Journal of

ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Volume 10, Number 2

cando
Inspiring Success

Captus Press

Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 2

cando
Inspiring Success

Captus Press

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.

Contents

Volume 10, Issue 2 Fall 2017

The Artist

Rebecca Dunnett

Rebecca Dunnett is an emerging Mi'kmaq artist from Metepenagiag First Nation, New Brunswick. She is a student at NBCCD and mainly works with oil paints but is also branching off to other art mediums. She takes inspiration from her rich culture and wishes to portray some of the traditional teachings and history in her artwork.

Artist's Statement Renewal

Rebecca Dunnett

This design was inspired by Mi'kmaq quill work, something in which the Mi'kmaq people are famous for. I wanted to represent the Northeastern First Nation people of Canada. We often see many representations of Indigenous cultures from the north such as Inuit and Cree. Also from the west and the south such as Black foot, Ojibway, Apache, etc. Those are the familiar Art styles that we often see represented in mainstream media.

Even though different tribes share some similarities with each other, each one is unique. I know my people did not wear headdresses like the ones in the west and south, nor do I believe the famous and now commercialized dream catcher originated with us. So that is why I took my inspiration from works of art actually created by our people. Quill work is one of those works of art that has been around for centuries and was widely used by the Mi'kmaq.

I used a sunrise design to go with the theme of this year's conference "A New Dawn in Indigenous Economies". I added two circles interlocking to symbolize unity, one is a half circle connected to the earth, meaning we are grounded and close to mother earth. What the theme says to me is, we are gaining back our pride and independence as the first people of this country by reconnecting and coming together.

The human figure at the top is what I used to symbolize our ancestors that came before us. There are small white dots behind them going in a disk shape, those are stars. I put them there to say, that our ancestors that are above will guide us through changes and lessons in life. The tipi's or "wigwams", I used to represent "home". This is where home is and it has been for centuries.

And lastly, the bottom design was inspired by the traditional double curve that is used in many works of art of the Mi'kmaq people. I used some elements such as the berries at the end and the flower in the middle to represent nature's abundance and our growth as a nation.

It is my privilege and distinct honour to present to you the 20th issue of the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, or *JAED*. The first issue was published in 1997, 20 years ago, and it has been a wonderful and meaningful journey for all involved to this point in time. *Huy tseep q'u Siiem nu Siye'yu* ("Thank you respected friends and colleagues" in Hul'q'umi'num'). The Journal, co-published by the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) and Captus Press, links practitioners, leaders, community change-agents, and researchers not only to each other, but also to those who coordinate, manage, lead, participate in, and teach about the governance and leadership of Indigenous community, business, entrepreneurial, and economic development. This issue, like the 19 issues that came before, highlights and profiles the ground-breaking economic development work that has been taking place in Indigenous communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

As I read through previous issues, I continue to be intrigued by the meaningful coverage of the range and diversity of topics. I invite readers of this issue to do the same and to engage with previous issues, as if for the first time. Each story, each leadership or student profile, each coverage of promising practices, and each topic researched, is as relevant and meaningful today as they were 20 years ago. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's "Calls to Action", in addition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, a document "that describes both individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples around the world", including economic and development rights, further affirms the need for our continuing effort to promote Aboriginal economic development and self-governance.

I trust that you will find this issue informative and interesting, and I look forward to your feedback and/or future submissions. Here is to the next 20 issues! Huy ch q'u — thank you.

Warren Weir

Introduction

Wanda Wuttunee

In this section, I am pleased to highlight some of our regular features and introduce some different ways of describing the successes that leaders and businesses are making in their communities. If you like what you see, I encourage you to shine a spotlight on hard-working and inspiring leaders and business owners that you think our readership need to meet by submitting their stories. The following give short summaries of the works that are included in this section.

The 2016 Economic Developer of the Year Award winners are recognized for interesting projects and experiences across a number of communities. Rob Crow, winner in the individual category and director of Economic Development for Blood Tribe, Alberta is leading a multi-million dollar grocery store project as well as advising the community in their land designation referendum. The community category winners reside in Teslin, Yukon and include the Teslin Tlingit Council and Village of Teslin. While cultural tourism, recreational fishing and hunting connect with the rest of the world, this community is also very reliant on hunting and fishing. They have a 10 year sustainable plan that will help the community meet basic needs while cultivating environmental sustainability with a focus on community capacity building. Birch Mountain Enterprises Ltd, Forth McKay, Alberta works closing with oil sands clients with a strong focus on supporting Indigenous programs, employees and business.

Putting people first before profit is at the heart of Aki Energy, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Its story is captured in a cast study that is perfect for the classroