other cases program representatives said they were unsure and would need to look into the matter, never to be heard from again. Together the uncertainty concerning program eligibility led 12 First Nation producers to not apply for program support despite being eligible to receive funds.

In addition to the above obstacles (communication and eligibility) other participatory barri-

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[1] As set out in Section 87 of the Indian Act, First Nation peoples are exempt from income tax when income is earned on reserve.

FIGURE 1
Difference Between Net Farm Income and Program Payments
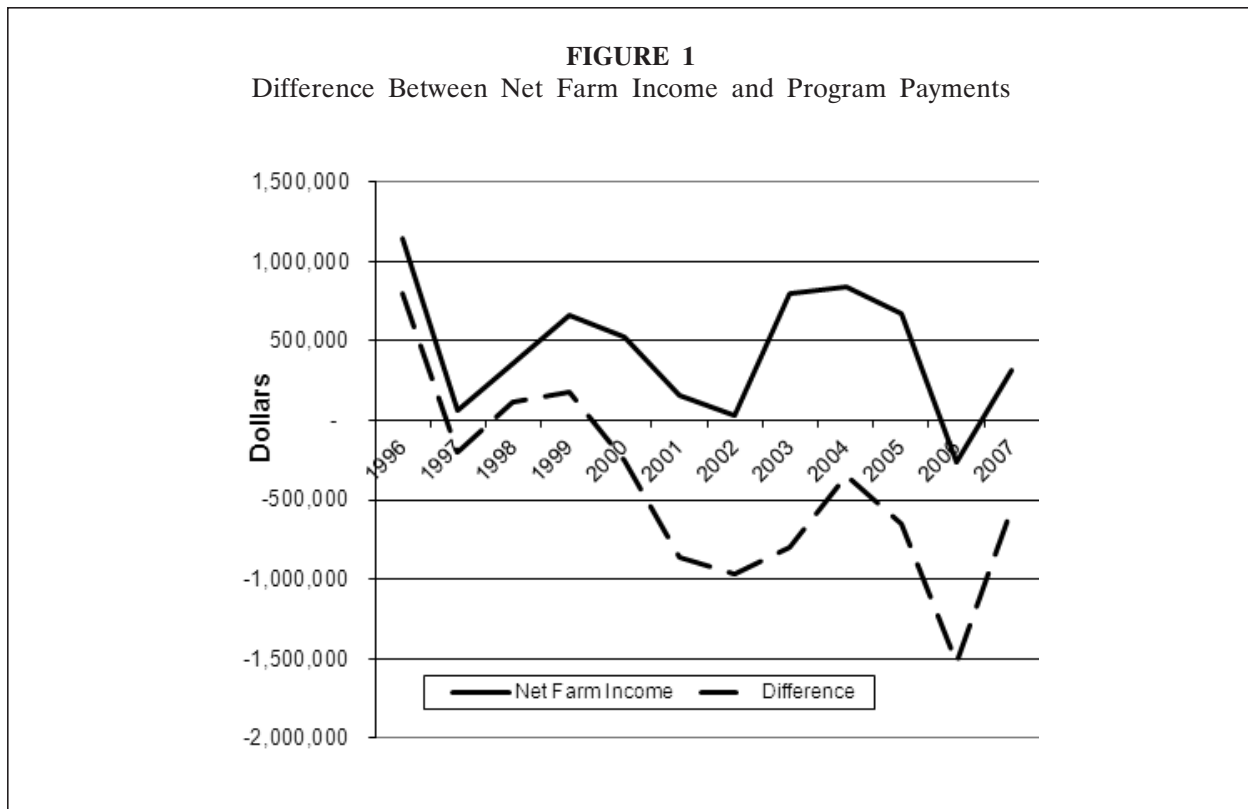
ers may have affected First Nation participation rates. For example, some First Nation producers we interviewed identified conflicts with social assistance payments as being a deterrent to applying and suggested that the threat of reduced social assistance could have dissuaded some First Nation producers from applying for financial support. Because program payments are treated as income, those First Nation producers receiving social assistance would have an equivalent reduction made in their social assistance payments. In these cases, participating in government support programs would decrease their monthly social assistance payment, thereby providing little incentive, and more likely serving as a disincentive to participating in BSE and other government support programs.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EXCLUSION

While the social and psychological impacts of BSE are likely still materializing (Mitra et al., 2009) the economic impact of BSE on First

Nation producers can be more readily discerned. To assess the impact that program payments have on Saskatchewan's agriculture industry, it is useful to first examine the overall contribution of program payments in relation to total farm cash receipts. Between 2003–2006 program payments accounted for more than 20% of total farm receipts. This is a significant contribution, which arguably stabilized the industry during this period. The substantial contribution to net farm income that is made by program payments is perhaps most clear in Figure 1. The solid line identifies net farm income for the years from 1996 through 2007 while the dotted line is the result of subtracting program payments. The space between the two lines represents the value of program payments.

In all but 3 of the last 12 years, subtracting program payments from Net Farm Income results in a negative net farm income. If the First Nation producers interviewed had received the same average BSE support payments as producers who were involved in the programs, this

would amount to approximately $590,000 in program payments, or an average of $17,878 per producer. Representing 50% of the First Nation cattle producers operating in Saskatchewan, the total payment to First Nation cattle producers during this time could potentially have been upwards of $1.69 million.

It must be noted that the government support for producers impacted by the BSE crisis was only a small percentage of the total government payments. Statistics Canada reported that the total direct government payment to agricultural producers in Canada from 2000 to 2009 was just over $35 billion of which approximately $8.3 billion was paid to Saskatchewan producers. The federal and provincial aid of $2.5 billion represents approximately 7% of the total payments during that decade. Based on our interviews we learned that First Nation producers participated in other support programs to no greater extent than they did in the BSE support programs. Full participation in all government programs could easily have resulted in payments to First Nation producers in Saskatchewan of over $25 million during the decade if based on potential BSE payments of $1.69 million. If the share of payments were based on the percentage of agricultural land owned by the First Nations of Saskatchewan their exclusion is even more significant. Approximately 5% of Saskatchewan farmland is owned by the First Nations. If government payments were made on the basis of land quantum the direct government payment to First Nations would have been approximately $414 million over the decade.

It should also be emphasized that access to these funds may be even more critical to First Nations producers than to their non-First Nation peers who are able to access lines of credit and other financial instruments to help them adjust to market fluctuations. Lacking these means, it is not surprising that First Nation producers, who, based on our interviews have not historically accessed government programs, have found little sustained success in agriculture operations. In most cases First Nation producers run smaller operations, are more susceptible to market and environmental changes, and without the stabilization of program payments, are at greater risk of losing their operations. The findings of this research seem to verify the vulnerability of First Nation producers. Prior to the BSE outbreak,

First Nations producers managed upwards of 7,500 head of cattle. At the time of this research (2008) the 33 producers interviewed had a collective herd size of approximately 1,600 head of cattle (representing 50% of First Nation producers in Saskatchewan). Between the 2003–2008 First Nation producers experienced a drop of approximately 4,300 head, or 57% of it pre-BSE herd size.

DISCUSSION

Given the apparent disconnect between First Nation producers and government support programs it may be fruitful to consider how other federal agencies engage Aboriginal communities in the delivery of their various program. Perhaps the best example is the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) who have long developed an effective communication and outreach strategy with Aboriginal fishers. According to DFO representatives many of the usual forms of communication are used, including letters, faxes to band offices, and media releases. These strategies have proven generally effective when announcing seasonal fisheries openings and closures and for communicating industry news. However, DFO recognized that these strategies are inadequate when responding to crisis situations. Because of this the Department of Aboriginal Fisheries (DAF) was established and was given the mandate to communicate and deliver DFO programs to First Nations communities and Aboriginal organizations. DFO Officers spend time working with Aboriginal communities in their regions and maintain close contacts with the individual fishermen. The objective is to develop relationships with local fisherman and to be in the position to personally convey critical information in a timely and responsive manner to enable Aboriginal fishers to respond to rapid and unanticipated changes in the industry (Levi, personal comm., 2008). Part of this responsibility is also placed on First Nations who are asked to identify a Fisheries Coordinator as the primary point of local contact. Now, and although informational letters and faxes continue to be sent to the Band Office, local Fisheries Coordinators are personally engaged in the flow of information between DFO and their First Nation.

In some ways this approach served as inspiration for the formation of the First Nation

Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan (FNACS). Established in 2005, FNACS was set up as a non-profit corporation to develop a long-term strategy to expand First Nation involvement in agricultural opportunities. Funded by the federal and provincial government of Saskatchewan, the goal for FNACS was to "develop a strong, viable, and sustainable agricultural sector both on and off the reserve for status Indians in the Province of Saskatchewan" (FNACS, 2008). Although demonstrating some success in its first three years of operation, FNACS' budget was not renewed and officially ceased operations in 2009. This was disappointing to many First Nations in Saskatchewan since FNACS was the first and only provincial organization representing their agricultural interests.

CONCLUSION

In *Lost Harvest*, Sarah Carter (1990) chronicles how the Canadian government has, since the first introduction of agriculture into western Canada, afforded optimum financial and political advantage to White farmers, while simultaneously obstructing First Nation access to markets and enacting specific policies that effectively removed any chance of agricultural development on reserves. Such hypocrisy can be traced to Canada's Peasant Farming Policy (1880s) that, among its many contravening effects, served to protect the incomes of non-Aboriginal farmers by limiting the number of cattle that could be owned by Aboriginal stock-raisers, in effect eliminating competition and fortifying a non-Aboriginal monopoly over western cattle markets (Bateman, 1996: 220). Although at times laudable, enthusiasm by government for Aboriginal agriculture has more often than not been fleeting and arguably gave way long ago to apathy and disinterest. While this research has found no malevolence, the exclusion of First Nation producers from BSE programs does nonetheless suggest a degree of indifference to the needs and success of First Nation producers.

If First Nation agricultural producers are to succeed in the 21st century they will undoubtedly require the same level of support and program access as enjoyed by their non-First Nation peers. Because the agricultural industry is characterized by high risks and extreme fluctuations in pricing and production requirements, First Nations will need fair access to government programs. To date this has not been the case. This has resulted in the marginalization of First Nation producers and is threatening their long-term ability to remain in the industry.

To reverse this trend concerted steps need to be taken by government. Specific recommendations arising from our interviews include finding ways to better engage First Nation producers in professional organizations (i.e., Stock Growers Association). Alternatively government should consider reestablishing the First Nation Agricultural Council or a similar embodiment to represent and engage First Nation producers. Through these professional networks, First Nation producers will be in a better position to access industry information and leverage institutional resources.

It was also recommended that staff of the Ministry of Agriculture spend more time cultivating relationships with the First Nations in their regions. These personal relationships can help familiarize First Nations with bureaucratic culture of government agencies that distribute public resources (Vasquez-Leon, 2009: 296). This is not to suggest that some government staff are not recognized for their outreach efforts. Nonetheless a more 'hands-on' approach would contribute greatly to building trust and personal relationships between First Nation producers and government representatives. At a minimum constructive change will require government to reconsider how their programs are communicated and administered and begin to ensure fair and equitable program access to all those vested in Canada's agricultural future. If changes do not occur, and government continues its policies of indifference to the needs of First Nations, it is difficult to imagine how agriculture will ever become a sustained economic base for First Nation peoples in Canada.

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REFRAMING FOREST-BASED DEVELOPMENT AS FIRST NATION– MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION
Lessons from Lake Superior's North Shore

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Ryan Bullock
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

ABSTRACT

Changes in Northern Ontario's planning and policy context (e.g., forest tenure reform, Far North Act) are creating opportunities and obligations for First Nations and towns that often are not matched by the local capacity, resources, and governance structures requisite for effective and equitable participation. This paper documents the early stages of a First Nation–municipal forest-based development initiative in the Northeast Superior Region and interprets evolving perspectives of 27 First Nation and non-First Nation interviewees concerning the establishment of counterpart regional governance forums — the Northeast Superior Forest Community and Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum. The analysis shows how contrasting framings of common problems, solutions, identities, and power relations contributed to conflict but also innovation for eventual collaboration. First Nations acted on their obligation to teach other groups how they wanted to be engaged and the importance of developing culturally appropriate protocols to initiate and structure working relationships. First Nations and municipal representatives realized the need and benefit of redistributing different sources of power to strengthen their network and the common voice of the region. The conclusion offers lessons about building trust and relationships, the role of teaching and learning, and avenues to empowerment for fostering First Nation–municipal collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal communities in Canada's provincial norths face growing and significant opportunities, but also responsibilities and challenges, associated with natural resource development and exploration in their traditional territories. In Northern Ontario for example, forest tenure reform, ongoing land claims, modernization of the Mining Act, and the introduction of the Far North Act and Ontario Green Energy Act have created community economic development, resource benefit sharing, mandatory Aboriginal consultation, and community-based land use planning processes (Clark et al., 2010; NSRCF, 2010; MNDMF & MEI, 2009; MNDMF, 2009; CCFM, 2008). Canadian Aboriginal groups are strongly committed to re-establishing their rightful roles as land stewards and resource decision makers, backed by constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights (Bombay, 2010; NSRCF, 2010).

The above-mentioned legislative and planning processes, and the economic development approaches they prescribe, remain contested among Aboriginal groups. An increasingly complex policy and planning context is not always matched by Aboriginal capacity and well-established governance structures requisite for effective and equitable participation[1]. There are growing resource development opportunities and obligations for Aboriginal groups, both with the Crown and third parties (i.e., municipalities, commercial interests, and land owners). However, conceptually sound and workable governance models and tools are required in order to make the most of such opportunities (Graham & Wilson, 2004). That the optimal protocols, processes and structures for Aboriginal governance are not widely understood remains a challenge for Aboriginal groups and their would-be collaborators (RCAP, 1996). With respect to First Nations, efforts to document and disseminate governance best practices are still in their infancy, though localised examples are surfacing (e.g., NCFG, 2009; Apolonio, 2008; CCCI, 2005; Graham & Wilson, 2004). Self-

organization of First Nation regional governance bodies such as the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum (NSRCF) in Northern Ontario shows that First Nation leaders recognize these pressing challenges and are already collaborating to develop and implement solutions.

This paper documents the initial stages of a collaborative forest-based economic development initiative involving several First Nations and municipalities in the Northeast Superior Region of Northern Ontario, Canada. Specifically, I interpret the evolving experiences and perspectives of First Nation and non-First Nation individuals concerning the establishment of counterpart regional collaborative governance forums — the Northeast Superior Forest Community Corporation and Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum. Both were initiated through bottom-up efforts to foster local development amidst a decade-long downturn in Ontario's forest economy. Analysis of interview transcripts and documents shows how different individuals framed and reframed First Nation–municipal collaboration over time, and bridges and barriers that were encountered. The final major section offers a synthesis of lessons shared by First Nations and non-First Nations to inform practice. The following section discusses concepts relevant to First Nation–municipal collaboration as an entry point for the case analysis.

FIRST NATION–MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION FOR FOREST DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Collaboration involves sharing ideas and resources, and sharing power and decision making among different parties (Selin & Chavez, 1995). Depending on interpretation, collaboration can range from simply informing other parties of ongoing decisions and actions, to fully sharing decision making and formal inter-area coordination that engages different groups from the outset (Pomeroy & Berkes, 1997; Plummer & Fitzgibbon, 2004). Multiparty collaboration

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[1] For example, First Nations in northern Ontario have legitimate concerns for their ability to effectively participate in parallel government-sponsored processes addressing the Far North, energy, and mining simultaneously (G. Broad, personal communication, April 10, 2011).

on environmental resource matters is necessary given the increasing complexity and uncertainty inherent in societal challenges that by their very nature render unilateral actions by individual organizations ineffective (Gray, 1989; Mitchell, 2002). Collaboration is typically used to (a) mitigate conflict by engaging opponents through a joint search for information and solutions that satisfy different interests and/or (b) to advance shared visions for the collective good of the social groups involved (Gray, 1989; Conley & Moote, 2003).

But social groups must first commit to working together as a preliminary step in defining a shared vision. With respect to regional forms of environmental resource development and governance that involve First Nations and municipalities, a common vision can be discovered or refined through social learning processes supported by collaborative arrangements that have been specified to a common challenge and context [e.g., Wendaban Stewardship Authority process in Temagami, Ontario (see Dust, 1995; Laronde, 1993)]. Even with mutual commitment, however, building cross-cultural collaboration to promote forest-based development can be difficult (e.g., Bullock et al., 2009; Robinson, 2007; Laronde, 1993).

The fact that First Nations and municipalities recognize and value the need to work together is demonstrated by collaborative efforts that have developed despite ongoing policy limitations (FCM, 2000). Research on First Nation–municipal collaboration in Canada highlights three main, indeed overlapping, areas of involvement: (1) regional governance, (2) land and resource co-management, and (3) economic development (Apolonio, 2008; Tamera Services Ltd., 2002). First Nation and non-First Nation communities share a significant interest in improving their relationships, especially where close proximity of reserves and municipalities creates common land use and socio-economic issues as well as options for cost and benefit sharing. Practical examples include arrangements for improving service delivery, developing and maintaining infrastructure, community land use planning, economic development and environmental stewardship. Coordinating decisions and actions can also prevent conflict (Apolonio, 2008). Cassidy & Bish (1990) remind us, however, that band governments are distinct from local governments as the former have unique political status and interact with other governments on a much more forceful basis; band governments are more likely to be responsible for more diverse portfolios of functions (e.g., schools, social assistance programs), and; their interactions with other governments often occur in a legally ambiguous arena (unlike municipalities).

Regarding the potential for First Nation–municipal forms of forest-based development and governance, Parsons & Prest (2003) observe increasing and diverse Aboriginal participation in forestry decision making and practice as more Aboriginal people assert their traditional beliefs and values as "stakeholder, partner, manager, worker, and owner" (Parsons & Prest, 2003: 779). There is also growing acceptance of municipal, First Nation, and local civic involvement in forestry decision making and development exemplified by provincially enabled community forests (Bullock et al., 2009) and federal programs (i.e., First Nations Forestry Program; Forest Communities Program) designed to enhance local use, benefits, and control of forests.

In the Northeast Superior Region of Northern Ontario where this research was conducted, First Nations are working with municipalities and private parties to manage large scale forest licences and purchase and operate idle processing facilities for mutual local benefits. For example, in 2009 the Town of White River, Pic Mobert First Nation and a private investor purchased the former Domtar mill in White River, Ontario with plans to manage the surrounding forest (Ross, 2010). The Ojibway of the Pic River First Nation, and the towns of Manitouwadge and Marathon together have an active bid with the province to hold management rights to the forests surrounding their communities (Louiseize, 2010). Discussed below, several Northeast Superior Region chiefs and municipal leaders have joined in a regional forest-based development initiative intended to generate innovation and economic opportunities throughout the region based on Aboriginal, local, and scientific understanding of forest ecosystems and communities. The next section outlines the context for First Nations–municipal collaboration in the Northeast Superior Region and the research methods.

CASE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Background

First Nations and municipalities of the Northeast Superior Region share a physically and culturally diverse landscape on Lake Superior's north eastern shore. This roughly 60,000 km^2 region extends across the Eastern Great Lakes–St Lawrence Forest and the northern boreal forest region transition. It is the traditional territory of the Brunswick House, Chapleau Cree, Chapleau Ojibwe, Hornepayne, Michipicoten, Missanabie Cree, Pic Mobert and Pic River First Nations, and several resource-dependent towns are located here including Chapleau, Dubreuilville, Hornepayne, Manitouwadge, Wawa, and White River.

Several Northeast Superior Region communities have recently faced collapse with the closure of 4 of 5 major forestry operations from 2003–2009. Over 1200 direct and well-paying forestry jobs were lost that provided core employment to a population of about 14,000 (AWIC, 2008). Notably, about 20 per cent of the population is Aboriginal (i.e., North American Indian and Métis). Between 2001 and 2006, municipal and First Nation reserve populations declined 16.4 and 17.5 per cent respectively (Statistics Canada, 2008) and communities have struggled to maintain basic services, infrastructure, and employment.

In response to the above challenges associated with small northern municipalities and the forestry crisis in general, the Northeastern Superior Mayors' Group emerged early in 2000. Sharing ideas, resources, and political support this informal regional network initially focused on improving communication, health care, and transportation services and infrastructure for the above mentioned six towns. By 2005 the Mayors' Group wanted more coordinated decision making and was working to build a regional economic strategy.

During the summer of 2006, the Mayors' Group responded to a Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) call for proposals for the Forest Communities Program (FCP). The purpose of the program was to "foster collaborative community efforts to help communities take advantage of new economic opportunities from forest resources" (NRCAN, 2007). The Mayors' Group bid was successful and the Northeast Superior Forest Community Corporation (NSFC or simply Forest Community Corporation) was created to administer an annual federal contribution of up to $400,000 for 5 years to establish research and programs meant to generate economic opportunities, human capital, and sustainable forest management knowledge.

Unsatisfied with the level of First Nations engagement, First Nation leaders formed the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum (NSRCF) in 2007 to establish a more formal collaborative relationship with the Forest Community Corporation "inspired by Aboriginal values such as caring, sharing, mutual respect and trust (NSRCF, 2010: 3). The Chiefs' Forum also acts as a regional governance body to coordinate First Nations' efforts that address economic development, environmental stewardship, and socio-cultural priorities. The Chiefs' Forum has successfully obtained funding to complement and augment Forest Community revenues. First Nations–municipal relationship building is ongoing, though much has been accomplished in a short time as the communities self-organize and formalize their links. Below I discuss the methodology used to analyze the initial, and at times turbulent, stages of these counterpart organizations and present key perspectives and events involved in building First Nation–municipal collaboration. The analysis focuses on past events that occurred between 2006 and spring 2008; it is important to be clear on the period covered here, given that the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum and Northeast Superior Forest Community Corporation have since evolved and some mutual and respective negotiations are ongoing.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study draws on 27 semi-structured interviews with representatives from area First Nations, towns, and senior levels of governments involved with the NSFC and The Chiefs' Forum. Following university research ethics approval, site visits and two rounds of confidential interviews were conducted between May 2008 and July 2009, which included 9 follow-up interviews with NSFC and The Chiefs' Forum representatives to examine evolving perspectives. In all, 5 First Nations and 12 NSFC representatives were interviewed, as well as 10 participants from municipal, provincial [e.g., Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry (MNDMF)] and federal governments

(NRCAN, FEDNOR) whose job description was to act as First Nations liaisons and/or to engage the broader public (including First Nations) on Northeast Superior Region economic development and forest resource management, planning, and development matters. Interview transcripts and documents were coded iteratively according to the main issues and perspectives shared by participants. Documents (reports, planning and policy statements, local newspaper archives) were also useful in confirming the occurrence and timing of events, and past views of certain participants concerning First Nations–municipal collaboration. To protect confidentiality, generic social group codes are used to identify participants below.

Frame analysis provides an approach for making sense of multi-party conflicts and understanding competing views that provide the basis for collective action and/or conflict in evolving collaborative processes (Gray, 2003; Dewulf et al., 2004). Central to this approach is the concept of *social framings* or the cognitive lenses held by individuals and groups that help them to interpret and give meaning to reality. Frames are shaped by past experience and culture; the meanings of experiences can vary depending on what frames individuals and groups use to interpret said experiences. This approach enables us to understand how different collaborative actors in a given context (a) view common problems, (b) identify themselves and others with respect to common problems, including responsibility for action, and (c) the forms and distribution of power (Gray, 2003; Dewulf et al., 2004) (Figure 1). Personal interaction, opportunity and willingness to co-learn, and trust are considered fundamental to collective reframing processes and can be a precondition and/or product of collaboration (Gray, 2003). The results below highlight several key perspectives and events instrumental in forming the Forest Community Corporation and Chiefs' Forum as the basis for First Nations–municipal collaboration.

(RE)FRAMING FIRST NATION–MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION FOR FOREST DEVELOPMENT

First Nations and municipalities had variable levels of collaborative involvement prior to the

FIGURE 1
Interplay of social framings in context-specific collaboration
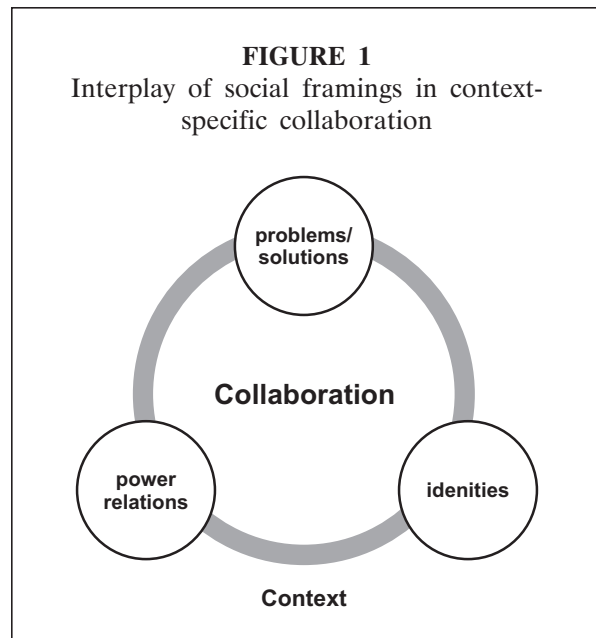
foundation of the Forest Community Corporation. For instance, First Nations representatives indicated that relations with municipal leaders needed to be developed during the NRCAN proposal process (FN1; FN2). Though three First Nations were listed as partners in the proposal, only one Chief (i.e., Chapleau Cree First Nation) provided a letter of support (see Albert et al., 2006). Two other First Nations (i.e., Pic Mobert and Missanabie Cree First Nations) had stated a "strong interest to participate in the project but more time [was] needed to explore their role in the project" (Albert et al., 2006: 41). The proposal stated that additional consultation with First Nations would occur immediately and that more letters of support would follow (Albert et al., 2006). However, the letter from Chapleau Cree First Nation was soon retracted. First Nations felt they were misled about the nature of their participation and the scale of NSFC funding (FN1, 2, 3). Galvanized by the perceived need for regional cooperation to address ongoing challenges and to bolster First Nations involvement with municipal leaders, the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum materialized in 2007.

The Chiefs' Forum factored prominently in common perceptions of First Nations influence. In general, while First Nations' authority regarding natural resources was widely recog-

nized, this was seen to be limited by capacity constraints. Many non-First Nation representatives encouraged First Nations' involvement in the Forest Community Corporation and confidently projected that First Nation capacity would increase in the future (NSFC, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9; MUN4, FED2). The Chiefs' Forum initiative was later partially funded by NRCAN through the Forest Community Corporation to help provide resources for capacity building. Organization of the Chiefs' Forum was seen by partnering First Nations to immediately boost their relational power with respect to negotiating change:

> We're going to be stronger number one as a voice. It's not just one person, one Chief, me [and] my Chief standing there saying 'this is wrong'. It's a group of First Nations saying 'no'. (FN2)

Subsequently, First Nations notified the Mayors' Group that Forest Community Corporation project plans would be suspended until First Nations were engaged appropriately. First Nations also informed municipal leaders of their duty to consult based on the receipt of federal funding and plans for resource development involving traditional Aboriginal territory (FN1). With support from a creative facilitator and strategic advisor, First Nations also made the case for more effective First Nation–municipal collaboration based on combining their traditional resource tenure with the capacity of non-First Nation communities. Notably, participants described First Nations as the third most powerful actor in the region with respect to forest governance (after the provincial government and forest industry). The power source most often associated with First Nations was legal authority, and there was growing awareness among municipalities that Aboriginal rights were being recognized by the courts. As one municipal representative summarized: "Their power is their legitimate Treaty Rights" (MUN4).

> Several NSFC and First Nations representatives (NSFC2, 3, 5, 8; FN1, 2), including other municipal (MUN1) and federal (FED1) representatives observing the collaboration building process throughout the region indicated that failing to approach First Nations early in the process was counterproductive, for example:

> I warned [the Mayors] very early. I said 'I think you need to go and talk to First Nations right away'. But that was ignored.... First Nations were [very concerned] ... they scheduled a meeting to talk to us and said: 'we have a role to play'. (NSFC5)

Some Forest Community Corporation representatives openly explained that the proposal to NRCAN was done quickly due to time constraints rather than malice and that elevating First Nations involvement was an important "part of the plan" (NSFC2, 7, 8). Still, before a meaningful collaboration could be built, conflict stalled the project temporarily and eroded First Nation–municipal trust — challenges that would only be overcome through ongoing mutual commitment to northern livelihoods and cross-cultural collaboration.

A step towards positive and meaningful First Nation–municipal collaboration was made in February 2008 when a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Northeast Superior Forest Community Corporation and Chapleau Cree First Nation. Chapleau Cree First Nation agreed to provide constructive feedback on the Forest Community Corporation's Strategic Plan, circulate the critique to other area First Nations for comment, and host a regional First Nations meeting to assess common preferences for involvement among affected First Nations (CCFN, 2008: 1). Soon after this arrangement was made, on March 2, 2008 NRCAN and Mayors' Group representatives traveled to Chapleau for the Forest Community Program contribution agreement signing event. Shortly thereafter on April 5, 2008, *The Chapleau Express* featured the Chapleau Mayor and President of the NSFC signing the agreement (Staff, 2008). The front page article publically highlighted the history of collaboration among the six towns and federal funding as parts of the regional and federal response to economic crisis and communicated the president's message:

> All the communities of this region have been built because of our forest resource, and now our job is to come together as a collective to find sustainable new industries for our future economic wealth. The NSFC will be the catalyst to move these types of initiatives forward.

Though municipal collaboration was promoted, the article refrained from mentioning First Nations because of the ongoing background work to foster First Nation–municipal relations. First Nations were indeed represented at the launch to show mutual support prior to full collaboration (NSFC7).

Following a March 31, 2008 regional meeting involving Chapleau Cree, Missanabie Cree, Brunswick House and Michipicoten First Nations (Hornepayne and Pic Mobert sent regrets), First Nations offered their feedback on the Strategic Plan to the Forest Community Corporation, which outlined general and specific points of agreement as well as those requiring modification and clarification. For example, aspects of the Strategic Plan that supported youth development, education, forestry research, capacity building, and local control of resources were consistent with First Nations values and objectives. Major points needing clarification related to the undefined role of First Nations in the project, references that First Nations had participated in regional capacity-building strategies (unbeknown to the First Nations themselves), the need for greater recognition of Aboriginal rights and potential contributions, as well as the validity of First Nations claims to biomass resources and sacredness of medicinal forest plants (CCFN, 2008: 7–8). First Nations proposed recommendations to redraft the Strategic Plan; elevate the profile of First Nations; garner formal support from interested First Nations; secure funding to assist First Nations participation; and confirm First Nations representatives to sit on Forest Community Corporation committees (CCFN, 2008: 19). The Forest Community Corporation sought additional funding from NRCAN to assist the Chiefs' Forum with enhancing capacity for coordination and participation. This funding was combined with significant funds leveraged independently by First Nations (FN1; NSFC7, 8; FED2).

One month later on May 7, 2008, NSFC's general manager published an article entitled "Co-operation Key to New Initiative Success" on the front page of the *Algoma News Review* (Lauziere, 2008). In part, the article was intended to improve First Nation–municipal relations and acknowledge the need for community awareness promotion. The article introduced the Northeast Superior Forest Corporation as

a new initiative that although some may have heard of, has not been described in any great detail. There are questions in the community, in fact all the regional partner communities, surrounding who we are and what we are doing.

One third of the article was dedicated to discussing plans for First Nations relationship building and stressed that:

> one of the key priorities for the NSFC is to build strong relationships with the First Nations within our project boundaries. The Mayors of all six communities recognize that decisions involving lands and resources cannot be made without the direct involvement of area First Nations. Now that process funding has been secured, the NSFC is committed to advancing an aggressive relationship building initiative with the seven First Nations located within the geography of the Forest Community initiative.

Public recognition of First Nations rights and plans to foster partnerships through relationship building exercises indicates a reframing of a common organizational identity essential for strengthening First Nation–municipal collaboration.

First Nations collaborative efforts were also gaining support from senior government funders:

> We're kind of looking at [the Chiefs' Forum] as a role model for the rest of the province. They seem to have a pretty good idea. So we figured [what] if we could stimulate almost pilot projects? We've been saying for years that First Nations need to partner up here [in Northern Ontario] because, try as they might, they are not going to get an opportunity for each one individual. They have to form some kind of a cooperative. So in this case being six or seven should be a pretty good forest opportunity there and they seem like a pretty good role model. (FED2)

Interviews during the spring of 2008 and again in spring 2009 with First Nations representatives (2, 3, 4, 5) indicated that awareness for the Forest Community Corporation among First Nation partners was building slowing. And as First Nations became more organized through the collective Forum, their power was evident at the level of Forest Community Corporation negotia-

tions, for example: *Now that [First Nations] are starting to speak as a collective, they have a lot more impact on what happens* (NSFC7).

Forest Community Corporation directors and staff further acknowledged the authority of First Nations to steer organizational planning and development processes but of equal importance they came to recognize the positive opportunities of working with First Nations. The agreement to collaborate, however, did not create an automatic alliance. First Nations, Forest Community Corporation staff and resource people, the Mayors, and Ministry of Natural Resources representatives felt that collaboration was very important, acknowledging that some conflict persisted (FN1, 2; NSFC2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9; FED1, 2), which was to be expected given the mix of people and issues involved. But both First Nations and non-First Nations were optimistic that any outstanding issues would be resolved (FN1; NSFC3, 6, 7) — a sign of mutual commitment to collaboration.

Relationship building and improving cross-cultural understanding were identified as important objectives by the Chiefs' Forum and Forest Community Corporation in order to openly address any mutual concerns for open information sharing and financial disclosures, as well as committee cross-representation (FN1; NSFC1, 3, 5, 7, 9). First Nations acknowledged that reconciliation and trust between First Nations and non-First Nations would take time (CCFN 2008). Forest Community Corporation representatives identified that First Nations and municipal leaders shared similar practical organizational challenges.

However, First Nations stated they had the added challenge of working in parallel to regenerate their own culturally appropriate governance relationships at the local and regional level (FN1; 2).

As efforts to establish a fully collaborative process evolved, interviews during May 2009 indicated a strong desire to have all the Chiefs and Mayors meet to discuss how working relationships could advance. Forest Community Corporation and Chiefs' Forum representatives (FN1; NSFC1, 3, 5, 7, 9) believed a constructive meeting would help initiate personal relationships and develop understanding of similarities and differences as the basis for a working relationship.

Subsequently, First Nation–municipal collaboration continued through the bridging of the Chiefs' Forum and Forest Community Corporation. By May 2010 First Nations had hosted a cross-cultural sensitivity workshop that was attended by 35 municipal and First Nations representatives. The Chiefs and Mayors had also joined at the Forest Community Corporation fall annual general meeting to celebrate their partnership and joint accomplishments, as well as select new board members. The Chief of the Michipicoten First Nation was selected as vice president of the Forest Community Corporation. As shown above, building cross-cultural relations created a steep learning curve, though many forecasted strength would come through continuation of First Nation–municipal collaboration. As summarized by one Forest Community Corporation representative:

> The more [First Nations] educate themselves, the more they're being active in all the processes, which is a great thing. It's just that it's a new way for us too. It's a whole new kind of dynamic that we need to consider. I mean, it's a great thing. It's really good to see the mayors have been endorsing them one hundred percent. They're supportive of the First Nations in the region as well. I mean, I think we're on to something, with the First Nations and the municipalities working together. We're going to have something here that nobody has anywhere. It's going to be really interesting to see how it plays out. (NSFC7)

The next section discusses lessons learned from the early stages of First Nation–municipal collaboration building and highlights how participants navigated contentious interactions and issues to give collaboration a chance.

INSIGHTS FROM FIRST NATION–MUNICIPAL COLLABORATION

Teaching and Learning

At its root, collaboration involves sharing ideas and resources to solve common problems and advance a shared vision (Gray, 1989; Selin & Chavez 1995). Both First Nation and municipal representatives acknowledged that they had learned from and at times educated one another on similarities and differences in their perspectives and situational needs relative to the forestry

crisis. With a limited history of formal involvement and no pre-existing locally-lead forums for meaningful cooperation in forest-based development and governance, neither group initially had a clear understanding or plan for how First Nation–municipal collaboration and trust should or could be developed.

Through their shared experience with the Forest Community Corporation and Chiefs' Forum, and through active involvement of experienced facilitators, participants had come to better appreciate the complexity of forestry in Northern Ontario, and in their region specifically. Despite their differences, First Nation and municipal leaders learned that they had to work together, instead of competing against one another for development opportunities. This perspective was referred to as "regional thinking" indicating a need to think more holistically about neighbouring towns and First Nations as part of a system: *It's like a card house. You pull one card out and the rest come down. We may not always agree, but we recognize that each card is important. What's good for one is good for all of us* (NSFC1). Reframing supported the development of a common place — and interest-based identity built upon bonds to a shared landscape and common reliance on forest ecosystems, as well as "northern problems" more generally.

During the evolution of the Forest Community Corporation and Chiefs' Forum, First Nations persistently engaged municipal representatives and tried to help municipal leaders understand how collaboration could be achieved. First Nations saw that their own obligation in the relationship was to help inform their potential partners how meaningful collaboration could be built. Through facilitation and asserting their own vision of how to proceed (e.g., teaching municipalities about Aboriginal and treaty rights; critiquing the Strategic Plan and offering tangible alternatives, organizing workshops), First Nations were proactive in navigating a joint way forward.

Importantly, First Nations also clearly articulated their expectations and the need to develop protocols for engagement. They continually emphasized the importance of designing culturally-appropriate protocols for Aboriginal engagement to structure First Nation–municipal, but also First Nation–First Nation relationships. Given the colonial legacy of corporate and senior government control over forestry in the region

neither First Nations nor municipalities initially had a well-developed model for engagement to advance a coherent vision for collaborative forest-based development. First Nations did stress, however, the need to guard against the reproduction of challenges inherent in conventional top–down forestry processes in the region that had often created divisive barriers between municipalities and First Nations (e.g., Local Citizen Committees; Ontario's Crown Land Use Policy Atlas). Emerging opportunities for teaching and learning led to the production of options for engagement and the chance to formalize Mayors' Group-Chiefs' Forum relations as well as identify mutual responsibilities and contributions as steps towards collaboration.

Building Trust and Relationships

Trust is essential to fostering First Nation–municipal working relationships and can be both a precondition and/or a product of collaboration. Those involved in relationship building exercises learned that trust can be delicate and easily eroded. Uncertainty initially clouded communications as First Nations and municipal leaders made "baby steps" towards middle ground. But this challenge was gradually overcome.

The above case confirms that even if there is common willingness to pursue local involvement in forest governance, some measure of creative conflict among First Nations and municipalities can persist. However, it is important to recognize that conflict is not always negative as it can provide motivation and spur innovation (Bullock & Hanna, 2008). In the Northeast Superior Region case, First Nations self-organized to match the level of political organization among municipalities, and in the process created other benefits of having their own regional forum to address political, cultural and capacity gaps. Forming the Chiefs' Forum elevated the level of trust and rekindled relationships among First Nations themselves.

As noted by several participants, a forum for direct interaction and open dialogue between First Nation and non-First Nation leadership was seriously needed in the region to familiarize the long-separated communities. The Chiefs' Forum and Mayors' Group came together to represent such a forum after years of dialogic work and facilitation. Opportunities for periodic,

informal personal interaction led by First Nations and non-First Nations were important to fostering collaboration.

The reframing of the Forest Community Corporation organizational identity to include First Nations (i.e., the second Forest Community Corporation media release) marked a threshold in developing more meaningful working relations. Indeed, an early obstacle was that some First Nations were listed as partners in the initial proposal to NRCAN, but the organizational identity was framed in a manner that, ironically, totally excluded them (e.g., claims that the mayors legitimately represented the entire Northeast Superior Region and use of maps in the Strategic Plan that located municipalities but not First Nation communities) (see Albert et al., 2006). Results show that common identities (e.g., exuded by an organization of individuals such as the Forest Community Corporation) and trust can evolve and be reinforced over time through shared experience. Growing trust among First Nations and municipalities increased willingness to search for common solutions to problems and adopt a provisional group identity for specific purposes (e.g., agreement for the need to work together through the Chiefs' Forum and Forest Community Corporation to address "northern problems").

Empowerment through Sharing Authority and Resources

Cross-cultural collaboration within the Forest Community Corporation presented a new opportunity to reconcile past community divides. Both First Nations and non-First Nations stated that slow growing respect for First Nations rights and leadership encouraged a positive rapport based on common problem identification and benefits of working together. Forest Community Corporation representatives came to respect that First Nations could intervene with project plans based on their legal authority. The early withdrawal of First Nations' support for the Forest Community Corporation proposal demonstrated the strategic use of their political influence. Realization among municipal representatives that First Nation duty to consult was a powerful tool to combat senior government and industry control was a critical turning point in First Nation–municipal collaboration.

Lack of capacity on both sides was another barrier to collaboration that was overcome. However, creation of the Chiefs' Forum and resource support from federal government and other funding streams contributed greatly to enhance participatory capacity. Early municipal actions were exclusionary and initially challenged efforts to build a common identity on collective local empowerment as the basis for further reframing problems and solutions for the Northeast Superior Region. Solidifying a common place-based identity between First Nations and municipalities as the basis for ongoing action required the willing redistribution of power among involved parties (i.e., shared decision making and resources) and the meaningful recognition of Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, which was advanced through First Nations facilitation.

SUMMARY

In light of opportunities unfolding and limitations for First Nations (and towns) in various natural resource sectors, there is a growing interest and need for First Nations–municipal collaboration. This paper showed how some proactive First Nations are working to change their own relationship with the land as well as relationships with non-First Nations. First Nation–municipal collaborative forums such as the Chiefs' Forum-Mayors' Group in Northern Ontario, Canada can help reframe local forest-based development by rethinking regional forest governance arrangements. Restructuring the conventional processes that influence the use and control of forest ecosystems and economic development activities moves First Nations and partner municipalities more directly into the realm of forest governance where they can affect change in keeping with local values and visions.

Shared commitment to adapt to socio-economic crisis and periodic social conflict helped to spark deliberative processes for framing and reframing forest development and eventually led to collaboration. This study illustrated contrasting First Nation–municipal perspectives of the common problems and solutions, identities, and power relations that contributed to developing collaborative arrangements and provided related lessons about building trust and relationships, the role of teaching and learning, and avenues to empowerment. First Nations realized they

had an obligation to teach and inform municipal and other social groups how they wanted to be engaged; they recognized the importance of developing culturally appropriate protocols to initiate and structure relationships with non-First Nation groups. Each group gradually saw the need and benefit of combining and redistributing different sources of power among collaborators to strengthen their network and the common voice for the Northeast Superior Region.

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DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN
Women and Youth in Aboriginal Community Development

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Loleen Berdahl
POLITICAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Bonita Beatty
NATIVE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Greg Poelzer
POLITICAL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

ABSTRACT

Scholars interested in Aboriginal community development have paid little attention to the important roles and contributions of women and young people. An extensive quantitative survey — the first such survey undertaken — provides valuable insights into the views and activities of Northern Saskatchewan Aboriginal residents. By assessing the extent of community participation and the support of residents for community engagement, this study demonstrates a deep and broad commitment to working at the community level. The study also shows stark differences between on- and off-reserve populations: on-reserve members have a very homogenous pattern of community engagement, while off-reserve Aboriginal people demonstrate significant differences by age and gender. These findings have important implications for the understanding and implementation of Aboriginal community development.

INTRODUCTION

Aboriginal people in Canada's resource-rich provincial Norths find themselves in the midst of a widespread economic boom, one that has brought comparatively few benefits and many challenges to their communities. Northern Saskatchewan, for example, has attracted growing interest. Corporations have broadened their mineral exploration activities, undertaken early stage oil sands development, expanded existing uranium and gold mines, sustained forestry operations, and developed plans for extensive hydroelectric development. The Province of Saskatchewan stands to benefit from expanded pro-

vincial revenues, improved corporate returns and an expanding market for skilled trades (Northern Labour Market Committee, 2009). In many ways, Northern Saskatchewan demonstrates significant potential for broadly-based Aboriginal community and economic development. However, a fundamental disconnect in terms of the ability of the Aboriginal workforce to meet regional labour demand has taken the edge off the promising opportunities of early 21st century regional development.

The benefits from rapid economic and resource development are not evenly shared. Aboriginal communities in the region experience high rates of unemployment, rising costs, poor educational outcomes and a broad range of socio-economic pathologies. One-quarter of all income in the region (compared to a province-wide average of 16%) comes from assistance programs. As a crucial regional labour force assessment reported, educational attainment in the North lags behind provincial educational attainment levels (Northern Labour Market Committee 2009). Skilled Aboriginal people have no difficulties finding work: the unemployment rate for Aboriginal people with a university degree is only 3%, below the provincial average for all residents. Yet those without at least a high school education face an unfriendly labour market: close to one-third of working age Aboriginal people without a high school diploma are unemployed (Northern Labour Market Committee, 2009: 8), and the unemployment rate soars much higher in the winter months. And while many Aboriginal people have difficulty finding wage employment, Northern Saskatchewan has serious difficulties finding and retaining workers, as "the local labour force often cannot meet industry demand —jobs often require higher education" (Northern Labour Market Committee, 2009: 5). Simply put, the employment benefits of the booming economy are not filtering down to the Aboriginal communities.

For Aboriginal leaders and government officials alike, successful Northern economic development requires training, workforce engagement and entrepreneurial activity. But these ends cannot be achieved without strong communities. Well-functioning communities underpin economic engagements, and improving conditions at the community level is clearly key to any long-term strategy for regional success. This raises questions, therefore, about community capacity, the nature of Aboriginal participation and interest in community affairs, and the most appropriate means of encouraging greater community engagement.

Discussions of community development often focus narrowly on formally structured programs by nonprofits, social enterprises and cooperatives. This narrow focus on organized or structured involvement is not sufficient for understanding the situation in Northern Aboriginal communities. The full range of Aboriginal community activities are not captured by what is, in effect, an institutional approach to community, and the informal networks and activities that are vital to a community's wellbeing are generally missed by this narrow definition. As Silver et al. (2006) argue, Aboriginal community development must be defined in Aboriginal terms, not in the institutional and structural terms that are common for non-Aboriginal communities. Conventional measures of community development are often limited in that they are, on the words of Findlay and Wuttunee, "insufficiently respectful of Aboriginal values, the aspirations and needs of communities on and off reserve, and the particular contributions of Aboriginal women" (2007: 5). This is problematic, as community development strategies that fail to incorporate Aboriginal understandings of community and Aboriginal cultural values will miss key opportunities and challenges. As Cornell and others have argued, successful Aboriginal economic development depends in part on a 'cultural match' between governance institutions and community values and beliefs (Cornell & Kalt, 1993; Cornell, 1998; Minore & Katt, 2007).

Furthermore, a narrow definition of community development can lead researchers to overlook the roles that women and youth play in Northern Aboriginal communities. Scholars often assert that women play "invisible" roles in the functioning and development of their communities (Silver, 2007). The neglect of women's community engagement may reflect methodological choices (Lowndes, 2004; Harell, 2009), as studies of community development and social capital typically focus on engagement in formal institutions. Scholars have also been reluctant to apply feminist perspectives to community development; the insights from this research emphasize the complex role of informal networks and contri-

butions by women (Leavitt, 2003). Overlooking women's roles can readily lead to the exclusion of these groups from the evaluation of community development processes; indeed, Silver argues, "The voices of women, and Aboriginal women, are often ignored in planning community development" (2007: 2).

The role and situation of Aboriginal youth is even more invisible. Obviously, young people represent the community leaders, workers and entrepreneurs of tomorrow, and understanding the attitudes of Aboriginal youth toward community engagement and their participation in community events and processes is fundamental to any long-term strategies for local development and community engagement. Yet in the literature, community participation by Aboriginal youth has been largely ignored. For the most part, research on Northern Aboriginal youth focuses on education and social challenges, including such issues as teenage suicide, poor educational outcomes, pre-adult sexual behaviour and drug and alcohol abuse. This research gap is problematic.

A comprehensive approach to community development must incorporate the formal and informal participation of Aboriginal women and youth and must look beyond current activities to determine the underlying assumptions and attitudes toward community held by these two crucial groups. Community development, for the purpose of this study, is defined in broad terms, and is considered to be the manner in which Aboriginal members participate in and support activities designed to develop their communities.[1] This inclusive definition better reflects Aboriginal understandings of community and measures more effectively the contributions of Aboriginal women and youth. Furthermore, the broad definition of community development is consistent with the scholarship that argues that community involvement and engagement provides an important foundation for community economic development (Putnam, 1993; Tolbert, Lyson & Irwin, 1998).

This study uses original quantitative survey data to evaluate the role of women and youth in Aboriginal community development in Northern Saskatchewan. Northern Saskatchewan serves as an ideal case study for this type of analysis. Saskatchewan's Northern Administrative District (NAD) comprises the top half of the province. It is home to roughly 37,000 people living in about 45 communities consisting of municipalities, reserves, settlements and adjacent reserve/municipalities. As a legislatively, geographically and culturally distinct region, the NAD is an ideal region for Northern and Aboriginal research. Based on the 2006 Census, over 80% (29,085) of the Northern population is Aboriginal (Cree, Dene, Métis). The dominant Aboriginal populations in the North are First Nations (62.3%) and Métis (22%). Dominated by the boreal forests of the Canadian Shield, the NAD has substantial commercially viable natural resources, including uranium, gold, oils sands deposits, and forests. As such, the NAD is the focus of extensive resource exploration, planning and development. The communities within the NAD are, however, constrained by remoteness factors, including limited infrastructure and government services, distances from major population centres, high costs of living, and the relative absence of locally controlled investment funds.

This study is the first extensive investigation of Northern Aboriginal community development. While scholars have considered urban Aboriginal community development, research to date has yet to fully consider Aboriginal community development in remote Northern communities. Northern Aboriginal communities have distinct economic and political histories. They are typically less influenced by federal and provincial government actions, and may be more successful at retaining cultural practices. Given these distinctions, the important lessons researchers have provided about urban Aboriginal engagement are not necessarily applicable to Northern Aboriginal community development.

The use of quantitative data provides the additional opportunity to explore the nuances and broad characteristics of Aboriginal women and youth participation in community develop-

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[1] Community involvement is an important component of social capital. For an excellent discussion of measuring social capital in Aboriginal communities, see Mignone, 2003.

ment. Much of the existing scholarship on Aboriginal community development relies on qualitative and interview-based data. These studies provide richness of detail, but are limited in their ability to draw conclusions about broader patterns of behaviour or to distinguish between subgroups within Aboriginal communities (such as gender, age or Aboriginal status cohorts). While quantitative data are available on community involvement in the Canadian population as a whole (Hall et al., 2009), national studies of community engagement typically have only a small number of Aboriginal respondents, rendering meaningful analysis of gender, age and Aboriginal community engagement impossible. The more nuanced understanding of the role of women and youth in Aboriginal community development emerging from this analysis should inform ongoing policy efforts by Aboriginal and other governments relating to Aboriginal community development.

WOMEN, YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Women and youth are critical to the future of Aboriginal community development. Aboriginal women, in particular, are ideally situated to act as change agents in their communities, a reality has been recognized in international development efforts, such as the United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), which focuses on developing the capacities of indigenous women. Women are seen as being closest to the community; as Silver asserts, "it is often the women, and especially Aboriginal women, who best understand the needs and capacities of their communities" (2007: 2). The centrality of women to the lives of their children and grandchildren means that their potential influence is vast: "Women's activism has been crucial to building and sustaining urban Native communities, not only through their direct participation in the overt politics of social movements, but through their particular roles around the organization of family, social life, sustenance, shelter, and the maintenance of culture" (Krouse & Howard-Bobiwash, 2003: 489).

Research suggests that Aboriginal women are critical to community success. Krouse (2003: 533) asserts that "[w]omen's activism, while less

visible [than men's], has been crucial to sustaining Indian communities.... Silver et al. (2006: 2) found in their study of community development in Winnipeg that "much of this community development work, although not all, is being done by Aboriginal women. It is Aboriginal women who are, for the most part, the leaders in conceptualizing and putting into practice a distinctly Aboriginal form of community development." Further, Aboriginal women are argued to bring unique qualities to community development. According to Weibel-Orlando (2003, 499), "Native American men and women have, since the initial days of urban Indian activism and community building, differed with regard to strategies of activism, community service interests and involvement, education, and self-identity." In particular, Aboriginal men and women may differ in their priorities and community agendas, with women's agenda potentially being "more pragmatic, localized, and service-oriented" (Weibel-Orlando, 2003: 496).

While the importance of Aboriginal women to community development has been explored (particularly in the urban setting), systematic studies about the role of Aboriginal youth are not yet available. Leaders speak eloquently about the future role of today's youth, but researchers have made few attempts to evaluate their attitudes toward community and to determine the possible trajectory of youth participation in community affairs. Research reveals much more about negative or problematized behaviour (school dropouts, teenager sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, youth imprisonment) of Aboriginal youth than about community-building activities (participation in community organizations, support for community events and the like). This focus on the negative ignores the tremendous opportunity present in Northern Aboriginal youth. National (general population) research suggests that young people (aged 15–24) are more likely than older cohorts to participate in formal and informal volunteer activities (Hall et al., 2009: 38, 51, 56). If relevant in the North, this pattern would represent a significant advantage for Northern Aboriginal community development, as young people make up a large proportion of Northern Aboriginal communities. Indeed, 43% of the NAD population (of which over eight in ten residents are Aboriginal) is under the age of 20, and the median age is 23

years (Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Relations, 2008; Northern Labour Market Committee, 2009).[2] A high level of engagement by Northern Aboriginal young people in their communities would thus translate into greater total number of people participating in community development.

It is also possible that the unique cultural influences in Northern Aboriginal communities could reduce or eliminate age differences in community development. Traditional Aboriginal cultures placed considerable emphasis on values of communalism, consensus decision-making, sharing, mutual aid and equality (see Poelzer & Poelzer, 1986, 3; Lithman, 1984; Brizinski, 1998; Leacock & Lee, 1982). While some argue that these values and norms are lost in modern Aboriginal communities (Boldt, 1993: 176–177), others assert that these values remain important (Wiseman, 2007: 106–7). The isolation of Saskatchewan's Northern Aboriginal communities required their residents to work together and rely on each other. Northern remoteness helped to reduce (but did not eliminate) the influence of 'modern' and 'European' cultures and economies on traditional Northern Aboriginal community values and political culture. Given this, age and gender differences in community involvement may be small, particularly for reserve communities.

METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Original quantitative survey data, collected between November 9 and December 21, 2010 by Probe Research on behalf of the survey team, allow for the examination of the relationship between gender, age and community development in Northern Saskatchewan. The survey questionnaire received ethics approval by the University of Saskatchewan. The research team presented the research plan to Northern Aboriginal communities before conducting the survey and received written support from the Prince Albert Grand Council and Meadow Lake Tribal Council. Northern Aboriginal leaders were given a month's notice prior to start of the actual survey and they were reminded of the project's objectives. Prior to the survey, the principal investigator was interviewed in Cree and English on MBC Radio (Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation), an Aboriginally-owned and operated radio station that broadcasts throughout Northern Saskatchewan. Additionally, advertisements about the survey in English, Cree and Dene ran on MBC Radio from November 1, 2010 until December 10, 2010.[3]

The survey was administered in English, Cree and Dene. A total of 505 Aboriginal respondents were interviewed: 214 identified themselves as Status Indians living on-reserve, 103 as Status Indians living off-reserve, 21 as non-status Indians, 161 as Métis, and two as Inuit.[4] For the purposes of this analysis, the Aboriginal population was divided into two categories: on-reserve and off-reserve (including Status Indians living off-reserve, non-status Indians, Métis and Inuit). Survey results can be expected to be accurate within +/-4.30% for the Aboriginal population in the Northern Administrative District, 19 times out of 20. Data are weighted to match the NAD's gender, ethnicity and age profiles. Young people (aged 18–24), those without a completed high school education, and the non-working population are underrepresented in the sample; this is consistent with the research methodology, as landline telephone survey research is limited in its ability to access individuals who do not have landline telephones (e.g., young people with cell phones and those who cannot afford telephones) and individuals who are often away from their landline telephones (e.g., individuals working on trap lines).

The project examined three dimensions of community engagement. First, researchers considered attitudes toward community engagement and Aboriginal culture. Respondents were asked, "In your opinion, how important is it that individuals be involved in community events and activities?" Respondents were also asked, "How

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[2] In contrast, for Saskatchewan as a whole, 27% of the population is under the age of 20 and the provincial median age is 39.

[3] There were over 30 advertisements, ranging from thirty seconds to one minute in length. The time schedule for advertising was spaced equally, with ten spots in each of the time periods from 6:00 pm — midnight; 1:00 pm–3:00 pm and 3:00 pm–4:00 pm.

[4] The survey also included an additional 337 non-Aboriginal respondents, and 13 respondents who either refused or were unable to identify with any category. These 350 respondents are not included in the analysis presented in this paper.

important is it that Aboriginal communities maintain traditional ways of life?" For both questions, response categories included very important, somewhat important, not very important and not at all important. Second, the research assessed community engagements as reported by respondents. Survey respondents were asked if they engaged in a number of community development activities "done as a part of a group or organization, other than your work or employment, in the past 12 months".[5] The seven activities considered included canvassing, campaigning or fundraising; serving as a member of a board or committee; organizing or supervising any activities or events for a school, church or other organization; volunteering for a Band event (asked only of Band members); teaching or coaching; providing care or support, including counseling or friendly visiting; and sharing traditional foods, such as moose meat or fish, with others. (Sharing traditional bush foods is a significant Northern Aboriginal community activity that demonstrates local knowledge and promotes cooperation, collective effort and respect for the land and its resources (Tobias & Kay, 1994; Ballantyne et al., 1976).) Responses were coded as yes and no. The community involvement questions did not cover all possible forms of local engagement but did include activities of considerable importance to Northern communities. Third, the responses to the seven community involvement questions were totaled to create a scale ranging from zero to seven. Individuals who reported doing none of the seven specified activities score a 'zero' on the scale, while individuals who reported doing all seven of the activities score a 'seven.'

The survey — the first of its type undertaken in Canada — allows for a comprehensive assessment of community engagement by Aboriginal peoples in Northern Saskatchewan. The data allowed for differentiation by age, ethnicity and gender, and by on- and off-reserve populations. Given the importance that Aboriginal leaders and government officials assign to community engagement as the foundation for healthy and healing communities, the survey allows for an evaluation of key social and personal factors in determining the extent and nature of community participation. Understanding these factors could eventually permit the development of improved strategies for promoting and sustaining community engagement practices in Northern Aboriginal communities. While the analysis has theoretical and conceptual importance, its primary value lies in assisting Northern Aboriginal communities with their ongoing efforts to rebuild social cohesion, address economic challenges and improve cultural outcomes through community engagement.

Community Engagement Attitudes

Eighty percent of all respondents, both on-reserve and off-reserve, indicated that community involvement was "very important" (Tables 1 and 2). Women were more likely than men to state that community involvement is very important, although the gender difference is only statistically significant in the off-reserve cohort. Age differences are also found: for the on-reserve population, respondents aged 18–29 were considerably less likely to consider community involvement to be very important, while in the off-reserve population, respondents aged 45–64 are more likely than other age cohorts to see community involvement as very important.

Variations are also seen with respect to attitudes about the importance of maintaining traditional Aboriginal ways of life. On-reserve respondents were slightly more likely to state that this is 'very important'. On this question, there is no difference between on-reserve men and women, but a gender difference is found in the off-reserve population: almost nine in ten women and three-quarters of men stated that maintaining traditional ways of life was very important. Age differences are again observed. In the on-reserve population, fewer than 80% of respondents aged 18–29 rate maintaining traditional ways of life as being very important, com-

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[5] These self-reported behavioural questions were adapted from indicators used in Statistic Canada's Canada 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) and 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participation (CSGVP). The specific questions adapted from the 2000 NSVGP are FV1_02, FV1_05, FV1_07, and FV1_08. The specific question adapted from the 2007 CSGVP is FV_Q04. As the NAPC survey sought to measure community involvement broadly, and not just volunteer activity, the questions were adapted to eliminate emphasis on unpaid activities.

TABLE 1
Community Attitudes and Demographic Groups, % 'very important', On-Reserve Only

	Total	Gender			Age				
		Male	Female	Sig	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Sig
Community Involvement	76.6%	72.2%	81.1%	n.s.	64.4%	83.6%	85.9%	100%	***
Maintaining Traditional Life	85.9%	85.0%	86.8%	n.s.	76.5%	92.6%	90.1%	100%	***

* p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

TABLE 2
Community Attitudes and Demographic Groups, % 'very important', Off-Reserve Only

	Total	Gender			Age				
		Male	Female	Sig	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Sig
Community Involvement	77.1%	71.4%	82.9%	*	73.8%	74.5%	85.4%	68.4%	***
Maintaining Traditional Life	80.9%	73.9%	87.8%	**	81.5%	83.0%	83.5%	62.2%	***

* p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

pared to over 90% of respondents aged 30 and over. Age differences follow a different pattern in the off-reserve population, where respondents aged 65 and over are less likely to state that maintaining traditional ways of life are very important.

Community Engagement Types

Turning to reported community engagements, strong majorities of on- and off-reserve respondents reported sharing traditional foods and providing care and support to others, with rates on both activities being higher in the on-reserve population. Participation rates drop for more formalized community involvements, such as canvassing, campaigning or fundraising, and serving as a board or committee member.

Important differences are seen between the on- and off-reserve populations. In the on-reserve population, very few gender or age cohort differences were found to be statistically significant: on-reserve women are more likely than on-reserve men to report providing care or support, and participation on boards and committees is higher among the 30–44 and 45–64-year-old age cohorts (Table 3). With the exception of these two activities, on-reserve residents report similar types of community involvements, regardless of gender and age.

Larger variations by age and gender were found in the off-reserve population (Table 4). Women and respondents aged 65 and older are less likely to report sharing traditional foods. Off-reserve women are more likely than off-reserve men to report providing care or support, or organizing or supervising events. Off-reserve residents aged 18–29 are less likely than older cohorts to report serving as a board or committee member, and off-reserve residents aged 30–64 are more likely to report teaching or coaching.

Community Engagement Levels

The number of community engagements also reveals some important patterns (Table 5). Again, demographic variations are greater within

TABLE 3
Community Involvement and Demographic Groups, On-Reserve Only

	Total	Gender			Age				
		Male	Female	Sig	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Sig
Share traditional foods	89.8%	89.4%	90.2%	n.s.	92.4%	90.1%	93.0%	100%	n.s.
Care or support	71.0%	65.9%	76.3%	*	65.2%	70.2%	80.3%	100%	n.s.
Organize/supervise events	51.4%	51.4%	51.4%	n.s.	55.0%	44.3%	60.6%	50.0%	n.s.
Volunteer band event	42.5%	42.3%	42.7%	n.s.	36.4%	43.3%	54.4%	36.4%	n.s.
Teach or coach	40.4%	42.2%	38.5%	n.s.	35.9%	41.3%	52.1%	25.0%	n.s.
Canvassing, campaigning or fundraising	30.4%	25.1%	35.8%	n.s.	24.2%	35.5%	39.4%	25.0%	n.s.
Board/committee member	27.4%	28.9%	25.9%	n.s.	18.3%	32.0%	39.4%	25.0%	*

Only Band members were asked about band activities. * p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

TABLE 4
Community Involvement and Demographic Groups, Off-Reserve Only

	Total	Gender			Age				
		Male	Female	Sig	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Sig
Share traditional foods	78.2%	82.5%	73.8%	*	85.2%	77.6%	80.8%	51.4%	***
Care or support	65.4%	56.4%	74.5%	***	68.8%	65.4%	65.0%	59.5%	n.s.
Organize/supervise events	46.7%	36.5%	56.9%	***	35.2%	48.1%	54.4%	48.6%	n.s.
Volunteer band event	33.1%	39.1%	28.4%	n.s.	42.1%	23.3%	31.1%	0.0%	n.s.
Teach or coach	35.0%	32.3%	37.8%	n.s.	20.4%	46.2%	40.8%	24.3%	***
Canvassing, campaigning or fundraising	36.0%	31.9%	40.1%	n.s.	33.3%	41.1%	39.8%	16.2%	n.s.
Board/committee member	32.9%	30.2%	35.6%	n.s.	11.1%	33.6%	49.5%	35.1%	***

Only Band members were asked about band activities. * p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

TABLE 5
Mean (Average) Number of Community Involvements and Demographic Groups

	Total	Gender			Age				
		Male	Female	Sig	18–29	30–44	45–64	65+	Sig
On-Reserve	3.52	3.44	3.60	n.s.	3.26	3.55	4.15	3.58	*
Off-Reserve	3.08	2.84	3.32	*	2.77	3.21	3.44	2.32	**

Only Band members were asked about band activities. * p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

the off-reserve population. Off-reserve women report a higher number of activities than do off-reserve men, while gender differences on-reserve are much more modest. The participation of age cohorts is rather uniform in the on-reserve population (the exception being the 45–64-year-olds, who report a higher number of activities), while in the off-reserve population the youngest (18–29) and oldest (65 and over) cohorts report a significantly lower number of activities than do the 30–44 and 45–64-year-olds. (Looking at the populations as a whole, it must be noted that although on-reserve residents report participating in a slightly larger number of activities than do off-reserve residents, these differences likely do not reflect meaningful participation experiences, as volunteering for Band activities is one of the seven activities considered and off-reserve residents are less likely to be Band members.)

To provide greater precision in identifying the determinants of community involvement, we turn to regression analysis. The dependent variable is the number of community involvements reported (ranging from zero to seven). Drawing on previous research (Hall et al., 2009: 38), the independent variables included in the model are gender, age, income, education, employment status, and the presence of children in the home. Additionally, self-reported health status is included, as individuals with poorer health status may be less involved in their communities. Finally, the model also includes the community involvement attitudes.[6]

The OLS regression analysis identifies important differences between the on-reserve and off-reserve populations (Table 6). Only one socio-demographic variable — work status — is a significant predictor of the number of community involvements among the on-reserve population. Controlling for all other variables, working individuals report higher numbers of community involvements than do non-working individuals. In

TABLE 6
OLS Regression of Number of Community Involvements

	On-Reserve			Off-Researve		
	B	SE	Sig	B	SE	Sig
Constant	−2.278	1.475		−2.590	1.137	*
Male	−.126	.237		−.326	.204	
Age	.007	.010		.023	.008	**
Working	1.366	.256	***	.620	.250	*
Children	−.024	.308		.134	.227	
Education	.128	.122		.275	.104	**
Income	−.005	.127		−.101	.100	
Health	−.196	.113		.090	.094	
Impt Community Involvement	1.285	.290	***	.645	.225	**
Impt Aboriginal Traditions	.081	.353		.371	.247	
Adjusted R^2	.228			.140		

Only Band members were asked about band activities.   Unstandardized coefficients are presented. * p > .05; ** p > .005; *** p > .001

[6] The independent variables include: sex (male=1, female=0); age in years; income; education; employment status (working=1, not working=0); children under 18 in the home (yes=1, no=0); health status (poor/fair=1, excellent=4); and ratings of the importance of community involvement and of maintaining traditional Aboriginal ways of life (not at all important=1, very important=4).

contrast, a number of socio-demographic variations are found in the off-reserve population. Working individuals report higher numbers of engagements, and the number of community involvements increases with age and education. Interestingly, in both the on- and off-reserve populations, gender, the presence of children in the home, health status and income are not significant predictors of the number of community involvements reported when other variables are controlled. Turning to the attitudinal variables, for both populations, and as expected, the importance that one places on community involvement is positively related to the number of engagements reported. Somewhat counter-intuitively, however, attitudes about the importance of maintaining traditional Aboriginal ways of life are not significantly related to the number of reported community involvements.

DISCUSSION

The data demonstrate a number of important variations relating to community engagement within the Northern Aboriginal population. With respect to community development attitudes, on-reserve and off-reserve populations equally value community involvement. The on-reserve population places greater value on maintaining traditional ways of life than does the off-reserve population, which is consistent with their choice of residence. Within the on-reserve population, men and women hold similar attitudes but significant differences are found between age cohorts. Within the off-reserve population, significant attitudinal differences are found between men and women and between age cohorts.

In both the on- and off-reserve communities respondents are more likely to report informal community engagements than more formal engagements. While a number of gender and age cohort variations are found in the off-reserve populations, there are only a limited number of gender and age cohort differences found in the on-reserve population. In short, the on-reserve population is more homogenous in its types of reported activities, while the off-reserve population is more heterogeneous. Put differently, on-reserve residents participate broadly while off-reserve engagement is more focused.

Socio-demographic variations in the number of reported activities were minimal in the on-

reserve population. In contrast, in the off-reserve population women and respondents aged 30–64 reported participating in a larger number of community engagements. Again, the data suggest that community involvement is more homogenous in the on-reserve population and more heterogeneous in the off-reserve population. These findings were confirmed in the multivariate analysis, which revealed only one significant socio-demographic predictor (work status) for the on-reserve population and three significant socio-demographic predictors (age, work status and education) for the off-reserve population. For both on- and off-reserve populations, assessments of the importance of community involvement are a significant predictor of the number of community involvements reported.

These findings have significant policy implications. First, the data demonstrate robust levels of Northern Aboriginal community engagement. Aboriginal people in Northern Saskatchewan are deeply and systematically active in supporting their communities. As governments and businesses strive to develop the North's natural resources, the duty to consult (as mandated by the Supreme Court of Canada for development activities in traditional Aboriginal territories) necessitates dialogue and engagement with Northern Aboriginal communities. Governments and businesses should be mindful of the high level of community engagement, and not enter consultations with an assumption about disengaged Northern Aboriginal peoples. Additionally, the data demonstrate the very high value that Northern Aboriginal residents place upon traditional Aboriginal ways of life and upon engagement with community development. These community values are part of the broader context for Northern economic development, and should be accommodated and recognized in consultation and Northern economic development strategies.

Second, the research provides a guide for areas of emphasis in the promotion of community involvement and the development of volunteers and community activists. Employed individuals, in both the on-reserve and off-reserve populations, report higher levels of community engagement. This makes sense: working people may have greater confidence and thus willingness to be engaged in their communities. They may have larger social networks and thus

more invitations to become engaged. Statistics Canada reports that 60% of the residents in Census Division 18 (which includes the NAD) are not working. Given the relationship between employment status and community involvement, increasing employment rates in Northern Saskatchewan can be anticipated to have benefits not only for individuals but also for the communities and, indeed, the whole region.

Women living off-reserve have a higher level of community involvement than do men, as indicated by the bivariate analysis. Local community organizations and policymakers might consider ways to increase the involvement of off-reserve men. Additionally, given the sizable youth populations in both the on- and off-reserve communities, community organizations and policymakers should promote youth community engagement. This is particularly true given that community involvement draws individuals into networks and develops leadership skills. Overall, opportunities for increasing community engagement are clearly evident from the demographic variations found in the analysis.

CONCLUSION

Northern Saskatchewan is one of the fastest growing and most promising resource development zones in North America. The richness of regional resources and the southern and international pressures to bring these resources to market have been placing considerable strain on Northern communities. This study demonstrates that Aboriginal people retain a strong commitment to traditional life ways and communities and are actively involved with community activities.

Aboriginal community engagement may be one of the greatest untapped and misunderstood resources in Northern Canada. Aboriginal people care greatly about their culture, values and community conditions. They participate in a broad range of activities and clearly believe that personal engagement translates to social, cultural and economic improvements in their communities. There are untapped resources, particularly among the youth and off-reserve men, and over-extended sectors of the community, principally women. That there are many people not yet fully engaged in community-building activities suggests that there is potential for expanded participation.

That employment is correlated to the level of community engagement supports the observation made by numerous Aboriginal leaders that economic development and job creation is essential for a return to community wellbeing.

The examination of engagement in Northern Saskatchewan challenges long-standing assumptions about Aboriginal participation in 21st century community development. Regional development strategies must take the level of commitment and participation into account and should focus on increasing employment, mobilizing young people for community service, and supporting women in their many and diverse activities. Perhaps most importantly, the research challenges the widely held notion that off-reserve Aboriginals have separated themselves from, if not rejected, their community and Aboriginal values. Instead, the survey demonstrates a regional population with robust levels of community engagement, a deep desire to improve local conditions, and a strong commitment to Aboriginal value and traditions.

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Editor's Introduction

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Robert J. Oppenheimer

The State of the Aboriginal Economy is a section of this journal that examines different aspects of the environment that may contribute to the economic well-being of Aboriginal communities and individuals. It is not intended to provide an assessment of how well or poorly Aboriginals across Canada are doing economically. If such an examination was provided, we would likely find that there is an extremely broad range results being achieved. Some communities are doing very well, many are struggling and others are getting by.

This section includes four papers that address issues relating to the economic well-being of Aboriginals. A common theme among these four papers is the opportunities for enhancing Aboriginal economies.

Seaman, Robertson and Ford discuss, in broad terms, investment opportunities for Aboriginal communities. This is presented in ways that are consistent with Indigenous laws and traditions, while recognizing constraints imposed by the federal government. Four potential areas that provide investment opportunities for those communities in a position to do so are reviewed. These include the gaming industry, with a focus on Saskatchewan, energy generation, with a focus on Ontario, carbon offset projects, which is still evolving and commercial real estate.

Bailie, Parungao, Ouellette and Russell report on opportunities within the forestry sector. This includes the finding that Aboriginal communities have increased the amount of forestry under their management. Further, there has been a significant increase in the total median income for off-reserve Aboriginal men working in forestry.

This has resulted in the closing of the income gap between them and non-Aboriginal men. Those working in forestry, on average, are older and better educated than they had been. However, employment in forestry for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals has declined, based upon the 1996, 2001 and 2006 census data.

White discusses the First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA), which is a Canadian law enacted in 1999 and the opportunities provided for land management. The paper argues that First Nations which achieve the five requirements under the Nation Building Model, which are explained, should experience greater success in their land management and obtain greater social and economic prosperity. The paper encourages taking advantage of the legislative tools that allow Aboriginals to exert self-governing jurisdiction over specific subject matters such as land management as well as education and family services, rather than taking an all or nothing approach to self-government.

Oppenheimer analyzes the employment patterns of Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in 2009 and 2010. When examining this by age, gender, province and territories there are very few areas where Aboriginals have achieved an increase in employment. Overall the employment comparisons between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals are not encouraging. Yet the picture changes dramatically when employment is assessed by level of education. What we see is that as the level of educational increases so does employment. This is the case for Aboriginals as well as for non-Aboriginals. Education may be seen as an opportunity for levelling the playing field as there is almost no difference in employment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals when examined by educational level. This may be seen as extremely encouraging as education appears to be a means for employment and economic advancement.

INVESTING ACCORDING TO INDIGENOUS TRADITION
An Assessment of Indigenous Laws and Investment

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Paul Seaman, with Scott Robertson and Robert Ford
GOWLING LAFLEUR HENDERSON LLP

ABSTRACT

Indigenous peoples have inhabited North America since time immemorial, using Indigenous laws as guiding principles on how to live sustainably. However, since European contact, Indigenous communities have seen their roles in planning for the future progressively eroded. Now that many new and modem investment opportunities are presenting themselves to Indigenous communities, some guidance on making the right investment decisions may be needed. The authors argue that because European laws and policies have historically not accommodated the unique requirements of Indigenous communities, communities may choose to apply proven Indigenous laws when making sustainable investment decisions today.

INTRODUCTION

The face of modern Aboriginal[1] economic development continues to be revealed in Canada. Many communities have made significant strides in various niche areas of business and settled billions of dollars in land claims. Among the most successful ventures have been those in the hospitality, tourism, and gaming industries. Perhaps surprisingly, although sizable claims have been settled and gaming ventures typically generate tens of millions of dollars in annual net profit, investment of settlement funds and gaming profits appears to be only just beginning. Some obstacles to economic development still remain. While acknowledging the survival of Indigenous

Paul Seaman is a Métis lawyer practising Energy, Technology and Aboriginal law in Gowlings' Toronto office, Scott Robertson is a Haudenosaunee lawyer practising Aboriginal law and general litigation in Gowlings' Ottawa office, and Robert Ford is a lawyer practising in Private Equity, Venture Capital, and Technology law in Gowlings' Ottawa office.

The authors welcome comments on this article at the following e-mail addresses: Paul Seaman (paul.seaman@gowlings.com); Scott Robertson (scott.robertson@gowlings.com); Robert Ford (robert.ford@gowlings.com).

[1] Note that throughout this paper, the term 'Indigenous' is used where possible to broadly refer to the original inhabitants of what is now Canada. Where necessary, the term "First Nation" or legal terms (Aboriginal, Indian, Métis, and Inuit) are used to indicate reference is being made to a specific group in a given context.

legal principles in Canada, this paper examines the reasons why diversified investments may make sense for Aboriginal communities and attempt to identify some potential investment opportunities. We suggest that flexible trust structures, greater access to gaming revenues, asset allocation, recent legislative changes, and certain developments in the energy and environmental sectors provide communities with an opportunity to sustainably plan their own economic affairs and build substantial economic capacity. We are of the view that many of these concepts and opportunities are currently within the reach of many communities.

INDIGENOUS LAW AND SUSTAINABILITY

Indigenous legal scholars argue that some, if not all, Indigenous communities in Canada have surviving laws that ought to dictate their role in modern self-determination and self-government. The Supreme Court of Canada has affirmed that, to the extent such laws prevail, they must not be incompatible with combined Canadian sovereignty, must not have been surrendered by treaty, and must not have been otherwise extinguished by the Crown.[2] The Supreme Court has also held that Aboriginal rights are not frozen in time.[3]

There are examples of Indigenous laws that may correspond to a right to self-reliance and sustainability in a modern investment context. For example, the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace *Kaianerekowa* requires decision-makers to consider the needs of future generations when making important decisions that may impact those generations.[4] Similarly, Anishinabek law deems humans to have a trust-like relationship

with land insofar as it is "held by the present generation for future generations"[5] and that any discretion the present generation may exercise over land is to be tempered by an overarching, guiding principle that future generations must also thrive on it.[6] Similar parallels exist in Canadian law. For example, the chief actuary of the Canada Pension Plan reports on the intergenerational sustainability of the Canada Pension Plan ("CPP") on the basis of looking 75 years into the future, directly influencing government decisions on how investment returns and CPP contributions may sustainably meet the needs of future generations.[7]

How the CPP has historically operated in respect of First Nations people provides another apt analogy. Until political will dictated otherwise in 1988,[8] status Indians who worked tax-free on reserve lands were precluded from contributing their earnings to the CPP altogether. Although this was changed to allow contributions from tax-exempt earnings of status Indians in 1989, the amendment was not retroactively applied, and participation in the CPP by status Indians is now merely optional.[9] The Federal Court of Appeal, ruling on litigation aimed at gaining a right to make retroactive CPP payments in 2003, held that the Old-Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement payments were acceptable substitutes in lieu of retroactive CPP contributions.[10] Without commenting on the fairness of this ruling on any individual, at minimum, the outcome illustrates one reason why the historical exclusion of Aboriginal people from certain aspects of sustainable planning in Canada drives the need for communities to engage in their own sustainable economic planning today.

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[2] See generally *Mitchell v. M.N.R.*, 2001 SCC 33, [2001] 1 S.C.R. 911 ("*Mitchell*").

[3] See generally *R. v. Sparrow*, [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075, 70 D.L.R. (4th) 385.

[4] John Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution*, (University of Toronto Press, 2010) at p. 75. Among other things, Professor Borrows argues in this work that Indigenous laws and lawmaking live on in Canada, both in codified form and what may be conceptualized as an Indigenous "common law."

[5] Borrows, ibid, at p. 246.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Canada Pension Plan, R.S.C. 1985, c. C-8, s. 115(1.1).

[8] The political will was driven by the equality guarantee in s. 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as adopted in 1982. See *Bear v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2003 FCA 40, [2003] 3 F.C. 456 ("*Bear*") at para. 40.

[9] Canada Pension Plan Regulations, C.R.C., c. 385 s. 29.1(1).

[10] See generally *Bear*, supra note 8.

UTILIZING CAPITAL SUSTAINABLY

According to the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and the Canadian Venture Capital Association, Aboriginal communities have acquired as much as $10 billion in capital from settling outstanding land claims and specific claims[11] in Canada.[12] Often, the funds associated with these claims are placed in a trust structure administered by a large financial institution. Assuming that the trust allows it, the funds are then invested according to the risk and return sought by the particular community. Because a lump-sum claim settlement is a one-time payment, often representing a community's lost landmass, and is intended for the benefit of the community as a whole for generations to come, it is often in a community's best interests to protect such funds by managing them conservatively.

GAMING

Annual profits from gaming also present a unique opportunity for investment. Because gaming is jointly regulated by provinces and the Canadian federal government, Aboriginal gaming ventures are normally implemented as bricks-and-mortar casinos that are established and operated in co-operation with the respective provinces.[13] A prominent example of this co-operation is the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority (SIGA), a First Nations-run entity that operates six casinos under traditional governance principles throughout Saskatchewan. SIGA was formed after considerable negotiations between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians Nations (FSIN) and the Saskatchewan provincial government. The product of the negotiations was a Framework Agreement that delegated the responsibility to certain First Nations-run casinos in Saskatchewan to SIGA.

SIGA has generated over $60 million in net profits in each of the past three years.[14] However, under the present iteration of the 2002 Framework Agreement FSIN signed with the province,[15] 25% of SIGA's net profit is added to the Saskatchewan provincial coffers, 50% is allocated for redistribution to Saskatchewan First Nations, and the remaining 25% is distributed to Community Development Corporations operating in the communities that the various casinos operate in. Much like the settlement claims discussed above, use of SIGA profits is controlled by a trust structure. Although clearly social, education, and infrastructure development is likely to remain justifiably high on the list of the permissible uses of the First Nations Trust, trust funds may also be used for "economic development", leaving open the possibility that certain investments may be made with the trust money gleaned from SIGA profits.

While the creation of SIGA and negotiation of the Framework Agreement can be lauded for many things — like its co-operative approach with the province, use of traditional governance principles, and the resulting on-reserve infrastructure and employment for First Nations people in Saskatchewan — it's likely that the 2002 Framework Agreement could be further sweetened, with the goal of providing more funds for investment pur-

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[11] Comprehensive claims are Aboriginal claims to land in areas of Canada where land rights have not already been formally addressed through treaty. Specific claims are claims negotiated between a First Nation and the Federal Government in respect of specific grievances a First Nation may have with unfulfilled treaty obligations or other losses attributed to alleged actions or inaction of the Crown. Specific claims may or may not deal with land. For more information, see Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *Land Claims*, online: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/al/ldc/index-eng.asp>.

[12] Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business & Canada Venture Capital Association, *2011 Aboriginal Private Equity Summit*, online: <http://www.cvca.ca/files/2011_Aboriginal_Private_Equity_Summit_Invite_REV.pdf>. See also Richard Remillard & Grant Kook, in Private Capital Volume 4, Issue 2, *Building Bridges: Aboriginal Business and Private Equity*.

[13] At least one community, the Mohawks of Kahnawake, established itself as a leading online gaming regulator in the late 1990s. The Kahnawake Gaming Commission operates independent of any agreement with a provincial or federal government. For a discussion of the evolution of gaming as Aboriginal economic development in Canada, see Paul Seaman, Brenda Pritchard, David Potter, *Betting on Reconciliation: Law, Self-Governance, and First Nations Economic Development in Canada*, Gaming Law Review and Economics. April 2011, 15(4): 207–19.

[14] SIGA, *September 7, 2010 Media Release: SIGA Reports Third Straight Year of Profits Above $60M* online: <http://www.siga.sk.ca/Upload/files/Media%20Release%20Revenues%20Sept%202010.pdf>.

[15] The Framework Agreement may be viewed online at the following address: online <http://www.slga.gov.sk.ca/Prebuilt/Public/2002%20Gaming%20Framework%20Agreement.pdf>.

poses. FSIN, for its part, has indicated a desire to both increase SIGA's profits through online gaming and eventually retain all of SIGA's profits. The Framework Agreement contains a clause that mandates a review of its terms by the province and FSIN every five years, leaving open the possibility that the Framework Agreement could be further improved to facilitate broader economic investment. Should the province allow FSIN to keep the additional $15 to $25 million in question, optimally within a highly-flexible trust structure, it could be used in whole or in part to guarantee loans or otherwise fund investments in various emerging opportunities now available to First Nations.

If a greater share of SIGA profits is negotiated by FSIN under the Framework Agreement, that money may, at least in some cases, be best spent on upgrading on-reserve infrastructure, such as roads, water, and housing. However, it seems unfair to use such funds to replace expenditures in infrastructure that some may argue, at least in some cases, ought to be characterized as replacing ongoing but unfulfilled treaty obligations of the Crown. Where First Nations have access to significant excess revenues from gaming, a sovereign wealth model may be appropriate to reinvest the profits. Sovereign wealth funds are investment funds held by a sovereign state that are used for reinvestment in various financial assets, such as domestic and foreign equities, bonds, real property, and sometimes precious metals. Some sovereign wealth funds are formed from the accumulation of non-renewable, resource-based revenues or comprised of large, conservatively managed pension funds, although technically these funds may be rooted in sovereign savings of any origin.

While SIGA's profits are relatively modest in comparison to most sovereign wealth funds,[16] they could eventually come to reach a substantial size if the share currently contributed to the Saskatchewan coffers was redirected to such a fund. Establishing such a fund to invest gaming revenue may be a prudent and important move. First Nations need to look no farther than recent lessons others have learned to discover why. The first lesson is that gaming and hospitality businesses are not recession-proof: SIGA profits dropped approximately 10% during the 2009/2010 financial period, which encompassed the lowest point of the recent global financial crisis. During that same period, the unemployment rate in Las Vegas skyrocketed from 3.8% to 12.3% over three years.[17] Some Las Vegas casinos were forced to discount room rates by as much 75% in order to reach an occupancy rate of 82% from 72%, an unsustainable occupancy rate in the hotel industry.[18] The State of Nevada, which has no income tax and is funded primarily by taxes on casino revenues, went "nearly bust" during the recession, underscoring the negative effect a recession can have on gaming.[19]

The second lesson is managing the use of proceeds earned from nonrenewable or otherwise finite resources. Alberta provides a good perspective in this regard. On May 5, 2011, the Alberta Premier's Council for Economic Strategy released a report entitled "Shaping Alberta's Future."[20] In this report, the council bemoaned the use of non-renewable resource revenue — such as oil royalties — by the provincial government to pay provincial expenses, rather than investing in a fund to ensure the future of the province. The rationale and general principle for Alberta's proposed fund is simple — investing profits from nonrenewable resources so that once the resource is reduced, the missing revenue from royalties is at least partially replaced by investment income.

Although gaming profits admittedly are not the same as royalties from nonrenewable

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[16] Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute, *Sovereign Wealth Fund Rankings*, online: <http://www.swfinstitute.org/fund-rankings/>.

[17] Time Magazine, *Less Vegas: The Casino Town Bets on a Comeback*, (August 14, 2009) online: <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1915962,00.html>.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Premier's Council For Economic Strategy, *Shaping Alberta's Future*, online: <http://www.premier.alberta.ca/plansinitiatives/economic/RPCES_ShapingABFuture_Report_web2.pdf>. Saskatchewan's Opposition NDP party has also recently promoted the possibility of creating a "rainy day fund" in Saskatchewan. See CBC News, *Saskatchewan needs to save for future: NDP*, (September 1, 2011) online: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/story/2011/09/01/sk-resource-fund-1108.html>.

resources, some analogous limitations are apparent. For example, SIGA is precluded from operating casinos in two of Saskatchewan's largest urban centers[21] under the Framework Agreement, and it has already opened casinos near to or within most other significant Saskatchewan centers.[22] Although tourism and promotion efforts may be one way to help increase overall cash flow and profit at existing casinos, the growth and sustainability of SIGA's operation in Saskatchewan may be reaching a plateau if it remains precluded from entering the Regina and Moose Jaw gaming markets. SIGA has indicated an interest in entering the online gaming market to increase annual revenues, but the recent crackdown on online gaming in the United States may diminish the appeal of earning profits from international sources.[23] Running out of provincial gaming market space is not unlike running out of oil. The case for First Nations to reinvest gaming profits in diverse investments or other meritorious projects is therefore relatively clear.

Whether dealing with a one-time claim settlement payment or ongoing profits that are subject to trust structures, one way that Aboriginal communities may better ensure that funds are managed in a sustainable way is to ensure that trust structures strike the difficult balance between protecting settlement funds while also allowing such funds to be used for investment in modern projects. In order to facilitate growth while also remaining somewhat risk-averse, adopting a broad asset allocation strategy will likely increase the appeal of private equity investment to communities. Establishing a diversified risk and return profile that matches the funds available and the risk tolerance of distinct communities would be important, and Aboriginal finance professionals managing such

investments are likely to play an important role in ensuring that Aboriginal people achieve the proper asset allocation profile and effectively remain in charge of their own investments.[24] Investing could be used with a view toward strategic business investments or savings — strategies that will likely need to change over time. Because, generally speaking, investing in private equity is a riskier proposition than purchasing government bonds, decisions to invest in such projects must always be evaluated carefully.

ELECTRICITY

Power generation, transmission, and export are opportunities that are already realized by some Aboriginal communities in Canada. Demand for renewable energy is increasing as provinces currently dependant on "dirty" coal-based generation and/or aging nuclear infrastructure seek out alternative sources of energy to support their electricity supply mix. Ontario's Bill 150, the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009*[25] introduced several possibilities for Ontario's Métis and First Nations communities to develop and maintain renewable power generation projects. Among the amendments made by Bill 150 to the *Electricity Act*[26] was one that has allowed the Ontario Power Authority to develop a Feed-In Tariff (FIT) program, complete with amendments to other legislation which allows for streamlined approval and implementation processes for renewable power generation projects. Aboriginal communities have had good opportunities available to them under the FIT program: depending on how much of a particular project is owned by an Aboriginal community, those communities may be paid higher amounts on kilowatt hours generated than other FIT partici-

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[21] Under the agreement, Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, a Crown entity, operates casinos in Regina and Moose Jaw.

[22] SIGA, a First Nations entity, operates casinos in North Battleford, Prince Albert, Yorkton, Swift Current, White Bear First Nation, and near Saskatoon on Whitecap First Nation. SIGA has recently indicated a desire to operate all casinos in Saskatchewan, including taking over operations at Casinos Regina and Moose Jaw. See Karin Yeske (CKOM News), *Sask. First Nations seek control over province's casinos*, (June 7, 2011) online: <http://www.ckom.com/node/9345>.

[23] CNET News, *Internet poker giants indicted in U.S. crackdown*, (April 15, 2011) online: <http://news.cnet.com/8301-13578_3-20054433-38.html>.

[24] A pair of landmark decisions handed down by the Supreme Court of Canada in July 2011 have, in certain circumstances, made interest earned on certain types of investments purchased at on-reserve financial institutions tax exempt. See *Bastien Estate v. Canada*, 2011 SCC 38 and *Dubé v. Canada*, 2011 SCC 39.

[25] S.O. 2009, c. 12.

[26] 1998, S.O. 1998, c. 15, Sch. A.

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pants (a so-called "Aboriginal adder"). As part of the FIT program, a provincial loan guarantee fund was formed with the intent to grant Aboriginal communities some flexibility in financing renewable generation projects.

Like Ontario, Saskatchewan also appears to want to phase out coal generation. This push appears to have been inspired by a 2009 report commissioned by the provincial government that addressed the possibility of implementing a nuclear power station in Saskatchewan. The report generally rejected the proposition of building a nuclear power station in favor of first exploring the possibility of investing in other generation technologies, like wind, solar, biomass, natural gas, and "clean" coal technologies.[27] Without sufficient hydroelectric or nuclear "base load" power available, Saskatchewan is left with supplementing coal generation with natural gas and renewables, heralding a likely push to privately-developed renewable energy projects of medium to large size, and corresponding transmission infrastructure.

Although meeting the province's growing need for electricity is of paramount concern, Saskatchewan is also missing out on international export opportunities. Despite demand for exported electricity in the United States, Saskatchewan only exported 125,509 megawatt-hours of electricity in 2010 (valued at only $4,420,574).[28] Qualifying this amount as "only" is apt when one considers that Saskatchewan's more hydroelectrically-endowed neighbour Manitoba exported 9,071,355 megawatt-hours (valued at $320,393,536) in the same time period.[29] Manitoba's export profits are expected to continue to rise when the $1.3 billion, 200-megawatt Wuskwatim hydroelectric station comes online at Taskingup Falls, Manitoba in 2012. That project is an equity partnership between Manitoba Hydro and the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. The power produced by the project is not projected to be needed domestically in Manitoba until 2020, leaving Hydro Manitoba and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation with an excellent opportunity to profit from the proven export market for electricity in the United States and other Canadian provinces.[30]

Perhaps not surprisingly, on March 29, 2010, SaskPower announced it had signed a memorandum of understanding with the First Nations Power Authority, a group dedicated to developing First Nations-run power projects in Saskatchewan. Membership in the First Nations Power Authority is open to any of the 74 First Nations within Saskatchewan. Some First Nations are already moving to take advantage of power generation opportunities: the Meadow Lake Tribal Council is pursuing a project that would re-use waste from its preexisting forestry operations as fuel for a biomass generation project.[31]

At the present time, power generation, transmission, and export projects appear to be a premium investment opportunities for many First Nations communities.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Recent legislative changes may also allow First Nations with "urban reserve" land to profit from commercial real estate deals. The *First Nations*

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[27] Dan Perrins (Committee Chair), *Future of Uranium Public Consultation Process Final Report*, online: <http://www.er.gov.sk.ca/adx/aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=10785,3385,5460,2936,Documents&MediaID=29016&Filename=Future+of+Uranium+Public+Consultation+Process+-+Final+Report.pdf>.

[28] National Energy Board, *Electricity Exports and Imports, Monthly Statistics for December 2010*, online: <http://www.neb-one.gc.ca/clf-nsi/rnrgynfmtn/sttstc/lctrctyxprtmprt/2010/lctrctyxprtmprt2010_12-eng.pdf>.

[29] Ibid.

[30] National Energy Board, *Outlook for Electricity Markets 2005–2006 (Energy Market Assessment)* (Calgary: National Energy Board, 2005) at Section 3.5. See also Manitoba Hydro, *Wuskwatim Generation Project Overview*, online: <http://www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/wuskwatim/overview.shtml>. For more information on Import and Export of Electricity in Canada, see Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP Energy and Infrastructure Group, *The Electricity Industry in Canada* (Toronto: Carswell, 2009) at Chapter 17 "Import and Export of Electricity".

[31] CBC Canada, *Power Deals with Sask. First Nations Sought*, (March 29, 2011) online: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/story/2011/03/29/sk-power-first-nations-110329.html>. See also Enterprise Saskatchewan, *Saskatchewan Economic News, February 19, 2010*, online: <http://www.enterprisesaskatchewan.ca/enr021910>.

Commercial and Industrial Development Act[32] (FNCIDA) is legislation that came into force in 2006 to address a "regulatory gap" associated with commercial and industrial developments located on-reserve. FNCIDA itself was developed in consultation with five First Nations.[33] On March 1, 2011, FNCIDA was amended by Bill C-24, the *First Nations Certainty of Land Titles Act* to allow commercial developments located on-reserve to circumvent the federal Indian Lands Registry System (ILRS) and instead be registered in a system similar to existing provincial land-title systems. ILRS has been roundly criticized for "lacking the necessary rigour to protect third parties' legal interests in land" and for potentially increasing associated transactional costs to four times those of developments on properties off-reserve.[34] Despite the general inalienable nature of reserve lands, regulations made under Bill C-24's provisions may allow reserve lands to be held in fee simple or otherwise be transferred or surrendered by a First Nation, in certain circumstances.

These changes may be good news for many First Nations, perhaps most significantly for those First Nations that currently hold urban reserve land in larger centres as a result of the Treaty Land Entitlement ("TLE") process. Several First Nations with urban reserves in Saskatchewan have already moved to develop their urban land with a variety of different projects.[35] Other First Nations in other provinces have taken other unique approaches: one of the major advocates of C-24's provisions was the Squamish First Nation, which sought to use its reserve lands to the highest possible value, particularly in respect of a proposed condominium development in West Vancouver.[36]

The flexibility of Bill C-24's provisions may allow TLE First Nations and other First Nations with land in or near major centres to more easily develop the land in new and innovative ways. Infrastructure projects like roads, bridges, Elders' homes, courthouses, and correctional facilities may also follow the so-called "P3" model[37] and become joint projects between First Nations, the Crown and private enterprises in building, owning, and operating particular infrastructure assets. Formation of and investment in a First Nations infrastructure fund to finance or guarantee loans for infrastructure projects may complement this type of capacity development.

CARBON OFFSET PROJECTS

First Nations with access to forest resources either through treaty entitlement or traditional use claims may be able to seize upon a burgeoning new economic development model which produces a revenue stream through the registration and sale of carbon credits. Offset projects which capture carbon are a relatively untapped source of creating revenue. Carbon credits are generated by implementing a program such as the planting of trees, adhering to a forest management regime, or altering agricultural practices to improve soil management. The additional carbon that is captured as a result of the program can be monitored, registered and a value assigned to it. Once certified, carbon credits can then be bought and sold just like any other commodity.

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[32] S.C. 2005, c. 53 ("FNCIDA").

[33] The five First Nations were Squamish Nation of British Columbia; Fort McKay First Nation and Tsuu T'ina Nation of Alberta; Carry the Kettle First Nation of Saskatchewan and Fort William First Nation of Ontario. See Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, *First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act*, online: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ecd/cid/index-eng.asp>.

[34] Library of Parliament, *Legislative Summary, Bill C-24: First Nations Certainty of Title Act*, online: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/LegislativeSummaries/40/3/40-3-c24-e.pdf>.

[35] City of Saskatoon, *Urban Reserves and Treaty Land Entitlement*, online: <http://www.saskatoon.ca/DEPARTMENTS/COMMUNITY%20SERVICES/PLANNINGDEVELOPMENT/FUTUREGROWTH/URBANRESERVESANDTREATYLAND ENTITLEMENT/Pages/UrbanReservesandTreatyLandEntitlement.aspx>.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Projects adhering to the so-called "P3 Model" are public-private-partnerships that provide a novel risk model by engaging the private sector in building public infrastructure. For more information, see Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, *Definitions*, online: <http://www.pppcouncil.ca/resources/about-ppp/definitions.html>.

In Canada, carbon credits are traded on the voluntary market because at present there is no regulated market for carbon transactions. However, even without a government policy regulating the sale of carbon in Canada, sales of carbon are increasing. Excepting the recent recession in 2009, the aggregate volume and value of the global voluntary carbon credit market has followed a general upward trend over the past decade.[38] Figures from 2007, 2008, and 2009 have estimated the value of the voluntary carbon market at $263 million, $419 million, and $338 million, respectively.[39]

Voluntary markets for the purchase of carbon credits are generally fuelled by private industry in an attempt to offset their own carbon emissions. There may also be some incentives to increase corporate responsibility and adopt practices to comply with future regulations. With these types of incentives and a worldwide upward trend in the sale of carbon, First Nations may consider a carbon offset project in their future economic development plans.

Before implementing a carbon offset project there are a number of issues that should be considered and assessed by First Nations. There is still considerable debate in Canada on whether carbon strategies will ever be regulated. Included in this debate is whether government will enact a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade system. Recently, Sustainable Prosperity, an environmental research group, drafted a report on the negative economic effects implementing a carbon tax would have on First Nation communities, specifically northern communities.[40]

Adding to the uncertainty surrounding the regulation of carbon offset projects are the initial start up costs of certification. Most offset projects will require third party verification and monitoring in order to become certified for sale. This has the potential to increase the overall costs of the project. One option to consider

when negotiating a deal for the sale of carbon credits is to off load the development costs to the purchaser. Additional value for First Nation carbon credits may also be sought on the basis of the actual benefits assisting the local community and strengthening overall biodiversity of a region.

A final hurdle in assessing an offset project may be to determine whether or not First Nations have an ownership interest in the carbon credits generated. Currently, First Nations are proceeding under the guise that carbon credits generated on reserve land are the property of the First Nation and therefore revenues generated from the sale of those credits belong to the band. However, it should be noted that ownership of carbon offsets generated on reserve or on traditional territory has not been the subject of any major litigation. There are interim measures which can be taken by First Nations in order to provide some certainty as to the ownership of this new resource. One example of this is the carbon credit revenue sharing agreement incorporated within the Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol by the Haida and the province of British Columbia.[41]

While questions remain relating to the viability of the global carbon market, there is still an opportunity for First Nations to position themselves as a developer of the carbon resource. Ironically, First Nations may benefit economically by certifying forest management regimes on their land that have already been practised for generations. Not only could this provide direct economic benefit to a particular community, it could allow First Nations to export their expertise to other offset project.

CONCLUSION

Potentially lucrative opportunities await ambitious Aboriginal communities in Canada who can

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[38] World Bank, *State and Trends of the Carbon Market, 2010*, at p. 37 online: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTCARBONFINANCE/Resources/State_and_Trends_of_the_Carbon_Market_2010_low_res.pdf>. See also World Bank, *State and Trends of the Carbon Market, 2009*, at p. 1. online: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTCARBONFINANCE/Resources/State_and_Trends_of_the_Carbon_Market_2009-FINALb.pdf>.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Sustainable Prosperity, Carbon Pricing and Fairness, July 2011 online at <http://www.sustainableprosperity.ca/article1626>.

[41] Kunst'aa Guu-Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol. online: <http://www.newrelationship.gov.bc.ca/shared/downloads/haida_reconciliation_protocol.pdf>.

access sources of substantial revenue, debt or equity-based financing. In one sense, Indigenous law supports investment models, whether as private equity, sovereign wealth-like funds, or by making other direct investments in specific projects. One important factor in determining the risk and return profile of Aboriginal investment is considering the source of the funds that a community seeks to invest and what that source represents to the sustainability of the community. As mentioned above, the source of the funds may be lucrative annual gaming profits that may be invested aggressively, or the funds may represent a community's lost land that demands a more moderate approach in order to support the community well into the future.

Our hope is that Indigenous legal concepts continue to evolve in the present and continue, at least in part, to guide communities in how they sustainably plan their affairs. Indigenous notions of self-reliance and sustainability are not so unfamiliar to Canadians that they ought to be considered incompatible with Canadian sovereignty. Whether or not such laws and law-making powers have been taken away by legal or technical means is one question, but perhaps the proper focus ought to be on the unique rights of

Aboriginal peoples and the distinct economic development opportunities available to communities seeking their own solutions to achieve self-reliance and sustainability. Arguably, many communities would be in much different circumstances today if they had been considered or consulted with by the Crown on legislation or other matters relating to sustainable planning. As discussed in the CPP example above, history appears to show otherwise. Unfortunately, from an Indigenous perspective, existing Canadian legislative regimes may be inadequate to meet the goals of traditional Indigenous self-sustainability and planning.

In many cases, a co-operative approach between the Crown and Aboriginal communities will likely be necessary to achieve the traditional sustainable planning goals of Indigenous people. The Crown, to its credit and for mutual benefit, is offering greater opportunities for Aboriginal communities to develop modern projects relating to energy, commercial land development, and potentially carbon credits. Capital held by communities should be protected, but also remain available for investments that build community economic capacity in ways that acknowledge and remain true to Indigenous legal principles.

BENCHMARKING TRENDS IN ABORIGINAL FORESTRY

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Anna Bailie
FOREST COMMUNITIES DIVISION, CANADIAN FOREST SERVICE, NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA

Robert Parungao
ASSISTANT SECRETARY'S OFFICE, CORPORATE SERVICE SECTOR,
TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT OF CANADA

Melanie Ouellette
GEOCONNECTIONS DIVISION, EARTH SCIENCES SECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA

Chantelle Russell
MA CANDIDATE, CARLETON UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

The forest has long been a central component of the culture of Aboriginal Canadians, and opportunities for economic development in Aboriginal forestry are emerging in several areas. The amount of forest assets managed by Aboriginal peoples has been increasing as well as the types of business relationships Aboriginal peoples are engaged in are expanding. However, the development of Aboriginal capacity in the forest sector is varied. The educational and skill-levels of Aboriginal workers in forestry is improving, but the average age of the Aboriginal workforce has steadily increased, which reflects a rapidly aging underlying demographic. While the median total income for Aboriginal workers in the forest sector has increased, the number of Aboriginal workers in the forest sector has steadily declined. Further, average income drastically varies depending on whether an individual is on or off-reserve. The earnings of off-reserve Aboriginal forestry workers are very close to those of their non-Aboriginal counterparts, while on-reserve forestry workers are earning less than half of what non-Aboriginals make. Benchmarking these trends is important as it facilitates the continued tracking of the role of Aboriginal peoples in the forest sector as it changes and new areas of opportunity develop.

INTRODUCTION

The state of Canada's forest sector and forest resources are assessed periodically by a number of groups, including the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers, provincial governments, industry associations and environmental groups. These reports examine a wide range of indicators, including social, economic, and environmental criteria. Aboriginal involvement in the forest sector is often an area of consideration when assessing the sustainability of forest management, but rarely do these reports explore or consider the breadth of criteria and indicators for Aboriginal participation in forestry and the community well-being to be derived from it.

The forest has long been central to Aboriginal culture, but its importance in relation to employing individuals and creating jobs in communities is difficult to measure. Currently, Aboriginal forestry is gaining importance in its contribution to the forest sector's performance and sustainability as First Nations assume increasing responsibility for the management of forest lands. With that, Aboriginal youth are being identified as crucial to the growth and maintenance of a natural resources labour force, and Aboriginal forestry businesses are growing in significance within regional and national economies. It is therefore timely to consolidate and share the collective knowledge on the state of Aboriginal forestry — in terms of its capacity, its opportunities and its impacts.

This paper provides an overview of Aboriginal forestry trends glimpsed from readily-available statistical data and other sources. Due to this limitation, the definition of Aboriginal forestry is constrained in this paper to the practise and execution of forest based activities for economic development (vs. non-commercial traditional use or other activities practised for cultural reasons) both on- and off-reserve by Aboriginal communities.

I. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ABORIGINAL FORESTRY

In the face of the recent economic downturn in the forest sector, organizations such as the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) have encouraged Aboriginal communities to expand their interests in forestry, and to diversify their activities on forested lands. Some emerging markets that NAFA is identifying as opportunities for Aboriginal communities include non-timber forest products, value-added wood products, and forest carbon management.[1] These opportunities are echoed by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers as top priorities for supporting forest sector transformation, but while they are vast and varied, their pursuit often requires Aboriginal communities to have access to and control of forested lands. Indicators of Aboriginal access to and control of forest lands include benchmark measures of (a) Aboriginal-owned lands and assets; (b) Aboriginal-held tenures to Crown forests, including responsibility for managing forests; and, (c) the emergence of alternative and collaborative business relationships.

(a) Forest Assets

> ▲ *Trend: Increasing*
>
> While the size of reserve lands varies from group to group, on a national scale there has been a growth in reserve land hectarage since the early 1990s, with projected increase until at least 2022.

Aboriginal communities are managing ever increasing sizes and volumes of forest timber assets. Self-government agreements, land claim settlements, treaty land entitlements, and additions to reserves have to-date triggered transfers in control and management responsibilities for almost 1.8 million hectares of land to First Nations, with another 1.4 million hectares pro-

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[1] Bombay, Harry. (2010). *Diversifying Aboriginal Forestry: Broad Directions*. National Aboriginal Forestry Association. <http://www.nafaforestry.org/pdf/Diversification%20Paper_FINAL.pdf>

FIGURE 1
Growth in reserve land hectarage — actual and projected (in thousands)
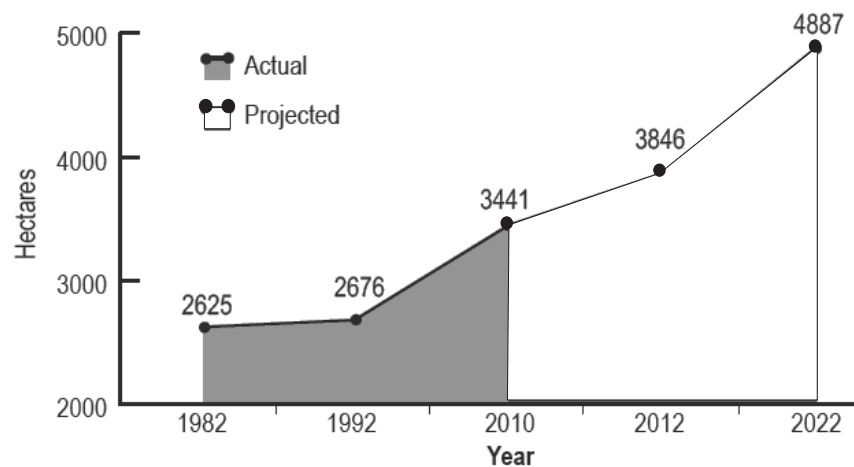
Source: Natural Resources Canada. (2010) *Aboriginal Communities and Forestry*. NRCan. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rncan-nrcan/Fo4-34-2010-eng.pdf>, p. 3.

jected to be transferred by 2022 (Figure 1). Much of this is forested land, which presents numerous forest-based economic opportunities to Aboriginal communities. However, the size of holdings across First Nations is varied, with only two groups holding more than 50,000 hectares, and 31 holding more than 10,000 hectares. On-reserve holdings rarely afford communities the opportunity to sustain commercial opportunities comparable to those operating on Crown lands.

As a result, a growing number of communities are also reaching out towards forest-based opportunities by securing Crown land co-management, tenure, and licensing arrangements with industry and the provinces/territories. While measurement of forest assets are important, these findings should be understood in conjunction with Aboriginal-held tenure.

(b) Aboriginal-held Forest Tenure

▲ *Trend: Increasing*

Nationally, Aboriginal communities have seen an increase in forest tenure and the tenure types they are receiving are granting them greater stewardship and responsibility for Canada's forests.

Forest tenure is a system which encompasses the "terms under which a forest manager or owner possesses the rights, and assumes the responsibilities, to use, harvest or manage one or more forest resource in a specified forest area for a specified period of time".[2] In Canada, where a large portion of our forests are owned by the Crown, access to this land or timber volume allocations for commercial or economic

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[2] Canadian Forest Service. Glossary. Retrieved from <http://canadaforests.nrcan.gc.ca/glossary/t>.

development is obtained via a variety of processes administered by the provinces. Recent increases in the amount of Crown forest tenure and harvest allocations being awarded to Aboriginal communities, reinforced by increasing levels of responsibility for Crown forest management is resulting in an important opportunity for accessing into the forest sector. Between 2003 and 2006 the total wood volumes allocated across the country through Crown tenure arrangements increased by 12 million cubic metres with almost one-third of this increase being allocated to Aboriginal communities.[3]

In 2006, Aboriginal communities across Canada held tenure representing access to an annual harvest allocation of 11.7 million cubic metres of Canada's Crown timber, up from 8.0 million cubic metres in 2003.[4] Aboriginal-held tenures increased from 4.7% of the national total harvest in 2003 to 6.4% in 2006; an increase of 3.7 million cubic metres per year. This represents a 30.5% share of the 12.1 million cubic metre increase in harvest for the period.[5] Allocations of Crown forest tenure to First Nations in British Columbia and Saskatchewan show the greatest increase over the period — increasing by 62% and 72% respectively.[6] Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba show modest increases in First Nation-held Crown tenure while New Brunswick's remained essentially constant since 2003,[7] First Nations in Nova Scotia, PEI, and the NWT hold no tenure. An allocation of 15 000 cubic metres in 2006 was the only noted gain in Newfoundland & Labrador.

The level of responsibility for Crown forest management that Aboriginal communities are assuming through tenure arrangements is also a telling indicator of emerging opportunities for participating in the forest sector. Longer term tenures have the most impact on Aboriginal groups as they provide a sustained financial opportunity and increased influence over Can-

ada's forests. NAFA currently distinguishes between four different types of forest tenures classified along a gradient that parallels increasing responsibility upon the First Nations to manage the forest. Groups I and II represent long-term tenure and significant timber volume supply while groups III and IV are primarily small-enterprise oriented tenures.[8] Between 2001 and 2006, Group I tenures held by Aboriginal communities have increased by 16% despite a 9% decrease in the national harvest. Group II tenures held by Aboriginal groups also rose by 72% since 2003. The largest observed increase in holdings was for Group III tenures; now accounting for half of all Aboriginal allocations.[9] Of the Group III tenures made available between 2003 and 2006, 92% were allocated to First Nations. Finally, Aboriginal-held Group IV tenure is limited to British Columbia and has decreased significantly.

(c) Business Relationships

> ▲ *Trend: Increasing*
> Aboriginal communities are building business relations with forestry companies in a variety of ways establishing a strong foundation of collaboration between Aboriginal communities and the forest industry.

Relationships between Aboriginal communities and the Canadian forest industry are steadily expanding. These business relationships are important as they provide opportunities to the local population by allowing for increased skills transfer and development in these communities.

Collaboration between Aboriginal groups and forestry companies can take various forms. Nationally, 60% of Aboriginal communities have treaties, agreements and/or memorandums of understanding (MOUs), while 59% have forest

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[3] National Aboriginal Forestry Association, *Second Report on First nation-Held Forest Tenures in Canada* (Ottawa, ON: NAFA, 2007).

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] National Aboriginal Forestry Association. Aboriginal-*Held Forest Tenures in Canada (2002–2003)* (Ottawa, ON: NAFA, 2003).

[9] NAFA, 2007.

tenures and 58% are engaged in a contract or partnership with a forestry company. Excluding B.C., 43% of Aboriginal communities have treaty agreements and MOUs, 39% have forest tenures and 50% have economic partnerships with forestry companies. As well, 36% of these communities are participating in land use studies and 39% have influence or consultation on decision making. These numbers are particularly useful in benchmarking the current popularity of the various types of collaborative agreements used by Aboriginal communities with businesses.[10] Furthermore, there is a growing policy voice representing and encouraging Aboriginal forestry on national and provincial levels. Examples of this include organizations like the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA), the B.C. First Nations Forestry Council and recent collaborations between the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Forest Producers Association of Canada (FPAC). The AFN and FPAC together sponsor an annual Aboriginal forest entrepreneur award, recognizing individuals who have taken a leadership role in the sector and in their communities.

II.   ABORIGINAL CAPACITY IN FORESTRY

There are a number of fundamental capacity issues that have historically limited full Aboriginal participation in the forest sector. These have included low levels of education, inexperience in business skills, inadequate financing and a range of social issues related to unemployment and poverty. However, increasing attainment of higher education, forest tenure and associated employment opportunities are providing the basis for Aboriginal people and governments to address these longstanding capacity concerns. This section will look at recent trends related to Aboriginal capacity in the forest sector derived from the 1996, 2001 and 2006 censuses allowing

for a 10-year snapshot that captures the overall direction of Aboriginal forestry and where it may be heading. When dealing with Aboriginal census data, some have raised issue with the comparability of the 2001 census with previous censuses due to changes in question format and wording, instructions and data processing[11]. While these concerns are valid, a 10-year capture of this data is still useful as a starting point as the data is available and reliable. Indicators of Aboriginal capacity in forestry include (a) workforce demographics and (b) education and skill levels.

(a) Workforce Demographics

▲▼   *Trend: Mixed*

The percentage of Aboriginal workers employed in forest industry subsectors has increased but the age demographic of the Aboriginal workforce in forestry is getting older raising concerns as to sustainability.

The forest sector is an important source of current and future employment for Canada's youthful and growing Aboriginal population. Forestry firms are actively seeking to increase Aboriginal involvement in all aspects of the industry. The demographics of the current forest sector labour force, the close proximity of Aboriginal communities to forest resources and the need for a stable pool of skilled workers has positioned Aboriginal Canadians to play an increasingly important role in the sector.[12]

Forestry is the largest private employer of Aboriginal people of any natural resources sector. In 2006, Aboriginal direct employment in the forest sector was 13,500 jobs, representing 3.5 percent of the Aboriginal labour force (compared to 1.8 percent of the non-Aboriginal labour force employed in the forest sector), and 2.7 percent of the total forest sector labour force.

[10]   Wyatt et al., *Collaboration between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian forestry industry: a dynamic relationship* (2010). Sustainable Forest Management Network. Retrieved from <http://www.ales.ualberta.ca/forestry/Sustainable_Forest_Management/Publications/StateofKnowledgeReports.aspx>.

[11]   Statistics Canada, *Aboriginal Origin, 2001 Census* (2011). Retrieved from <http://www12.statcan.ca/English/census01/products/reference/dict/pop002.htm>.

[12]   Forest Product Sector Council, *Renewing Canada's Greenest Workforce: A Labour Market Intelligence Report* (Ottawa, ON: FPSC, 2011), p. 4.

FIGURE 2
Percentage of Aboriginal workers employed in forest industry subsectors
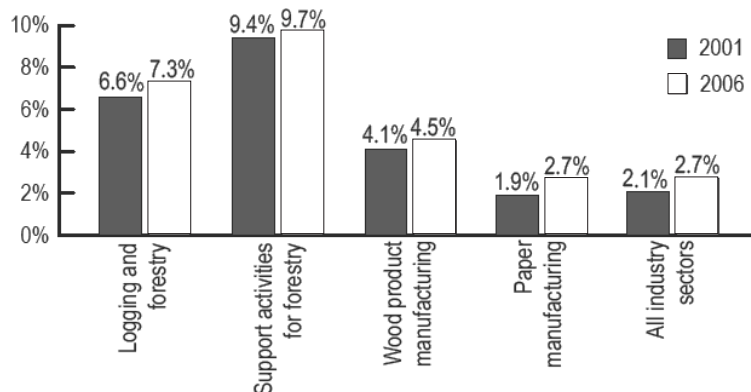
Source: NRCan, 2010. P.3.

As seen in Figure 2, Aboriginal workers contribute to all subsectors of the Canadian forest sector. These values show growth in labour force representation in every subsector over 2001 employment rates, but it should be noted that the bulk of jobs held currently by Aboriginal workers do not require high-skills sets.

A look at the age distribution of Aboriginal workers in the forest sector can be used to forecast future labour force trends. As seen in Figure 3, the largest age group working in the sector are 25–44-year-olds. However, there has been a decline in this group, decreasing around 19% between 1996 and 2006. The youngest age category, 15- to 24-year-olds, also saw a steep drop as well, falling 37%. 45–64-year-olds, the oldest age group, actually increased over the 10-year period indicating that workers in 25–44 age category simply shifted into the next age category as they grew older, meaning that many of the older workers in forestry have remained in the sector, despite decreasing labour force activity, while younger workers have moved into different occupations. If this trend continues, 45–64-year-old workers may overtake 24–44-year-olds as the largest age demographic in the Aboriginal forestry labour force. While this suggests an experienced work force, it also raises concerns regarding the sustainability of Aboriginal forestry as the workforce moves closer to retirement age without a large population of younger workers to replace them. Interestingly, statistics from the 2006 census indicates that Canada's Aboriginal community has a large and growing youth population. Indeed the median age of Aboriginal people was 27, compared to 40 for non-Aboriginals, and Aboriginal youth constituted 17.6% of the Aboriginal labour force.[13] The Forest Product Sector Council, in their report titled "Renewing Canada's Greenest Workforce" emphasizes the importance of attracting youth to the sector by highlighting the highly skilled and technological aspects of the work. They refer to Aboriginal youth as "one of the sector's best hopes for a future labour supply" and will soon release a report on mechanisms to engage with this cohort.[14]

[13] Ibid. p. 2

[14] Forest Product Sector Council. *Renewing Canada's Greenest Workforce: A Labour Market Intelligence Report* (Ottawa, ON: FPSC, 2011). p. 25.

FIGURE 3
Age demographic of Aboriginal workforce in the forest sector (1996–2006)
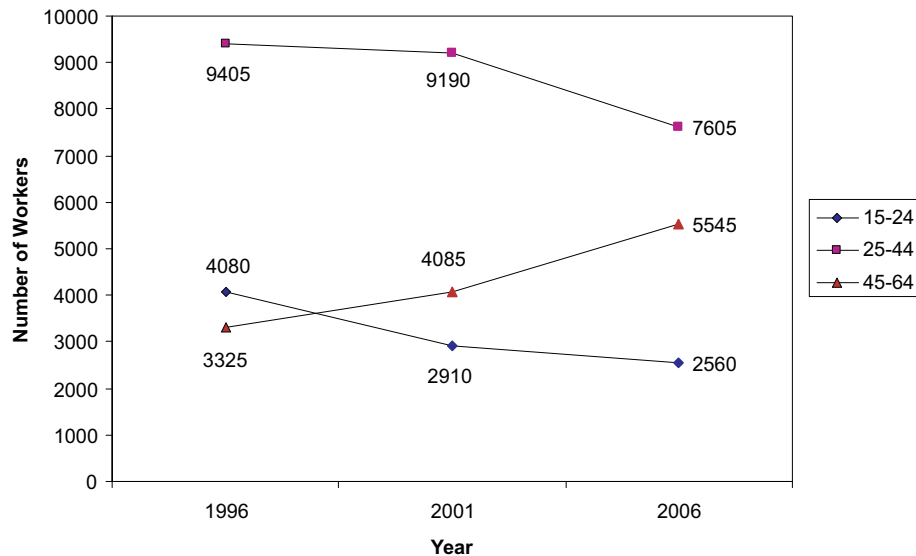
Source: Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Forestry Census Data, 1996–2006*. (database). Statistics Canada. Last updated October 5, 2009. CD-ROM. Beyond 20/20.

(b) Education/Skills

▲ *Trend: Increasing*

In the forest sector, the percentage of Aboriginal workers with no educational certificate is decreasing while the percentage of Aboriginal workers with a university degree is increasing.

Another metric to consider in Aboriginal forestry is the education level of Aboriginal workers compared to non-Aboriginals. Aboriginal workers in the forest sector are less likely overall, compared to non-Aboriginal workers, to lack educational credentials at multiple levels. In 1996, 61% of the Aboriginal labour in the forest sector did not have any educational certificate (including high school graduation), compared to 38% for non-Aboriginal workers. In 2001 the number of Aboriginal workers without credentials fell to 52% for Aboriginal workers and to 40% in 2006. Alternatively, non-Aboriginal rates

dropped to 35% in 2001 and 26% in 2006. Overall, this indicates a shift in the forest sector away from workers who have no formal education, with Aboriginal workers trailing behind their non-Aboriginal counterparts in this trend.

On the opposite side of the educational spectrum are those with university certificates, diplomas or degrees. In the non-Aboriginal population, the percentage of workers in this category increased over the 10-year period, starting at 7% in 1996, rising to 9% in 2001 and 10% in 2006. For Aboriginals these numbers also increased, from 1% in 1996; 2% in 2001, and up to 3% in 2006. While a majority of the Aboriginal labour force do not have any kind of degree, diploma or certificate, the percentage of Aboriginals with a university education is increasing and Aboriginal foresters are well positioned to access high skilled positions, though there are many fewer of them distributed across the country. In terms of highly skilled labour within the Aboriginal labour pool, there were

TABLE 1
Education of workers in the forest sector (1996–2006)

	1996		*2001*		*2006*	
Aboriginal workers (total)	*16865*	*100%*	*16330*	*100%*	*15945*	*100%*
No degree, certificate or diploma	10320	61%	8465	52%	6335	40%
High School Graduation Certificate	2815	17%	3495	21%	4615	29%
Trades certificate or diploma	2355	14%	2885	18%	2720	17%
Non-university certificate or diploma	1130	7%	1235	8%	1790	11%
University certificate, diploma or degree	245	1%	250	2%	485	3%
Non-Aboriginal workers (total)	*380860*	*100%*	*348855*	*100%*	*306200*	*100%*
No degree, certificate or diploma	146260	38%	123690	35%	80290	26%
High School Graduation Certificate	97380	26%	91355	26%	92480	30%
Trades certificate or diploma	63900	17%	61535	18%	57160	19%
Non-university certificate or diploma	45320	12%	42195	12%	46790	15%
University certificate, diploma or degree	28000	7%	30080	9%	29475	10%

Source: Canadian Census, 1996, 2001, 2006.

recently 225 Aboriginal forestry professionals and 800 technologists and technicians.[15] As technical, maintenance and management skills are among those identified by forest sector employers as 'most needed' by their operations, Aboriginals should be well positioned to access those more capable positions, though possession of essential skills is also important.[16]

III. PARTICIPATION IN ABORIGINAL FORESTRY

A third aspect to consider when measuring Aboriginal forestry is how opportunities and capacity have impacted actual participation in the sector. This section will consider the participation rate from 1996 to 2006 along with changes in earned income. As in capacity, the data for these sections are gathered from Statistics Canada, using Aboriginal census data. Two indicators in benchmarking participation in Aboriginal forestry are (a) participation rates in the sector and (b) earned income.

(a) Participation Rate

▲▼ *Trend: Mixed*

The Aboriginal labour force in forestry has declined, as part of a sector wide trend. However, Aboriginal participation rates have greatly improved, catching up with those of non-Aboriginal over the ten years considered.

Another indicator to assess Aboriginal forestry is the participation rate, which is a measurement of the proportion of the working age population in a community actually employed or seeking work. When looking at a particular sector, such as forestry, it captures those who are actually participating via employment in the field. Table 2 shows participation rates for various groups of workers in the forest sector. In 1996, Aboriginal workers overall had a lower participation rate compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This has improved dramatically, and in 2006 the participation rates are

[15] Natural Resources Canada. *Aboriginal Communities and Forestry*. NRCan. Retrieved from <http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/rncan-nrcan/Fo4-34-2010-eng.pdf>. p. 2.
[16] Forest Product Sector Council, *Renewing Canada's Greenest Workforce: A Labour Market Intelligence Report*. (Ottawa, ON: FPSC, 2011), p. 6.

TABLE 2
Aboriginal participation rates in the forest sector (1996–2006)

	1996	2001	2006
Aboriginal	83.4%	89.1%	90.3%
Non-Aboriginal	92.8%	92.7%	92.1%
Aboriginal (On Reserve)	78.3%	84.5%	86.2%
Aboriginal (Off Reserve)	86.8%	90.6%	91.4%

Source: Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Forestry Census Data, 1996–2006*. (database).
Statistics Canada. Last updated October 5, 2009. CD-ROM. Beyond 20/20.

TABLE 3
Forest sector labour force (1996–2006)

	1996	2001	2006
Aboriginal Proportion of the Sector	4.7%	4.5%	5.0%
Aboriginal (On and Off Reserve))	16885	16335	15950
Aboriginal (On Reserve)	5915	4195	3470
Aboriginal (Off Reserve)	10980	12140	12480
Non-Aboriginal	380855	343765	306230

Source: Canadian Census, 1996, 2001, 2006.

only marginally different (with 90% for Aboriginal to 92% for non-Aboriginal). However, on reserve Aboriginal workers consistently have a lower participation rate than their off-reserve counterparts with difference gaps of over 8% in 1996, decreasing to 6% in 2001 and 5% in 2006.

In terms of real numbers in the labour force, Table 3 shows that there is a significant decrease in labour force activity across the sector. In particular, on-reserve workers in the forest sector have gone down from 7870 in 1996 to 3470 in 2006, a 56% decrease over 10 years, the largest in any of the categories. While the issue of the decrease in labour force activity is not a uniquely Aboriginal problem, as it is likely a response to the downturn in the forest sector, on reserve Aboriginal workers were the most affected by this trend. Interestingly, the number of off-reserve Aboriginal workers increased over this period, indicating a transition of these work-

ers off reserves. It should be noted that despite the decrease in Aboriginal employment in the forestry sector there was an increase in the participation rate in the same period. The reasons for this are unclear.

(b) Earned Income

▲▼ *Trend: Mixed*

Off-reserve Aboriginal workers have seen significant increases in their median total income, with Aboriginal men effectively closing the income gap between them and non-Aboriginal men. However, on-reserve workers have fared poorly in comparison to their off-reserve and non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Another indicator for the state of Aboriginal forestry is trends in median total income

TABLE 4
Median total income for workers in the forest sector (1996–2006)

	1996	*2001*	*2006*
Aboriginal Male (On-Reserve)	$17,053	$12,245	$20,155
Aboriginal Male (Off-Reserve)	$28,046	$37,292	$40,835
Aboriginal Female (On-Reserve)	$11,123	$17,646	$18,081
Aboriginal Female (Off-Reserve)	$16,825	$28,300	$29,234
Non-Aboriginal Male	$42,697	$43,889	$44,432
Non-Aboriginal Female	$26,827	$28,493	$31,289

Source: Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Forestry Census Data, 1996–2006*. (database). Statistics Canada. Last updated October 5, 2009. CD-ROM. Beyond 20/20.

for individuals working in the sector. As seen in Table 4, on-reserve Aboriginal male workers have, and continue to have, lower median total incomes than their off-reserve counterparts. While this gap was close to $11,000 in 1996, it has since increased and in 2006 the difference between on and off reserve incomes for males was over $20,000. When compared to non-Aboriginal males in the same labour force, off reserve Aboriginal men made over $14,000 less in 1996. This gap has slowly closed and in 2006 this gap was around $4,000.

Overall, Aboriginal women in the forest sector have the poorest earned incomes. Off-reserve Aboriginal men consistently made more than off-reserve women; in 1996 the income gap was slightly under $12,000 and by 2006 the gap was over $11,000. The gap has not increased, but appears to have stayed the same at approximately 11,200 to 11,600. On-reserve Aboriginal women made even less than their off-reserve counterparts, with the gap starting at around $5000 in 1996, increasing to $11,000 in 2006. These trends indicate that Aboriginal women, both on- and off-reserve, are not keeping up with the median total income increases occurring for male Aboriginal workers or female non-Aboriginal workers.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

As seen in Figure 4, Aboriginal forestry has recently seen many gains. Most of these increases are found in land-based opportunities where court decisions, treaty land entitlements, claim settlements and government policy initiatives have led to an increase in area of forests controlled and/or managed by Aboriginal people. However, compared to these gains, increases in capacity and participation in have not been as rapid. While earned income has increased for most, overall labour force activity has declined and the average age of those participating in Aboriginal forestry is increasing indicating that there is a paucity of new entrants to the field. However, it must be kept in mind that these falling numbers are part of a larger decline in the forest sector overall and Aboriginal youth will likely be key to supporting future re-growth in forestry, including being recruited to help replace upcoming retirements in the sector.

As the industry transitions, these numbers provide a benchmark for future research to determine if Aboriginal communities will see forestry as a good investment and develop their capacity to act on opportunities. The Aboriginal Forestry Initiative is the new Government of Canada approach to enhancing Aboriginal participation in the competitive and sustainable transformation of Canada's forest sector. It is meant to support capacity building by facilitating knowledge exchange and coordination of federal and other forms of support for opportunity-ready Aboriginal forestry projects and partnerships.

This report provides a snapshot of quantitative and trend analysis which only gives a partial understanding of the overall story. While

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FIGURE 4
Summary of opportunities, capacity and participation in Aboriginal forestry

Opportunities		*Capacity*		*Participation*	
▲	Forest assets	▲▼	Workforce Demographics	▲▼	Participation Rate
▲	Aboriginal-held forest tenure	▲	Education/Skill	▲▼	Earned Income
▲	Business relationships				

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statistics are easily measurable and readily available, it is just as important to look at qualitative sources to better flush out what is occurring on the ground, and how assessments of opportunities, capacity, and participation can be further improved. This can emerge from a variety of sources, including academic research in the industry and communities, analysis of developing sector trends (such as bioenergy or green wood), and discussion with the Aboriginal experts and elders. As the research on these parameters continues, more of these qualitative data sources will be incorporated to better encapsulate the voice of Aboriginal communities engaged in forestry. This article is meant to provide preliminary data as a starting point in moving forward towards more systemic tracking and reporting of Aboriginal forestry trends.

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NATION BUILDING THROUGH LANDS MANAGEMENT
Application of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development to Canada

Michelle White-Wilsdon

LEAD RESEARCHER & SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR

ABSTRACT

The research findings of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development and the principles of Nation Building arising from the Harvard project have been central to the progression of new policy on Aboriginal Economic Development. However, key differences exist between American Indian Tribes and Canadian First Nations that warrant concern about the appropriateness of using American-based research findings as the basis of policy development for Aboriginal people in Canada. This paper demonstrates that the Harvard principles can be extrapolated into a Canadian context through an analysis of the statutory requirements under the First Nations Lands Management Act and a comparison to the Nation Building Model as defined by the Harvard Project. This article will also recommend specific research activities that will test the effectiveness of the Nation Building Model in Canada (1) to ensure that responsible policies are based on Canadian-based research, and (2) to strengthen the business case for increased financial investment by the Government of Canada to support best practices in First Nations lands management and economic development.

Lands
Management

Successful Community
Economic Development
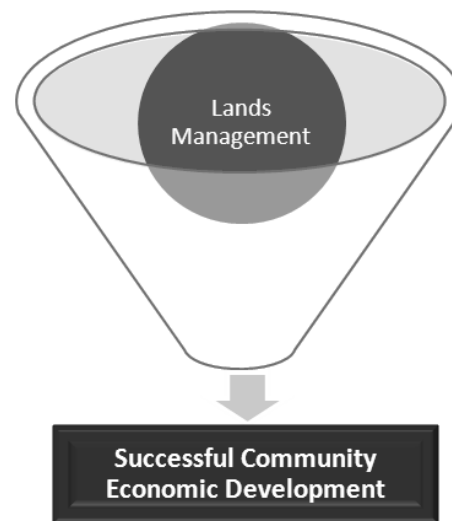
INTRODUCTION

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (Cornell & Kalt, 1998) has provided the basis for several recent government commissioned reports on Aboriginal economic development (Peoples, 2007), and Aboriginal self-government (Cornell, Kalt & Jorgensen, 2002) that is integral to the work of the National Center for First Nations Governance and Research (NCFNG). As such, the Harvard Project has become increasingly popular among government policy makers and First Nation leaders in Canada. However, many critics (Simeone, 2007) of the Harvard Project warn that the research findings may be difficult to apply outside of the U.S, and that the Harvard project should not be so indubitably accepted and used as the foundation for new policy on Aboriginal economic development. While there are important differences between Indigenous nations in Canada and the U.S, differences that may make the application of the Harvard findings difficult to apply in Canada, the founders of the Harvard Project did not suggest that Nation Building was a simple endeavour. It is important that the fundamental concepts of the Harvard findings do not get lost in the argument of applicability and scholarly rebuttals. Instead, the focus should be to find innovative ways in which the Harvard findings may be extrapolated into a Canadian context so that First Nations can go about the business of making positive changes that will drive sustainable and successful Aboriginal economic development. The primary purpose of this paper is to display how the Harvard project may be applied in a Canadian First Nations context through an analysis of First Nations land management practices and a comparison to the Nation Building Model as defined by the Harvard Project. Furthermore, this paper will argue the need to test the applicability of the Nation Building Model and suggest specific activities warranting further research.

BACKGROUND

Nation Building Model

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development was founded by Professors Stephen Cornell and Joseph. P. Kalt in 1987 and operates jointly through Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and the Native Nations Institute at the University Arizona's Udall Center. The Harvard Project attempted to understand why some American Indian Tribes enjoyed sustained and successful economic development, while others remained paralyzed by poverty. The research suggested that there are essentially two approaches to economic development in Indian country: (1) the Standard Approach and (2) the Nation Building approach.

The Standard Approach focuses on short term economic solutions that are more concerned with starting businesses to create jobs and income *now*, rather than *sustaining* businesses to build an economy for the *future*. The standard approach allows external governments to set the development agenda and views economic development as an economic problem typically attributed to issues such as access to capital, proximity to markets and a lack of business development resources. The Nation Building approach is an innovative strategy to economic development that is currently being implemented by various Indigenous Nations who have recognized that the Standard Approach results in failed enterprises and creates a false economy that jeopardizes the Nation's credibility and well being. The Nation Building Model (NBM) of economic development is summarized by five key determinants: (a) Sovereignty, (b) Capable Governing Institutions, (c) Cultural Match, (d) Strategic Thinking, and (e) Leadership. All of these determinants are founded on the principle that challenges to economic development are political in nature rather that economic. While it is unclear whether the Harvard Project research has been able to define a weighted contribution or significance that each of the five determinants has to successful economic development, it is clear that sovereignty is considered the most important, if not compulsory, determinant. The five key Nation Building determinants are summarized as follows:

(a) Sovereignty

Sovereignty means that Indigenous Nations are responsible for what happens on Indigenous lands and by marrying consequences to decisions, better decisions will result. The Harvard Project found evidence that suggests if an Indigenous Nation is to realize sustained and self-determined economic development, then the nation must have the authority to set its own development agenda. Within the sample of tribes studied throughout the Harvard Project, every single example of sustained economic development was correlated with effectively exercised self-government (Cornell & Kalt, 2003).

(b) Capable Governing Institutions

Assertion of sovereignty is necessary, but it is not sufficient on its own for sustained development to occur. Authority must be backed up with stable institutions that are capable of dealing with contemporary challenges. In addition, it should keep politics from interfering with sound decision making, and provide independent and fair dispute resolution mechanisms. A capable governing institution establishes the framework that ensures that a bureaucracy can make binding decisions in a timely manner, and get things done.

(c) Cultural Match

In order for governing institutions to be legitimate they must match Indigenous ideas about how authority should be organized and exercised. If the framework through which an elected First Nations band council must govern is created and imposed by external, non-indigenous authorities, there is some likelihood that it will not earn respect or acceptance from the people it is meant to serve. To ensure that the institutions have the support of the people, they must believe that the government is of their own design.

(d) Strategic Thinking

There must be a shift from reactive, short term thinking to proactive long term thinking and planning. Instead of only worrying about what is on the agenda is for the day, Indigenous Nations also need to determine what their priorities are for the future.

(e) Leadership

Nation building entails having a champion that is up to the task and has the ability to inspire others to work together to bring about change. A leader may be anyone in the community, who has a vision of the Nation's future and can promote the foundational changes that the vision requires, such as knowledge, experience, spiritual guidance and a desire for change (Dr. Manley A. Begay, Jr., faculty chair of the Native Nations Institute at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy, personal correspondence, June 23, 2009).

First Nation Lands Management in Canada

There are over 600 First Nations and 2.7 million hectares of land in Canada that are subject

to the land management provisions of the *Indian Act* (Government of Canada, 2009). Since 1980, these reserve lands have been administered by INAC under two land management regimes, which are the Regional Lands Administration Program (RLAP), and the Delegated Lands Management Program (53/60).

RLAP is a co-management form of devolution, which means First Nations Lands Staff share the responsibilities of land management with INAC Staff. RLAP offers no delegated authorities, and therefore less control, as accountability for lands management functions resides with the Minister. The 53/60 program was introduced in the 1970s in response to First Nations who expressed a desire to exercise more authority over their lands. The 53/60 program authorizes the First Nation to exercise delegated land management authorities on behalf of the Minister under Sections 53 and 60 of the Indian Act. While the 53/60 was a good start, it was ultimately inadequate in addressing the major concerns of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups that land management provisions under the *Indian Act* are antiquated, ineffective and act as an obstacle to Aboriginal economic development (Auditor General of Canada, 2009). As a response to this long-standing concern, First Nations worked with the Government of Canada to develop the Reserve Lands and Environment Management Program (RLEMP). The RLEMP was designed to strengthen First Nation governance and improve accountability, whereby INAC plays only an advisory and supervisory role. It involves an integrated training approach with skills development mechanisms as well as institutional development support. For many First Nations, the RLEMP is considered an opportunity to build the capacity required to prepare for self-government of lands and resource management under the *First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA)*. The FNLMA is a Canadian federal law enacted in 1999 to provide signatory First Nations autonomy over their lands and resources. The FNLMA ratifies the Framework Agreement on First Nations Land Management, which was signed by 14 original signatory First Nations in 1996 and is the source of First Nation land management authorities.

There are currently 33 First Nations that are fully operational under the FNLMA with another 10 still in the developmental stage who have yet to ratify their funding agreements and land codes. There are also an additional 70 First Nations who have submitted a band council resolution seeking entrance into the *Framework Agreement* and are currently on the "waiting list" by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (formerly known as INAC). Insufficient funding has prevented many of the First Nations from becoming operational under the FNLM regime. The Report of the Auditor General on Land Management and Environmental Protection of Reserves describes the effects that a lack of adequate funding has had on the FNLMA:

> When developing the programming for the FNLMA, the Department anticipated that about 90 First Nations could become fully operational in all provisions of the Act. In 2002, its plans called for having 30 First Nations in the developmental phase of the FNLMA regime at any given time. The Department anticipated that up to 75 First Nations would be operational by the end of 2007. At the time of our audit, only 22 First Nations were operational, 19 were in the developmental stage, 2 had negotiated self-government agreements, and 9 were inactive. Another 61 First Nations were waiting to enter the FNLMA, most of whom were still waiting to be assessed by the Department to determine whether they were ready to enter the FNLMA regime. At the end of 2008, 15 of these 61 First Nations had been waiting for more than seven years. In March 2008, INAC had to close the FNLMA regime to new entrants due to a lack of funding. The Department is currently seeking additional resources to effectively implement the FNLMA regime for participants and expand it to new First Nations (Auditor General of Canada, 2009).

It is clear that without sufficient Federal funding required to facilitate a First Nations' operation under FNLM regime, the FNLMA will never realize its full potential. In response to this concern, KPMG was commissioned by the Lands Advisory Board to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the *Framework Agreement* with the intent of establishing a business case for increased investment by Canada to support

First Nations seeking sectoral jurisdiction of their lands and resources under FNLMA.

The KMPG findings were indicative of the positive contributions that the ratified *Framework Agreement* has had on Aboriginal economies (Lands Advisory Board, 2009–2010). For example, they found that *Framework Agreement* First Nations showed an overall increase of land transactions by 9%, compared to a decrease of 1% for *Indian Act* First Nations. The KPMG report also found that the time to complete a land transaction was significantly reduced for FNLM First Nations. For instance, commercial leases may take up to several years to complete under the *Indian Act* land management regimes*, but only months or weeks to complete under the FNLMA. The KPMG study also suggests that Framework Agreement* First Nations attracted approximately $48 million in external investments, $53 million in internal investments, and created a total of 1,959 jobs, over half of which were filled by Aboriginal people.

Fortunately for aspiring FNLM First Nations, a four-year funding agreement was secured in 2009 through the Aboriginal Economic Development Action Plan, which should allow up to 20 new First Nations to enter the RLEMP program each year. Even more encouraging is the renewed enthusiasm by the Federal Government to support on FNLM as a priority under the New Federal Framework on Aboriginal Economic Development. This commitment was apparent in the Conservative 2011 Budget, which provided for an additional $20 million dollars over two years into the First Nation Land Management Regime as an investment into the development of the Aboriginal Canadian economy. With the growing support for First Nations Land Management by First Nations and the Federal Government, it is expected that there will be a surge of First Nations looking to build capacity in the area of land management.

ISSUE

Nation Building is a highly desirable goal for many First Nation leaders and government officials whose attention has been drawn to this increasingly popular approach to Aboriginal economic development. Representatives from the Native Nations Institute who are actively involved with the Harvard Project are frequently invited to work with various First Nations in Canada and federal, provincial and territorial governments are often willing to foot the bill. The concept of Nation Building is exciting, and those who are fortunate to have the opportunity to attend a workshop on the Harvard Project are left with a sense of hope that positive change is on the horizon and a belief that a lasting change can happen if only the Nation is willing to roll up its sleeves and begin some very hard work on governance reform.

What often follows is that the First Nation leaders start to walk the path of Nation Building toward the first and most important step, which is asserting jurisdiction and claiming sovereignty, and soon meet their first roadblock. A major obstacle is the realization that Canada has been unsuccessful in enacting legislation that would recognize the self-government rights of First Nations and provide them with a statutory alternative to the Indian Act. A constitutional amendment explicitly recognizing an inherent right to Aboriginal self-government was proposed in the Charlottetown Accord, but failed ratification in the 1992 federal referendum. The most recent attempt to introduce First Nations self-governing legislation was proposed by the First Nations Governance Act (Bill C-7). After consultation with over 500 witnesses, including First Nations organizations, community leaders and individuals, serious deficiencies (Cornell, Kalt & Jorgensen, 2002) were identified in the Act and Bill C-7 subsequently died on the *Order Paper* with the prorogation of Parliament in November of 2003. To date, the only method by which a First Nation can achieve self government in Canada is to engage in self-government treaty negotiations. According to the International Indian Treaty Council (2003), treaty negotiations in Canada have taken an average of 15 years to reach Final Agreements, and a further 10 years to complete the initial implementation phase. While this process is still very worthy of engagement for First Nations wishing to achieve self-government, it does not address the immediate needs of the nation who wish to build successful Aboriginal economies that set the foundation for healthy and prosperous communities.

If a First Nation is unable to claim sovereignty in an effective timeframe, how are they to

engage in Nation Building if they cannot accomplish the fundamental task of self government? This is one example of the challenges that critics (Simeone, 2007) of the Harvard Project refer to when they warn that there are important differences between Indigenous Nations in Canada and the U.S. that make the application of the Harvard findings in Canada difficult to put into in practice and quite overwhelming for First Nations to attempt.

It is apparent that there is a critical need to rethink the Nation Building Model and explore ways in which it can be applied in a Canadian First Nations context. Although comprehensive self-government is extremely difficult for First Nations to achieve, there are legislative tools that allow First Nations to exert self-governing jurisdiction over specific subject matters such education, land management or family services. Perhaps self-rule does not have to be all-or-nothing in order for the Nation Building Model to be utilized. Is it possible that if the Nation Building approach is considered in a more limited scope, it can actually be achievable to implement? If so, First Nations up to the task of Nation Building can get beyond the "concept" and mobilize their efforts in an achievable, but incremental manner.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON

Nation Building through Lands Management — Requirement One: Sovereignty

There are essentially two methods by which First Nations may assert sovereignty over their lands and resources. As was mentioned in the previous section, First Nations have the option to engage in government-to-government negotiations for comprehensive self-government. Without a statutory framework to facilitate this process, the timeframe, costs and other challenges may negate comprehensive self-government as a desirable option. The source and distribution of land management authorities are summarized in Table 1, which demonstrates that *Framework Agreement* for First Nations Land Management serves as a sectoral statutory alternative to comprehensive self-government in that AANDC cannot interfere with management of reserve lands and resources as it can under the Indian Act. The Framework Agreement sets out a government-to-government process to transfer jurisdiction over lands and resource management from the Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada to the First Nation. The Framework agreement has

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TABLE 1

Options for First Nations Lands Management (*adopted from Lands Advisory Board (2009–2010)*)

Optional First Nation Land Management Regimes	Land Administration by AANDC	Regional Land Administration Program	Delegation of s. 53 & s. 60 authorities	Framework Agreement (sectoral self-government)	Comprehensive self-government
Statutory Regime	*Indian Act*	*Indian Act*	*Indian Act*	FN Land Code and FNLMA	Other (e.g., FN Constitution)
Distribution of Authority and Responsibility	**Minister of AANDC** (spanning)				**First Nation** (spanning)

three main components that include a community ratification process, a Land Code and an individual funding transfer agreement. In order for a First Nation to ratify the Framework Agreement, they must develop a Land Code that is approved by majority vote. Once the ratification process is concluded, the *Indian Act* provisions relating to land management no longer apply and the First Nations assumes full control and management responsibilities of their reserve lands.

A First Nation who becomes a signatory to the Framework Agreement and is successful in ratifying its Land Code will effectively be opting out of approximately 25% of the *Indian Act* (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre, 2010). Under the *Framework Agreement*, the First Nation has the power to enforce the Nations land laws, including the appointment of the Nations own Justice of the Peace. The community Land Code represents an element of a "constitution" for a First Nation government, and is certainly more achievable than developing a full-fledged constitution that would take upwards of a quarter century to be recognized by the federal government. In summary, lands management under the FNLMA is an achievable, sectoral form of self-government that provides First Nations with sovereignty over their lands and resources.

Nation Building through Lands Management — Requirement Two: Capable Governing Institutions

The Framework Agreement requires that the Land Code developed by a First Nation include provisions for a dispute resolution process to address any disputes relating to interests in First Nations lands. Effective and non-politicized resolution of disputes is one of the characteristics that the Harvard Project attributes to a good governing institution. Another characteristic is the ability to make binding decisions in a timely manner. One of the primary complaints that *Indian Act*-managed First Nations make is the length of time it takes to receive Ministerial approval for land transactions, and the destructive effect that time delays have on economic development.

First Nations are governed by about 35 land-related sections of the *Indian Act*, including about 25 provisions that involve the Minister or Governor in Council in reserve land and

resource management decisions (Auditor General of Canada, 2009). Approval for various land transactions, such as land designation, have been known to take upwards of 11 years to finalize under *Indian Act* processes — long after economic opportunity that initiated the transaction has dissipated. Under the FNLMA, a First Nation has full authority over lands management without interference from INAC, which significantly improves the Nations ability to make timely decisions.

Nation Building through Lands Management — Requirement Three: Cultural Match

If the community is involved from the beginning of the Land Code development process, the laws of the land will surely reflect the community's vision on how the land ought to be managed and how authority should be exercised. In this sense, the Land Code and the institution that implements and enforces it will have legitimacy with the community it was designed to serve. Accordingly, full participation of the community is very important for a successful ratification vote.

Nation Building through Lands Management — Requirement Four: Strategic Thinking

A First Nation's Land Code may include provisions that require rules and procedures developed to address land use planning and zoning. Additionally it also requires community approval through a majority vote. Land use planning helps the Nation decide how the community will grow; where businesses, homes and recreation areas should be built; where sewers, roads and other infrastructure should be provided, and how the environment and sacred lands will be protected and balanced with economic development. The goal of land use planning is to formulate policies that will be consistently applied, and provide a roadmap for future planning, while encompassing traditional land use principles and guidelines (cultural match!). A land use plan fulfills the requirement of having a strategic orientation for successful land management under the Nation Building model.

Nation Building through Lands Management — Requirement Five: Leadership

Leaders of First Nations communities are typically thought of as elected officials, or members of Council. In truth, leaders can be anyone in the community, such as political activists, environmental watchdogs, or spiritual elders. A leader is anyone not afraid to break away from the standard way of doing things, has a new vision of the Nation's future and can promote the foundational changes that the vision requires. A leader should demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes the Nation needs to affect change through Nation Building efforts. In the context of Nation Building through land management, First Nation communities should rethink their ideas of how to govern their lands and devise new land management tools and strategies that reflect the values of the community. There is no question that a strong, public-spirited leader is necessary to undertake the development of a Land Code and land use plan that is ratified by the community.

The Reserve Lands and Environment Management Program is a two-year certification program that allows leaders in First Nations lands management to emerge. During the first year a participant completes a one-year accredited academic program through the Indigenous Peoples Resource Management Program at the University of Saskatchewan. In the second year participants attend lands-management specific training with the National Aboriginal Lands Management Association (NALMA), while fulfilling a work experience component. At the end of the two years, the student will receive certification as a Professional Lands Manager from NALMA. The RLEMP program allows aspiring or existing First Nations lands managers to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience that they will require in undertaking land code development and community land use planning as well as performing lands and natural resources transactions, environmental management, and compliance management duties.

CONCLUSION

The theory that First Nations land management is a critical component of sustainable Aboriginal economic development is by no means a new concept. It is a highly supported theory as is reflected in recent policy directives and legislation such as the RLEMP program and FNLMA. Similarly, the Harvard Project's Nation Building Model for Indigenous Economic Development has been favourably received and has had widespread influence on the decisions of Canadian Aboriginal leaders and government policy makers. This paper was intended to introduce the connection that exists between the NBM, FNLMA and lands management best practices. Furthermore, this paper suggests that the Nation Building Model can be applied to First Nations lands management, and argues that, under the FNLMA, a First Nation is essentially fulfilling the requirements of the Nation Building approach to Aboriginal economic development. Based on the successes of American Indian Tribes who have built their Nations using the Nation Building approach, it is reasonable to expect that a First Nation that applies the NBM approach to land management should experience great success in the management of its lands and resources. Given the interconnection between lands management and Aboriginal economic development, success in lands management using the NBM should be reflected in the healthy development of the local First Nation economy. Perhaps it is also arguable that the KPMG report summarized earlier in this paper support the conclusions presented here. At the very least, there is no question that over $100 million of increased investments in First Nations and nearly two thousand new jobs created is a successful outcome of the FNLMA and is certainly evidence for justifying the continued support of the land management regime by AANDC.

FURTHER RESEARCH

It is important to remember that this paper simply argues that the FNLM regime offers sectoral self-government and requires a First Nation to develop land management tools that exemplify the five determinants of the Nation Building Model. It is still unknown if it is *necessary* for a First Nation to fulfill all five key components of the Nation Building Approach to land management in order to mirror the successes highlighted by the Harvard research. According to the Harvard Project, the Nation Building

Approach works for American Indian Tribes with respect to economic development. Will Canadian First Nations experience the same success if they apply the Nation Building Model to lands management? This may be an important question to answer because in doing so, it tests the Nation Building Model for effectiveness with Canadian First Nations. This should be of particular interest to Canadian Aboriginal policy-makers, who have been adopting the Harvard Project principles and should be concerned that responsible policies are influenced by sound Canadian-based research.

One possible method by which to test the Nation Building Approach to lands management would be to undertake a research project that would examine the economic status of those First Nations who meet any of the five key determinants under the Nation Building Model, as it applies to First Nations Lands Management. To clarify, consider sovereignty, which was determined to be a crucial factor in the sustainable development of American Indian Tribes economies. The results of the comparison and analysis presented in this paper suggest that FNLMA fulfills the sovereignty requirement for Canadian First Nations in terms of lands management. Extrapolating from those conclusions, it may be fair to suggest that opting into the FNLMA is a requirement for successful lands management. If it is true that not one single American Tribe studied in the Harvard Project experienced sustained economic development without the effective assertion of sovereignty, then it should also be true that Canadian First Nations will not experience success in lands management and reap economic benefits unless they opt into the FNLMA or achieve comprehensive self-government. So then, how is the success of the Osoyoos Indian Band (OIB) explained? OIB has been highly recognized as a successful model of economic development for First Nations in Canada. OIB is considered to possess strong leadership, have built capable governing institutions, be strategically oriented, and utilize an economic development model that is a good cultural match. However, in 2007, their land code was not ratified (First Nations Land Management Resource Centre, 2010) and as a result, they do not currently have sectoral self-government over their lands and resources. One could argue that they only meet four out of the five key determi-

nants for success under the NBM. Now, consider the Westbank First Nation (WFN) who has successfully ratified the *Framework Agreement* and is another highly respected model of successful economic development. The Westbank First Nation is an example of a Canadian First Nation that meets all five of the Nation Building requirements. How does WFN compare against the OIB, economically speaking? To expand further, how would a First Nation that only has two of the key determinants of successful lands management under the NBM (e.g. a land use plan representing strategic thinking, and a policy framework that is paired with a dispute resolution process representing capable governing institutions) compare to both the OIB and WFN who meet four and five of the Nation Building Model requirements, respectively? What controls could be used to ensure that differences in economic successes between First Nations resulting from the best land management practices can be isolated from other contributing variables?

A definite need exists to test the applicability of the NBM in Canada, and this paper has argued that this task can be accomplished by analyzing the various successes that First Nations have had with various lands management regimes. If the hypothesis that FNLMA First Nations achieve all five requirements under the Nation Building Model and enjoy significantly higher rates of social and economic prosperity, then a strong business case can be developed to pressure the Canadian government to provide adequate levels of funding to First Nations who wish to take back control of their own destiny, starting with regaining autonomy over their lands and resources.

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EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS 2009–2010 IN CANADA
A Dark Cloud for Aboriginals with a Silver Lining

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Robert J. Oppenheimer
JOHN MOLSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

The Canadian economy grew in 2010, compared with 2009 and employment rates increased marginally. However, the picture is different for Canadian Aboriginal peoples living off reserve, as they experienced a decline. Data is unavailable for those living on reserves. The decline in employment levels was the case for both men and women in all age categories, except for women from 15 to 24. There was also a decline in Aboriginal employment rates in seven of the ten provinces. In contrast the three territories experienced an increase. In 2010 Aboriginals had a lower employment rate than non-Aboriginals in all ten provinces and the three territories and in every age group, except for women over 55. However, a meaningfully different picture appears when employment rates are examined by educational level. The higher the educational level the higher the employment level. This applies to both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Further, there is only a minimal difference in employment levels between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, when examined by their educational level. One conclusion is that education appears to be a path for greater employment.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian economy in 2010 grew in comparison to 2009. A common measure used to assess a country or region's economic growth is its gross domestic product (GDP). In 2010 Canada's GDP grew at a rate of 3.1% (CIA World Factbook). However, an alternative measure, which may provide a better indication of how the people in that country or region are doing, is the level of employment. This article examines the rate of employment between Aboriginals living off reserve and non-Aboriginals

in Canada. The data is supplied by Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. Unfortunately, information pertaining to those living on reserves is unavailable. By examining employment levels we are able to obtain insights into a measure of the state of the Aboriginal economy. When we analyze the employment picture by age, gender or geographically of Aboriginals living off reserve in 2010, compared to 2009, it is not encouraging. The picture is even worse when compared to non-Aboriginal employment. However, when we examine the data by educational level an entirely different picture emerges.

135

TABLE 1
Percent Employed Across Canada's 10 Provinces

		Non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal	
		2009	2010	2009	2010
Both sexes	15 years and over	61.7	61.8	56.6	53.7
	15–24 years	55.8	55.3	46.0	44.9
	25–54 years	80.6	80.9	68.5	65.8
	55 years and over	32.8	33.7	34.5	30.3
Men	15 years and over	65.3	65.6	59.9	56.0
	15–24 years	54.0	53.7	48.0	45.3
	25–54 years	83.7	84.3	72.7	69.7
	55 years and over	38.3	39.5	37.2	30.4
Women	15 years and over	58.2	58.1	53.6	51.6
	15–24 years	57.7	57.0	44.1	44.6
	25–54 years	77.5	77.4	64.8	62.1
	55 years and over	27.9	28.6	32.0	30.4

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

EMPLOYMENT BY AGE AND GENDER

In analyzing employment the population of those 15 years and older is used. In 2010 the percent of non-Aboriginals employed was marginally higher than it was in 2009. In 2010 it was 61.8% in comparison with 2009, when it was 61.7%. With an increasing population and a larger percent working, the growing Canadian economy appears to be benefitting more and more people. However, the picture is markedly different when we look at employment for Aboriginals living off reserves. In 2010 the percent employed was 53.7%, while in 2009 it was 56.6%. The fact that employment of Aboriginal people is significantly lower than for non-Aboriginals may not be surprising to those familiar with this issue. However, the fact that it is getting even worse may be contrary to what some may have been expecting.

The decrease in 2010 in the percent of Aboriginals employed occurred for each age group and for both men and women, with one exception. The exception is the employment of Aboriginal women in the 15- to 24-year-old age group, which increased from 44.1% in 2009 to 44.6% in 2010. This was opposite to the trend for non-Aboriginal women in this age group, which was 57.7% in 2009, but went down to 57.0% in 2010. The highest percent of employment is in the 25- to 54-year-old age group. Here, Aboriginal employment decreased from 68.5% to 65.8% from 2009 to 2010, while for non-Aboriginals it increased from 80.6% to 80.9% for this period. The decrease for Aboriginals 55 years and older was the worst of these three age groups. The percent of Aboriginals employed in 2009 was 34.5%, but dropped to 30.3% in 2010. This is in comparison to non-Aboriginals, where employment increased from 32.8% to 33.7%. The decline in Aboriginal employment for men 55 and over was the most dramatic, dropping from 37.2% to 30.4%. The percent employed by age and gender across the ten Canadian provinces are shown in Table 1.

EMPLOYMENT BY PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

When the data is examined by province or territory, there are areas of improvement. The employment picture for Aboriginals improved in Nova Scotia, Alberta and each of the three terri-

tories. However, in the other eight provinces the percent of Aboriginals employed decreased from 2009 to 2010. Nova Scotia had the greatest increase in the percent of Aboriginals employed. It is also the province where the percentage of employed non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals is the closest. The employment percent increased from 51.1% to 56.7% for Aboriginals and decreased from 58.6% to 58.3% for non-Aboriginals from 2009 to 2010 in Nova Scotia.

TABLE 2
Employment by Province and Territory

| | | Percent Employed | |
		2009	2010
Canada (Ten Provinces)	Non-Aboriginal	61.7	61.8
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	56.6	53.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	Non-Aboriginal	50.1	51.8
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	50.0	46.9
Prince Edward Island	Non-Aboriginal	59.3	60.4
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	66.7	55.6
Nova Scotia	Non-Aboriginal	58.6	58.3
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	51.1	56.7
New Brunswick	Non-Aboriginal	58.6	57.8
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	60.7	48.9
Quebec	Non-Aboriginal	59.8	60.3
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	55.6	45.1
Ontario	Non-Aboriginal	61.2	61.4
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	55.3	49.9
Manitoba	Non-Aboriginal	66.1	66.6
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	61.1	58.4
Saskatchewan	Non-Aboriginal	67.4	67.2
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	54.3	53.5
Alberta	Non-Aboriginal	69.8	68.4
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	59.3	60.9
British Columbia	Non-Aboriginal	60.7	60.8
	Aboriginal (living off reserves)	55.6	53.6
Yukon	Non-Aboriginal	76.9	76.4
	Aboriginal	43.5	46.2
NorthWest	Non-Aboriginal	84.2	83.1
	Aboriginal	46.7	50.6
Nunavit	Non-Inuit	88.9	89.5
	Inuit	43.6	46.0

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

TABLE 3
Percent Employed Across Canada's Ten Provinces by Educational Level

	non-Aboriginal		Aboriginal living off reserves	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
Total, all education levels	61.7	61.8	56.6	53.7
Less than high school	34.2	33.7	34.6	32.2
High school graduate	61.7	61.7	62.1	60.0
Completed post-secondary education	73.0	72.7	73.0	68.4
Bachelor's degree	75.6	75.3	83.6	76.2
Above bachelor's degree	76.3	75.4	79.0	80.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey

Alberta was the province with the highest percent of Aboriginals employed in 2010, which was 60.9%, an increase from 59.3% in 2009. Similar to Nova Scotia, the percent of non-Aboriginals employed decreased in Alberta. It declined from 69.8 % in 2009 to 68.4% in 2010. This is in marked contrast to the pattern in Ontario and Quebec where the percent of non-Aboriginal employment increased slightly from 61.2% to 61.4% and from 59.8% to 60.3%, respectively. But the employment percentages decreased considerably for Aboriginals. In Ontario it decreased from 55.3% to 49.9% and in Quebec it decreased from 55.6% to 45.1%. Thus, there are markedly different patterns of employment growth and decline, depending on the province. An unfavorable aspect of Aboriginal employment is that it was lower in every province and territory in 2010 than it was for non-Aboriginals. This is shown in Table 2 on page 137.

EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

A different pattern emerges when we examine employment based upon educational level. The higher the education level, the higher is the percent of those employed. This applies for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. This is highly significant. When we looked at employment patterns by age, gender or geographically, Aboriginal employment percentages were lower than they were for non-Aboriginals. However, when we examine employment patterns by educational level we see that there is very little difference in employment percentages. In 2009 Aboriginal employment percentages were somewhat higher in each of the five educational levels than they were for non-Aboriginals. In 2010 this changed and employment percentages were larger for non-Aboriginals who completed a post-secondary education, completed high school and for those who did not complete high school. In 2010 Aboriginals with a bachelor's degree or higher still had a larger employment percentage than non-Aboriginals.

For those who did not graduate from high school, approximately only 1 in 3 are employed, regardless of whether they are Aboriginal or not. In comparison, approximately 6 out 10 of those who graduated from high school are employed; approximately 7 out 10 who completed a post-secondary education and approximately 3 out 4 with a bachelor's degree or higher are employed, for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. The percent employed by educational level is shown in Table 3.

CONCLUSION

The data shows that as educational levels increase, the percent of those employed increase. The conclusion is that education appears to be a path for greater employment and which implies enhanced economic well-being. There are many

challenges facing Aboriginal communities and individuals living on as well as off reserves. One of these challenges appears to be to create the conditions that will encourage staying in school and achieving higher levels of education. There are numerous strategies that may be applied to achieve this. The task facing those committed to facilitating long-term employment growth and economic development is to implement the appropriate strategies.

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Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development

Call for Papers
Volume 8, Issue 1

Published jointly by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) and Captus Press, the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development* (JAED) is a peer-reviewed journal for practitioners and scholars working and researching in areas relevant to Aboriginal economic development. Published yearly, the Journal is a unique resource for anyone interested in Aboriginal community economic development. Its intent is to explore ideas and build knowledge in the field of Aboriginal economic development theory and practice. The journal prefers a broad interpretation of research and knowledge and encourages a wide variety of contributions in this area.

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- Aboriginal Community Economic and Enterprise Development
- Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship
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- Sharing and/or Evaluating Current Aboriginal Economic Activity
- Aboriginal Corporate Responsibility, Social Auditing, and the Triple Bottom Line
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Please send three copies of your manuscript. Contributions may vary in length, depending on the section they are written for. We are looking for submissions in the range of 15–20 pages, or about 4,000 words for research papers, about 1,000 words for book reviews, about 1,000 to 4,000 words for the state of the Aboriginal economy section, and about 2,000 to 3,000 words for the experience section. Manuscripts submitted should be single spaced with 1.5 inch margins all around and page numbers at the bottom middle. The title page should indicate the section for which you are submitting. All identifying information should be restricted to this one page. Review for publication will take approximately 8–12 weeks from time of receipt. Academic papers will be subject to the usual double-blind peer-review process.

SUBMISSIONS MAY BE FORWARDED TO

Submissions by e-mail are welcomed, in fact preferred. Please send the paper as an attachment to the e-mail address above. **The deadline for receipt of submissions for Volume 8, Issue 1 is May 1, 2012**. If your paper is not included in this issue due to space or deadlines, or needs extra work, it will be considered for publication in Volume 8, Issue 2. Should you require further information please contact Svitlana Konoval, Cando Executive & Administrative Services Coordinator at 1-800-463-9300 or skonoval@edo.ca. Research submissions should conform, where practical, to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 6th edition); however, the Journal is flexible in its format and encourages creativity and innovation.

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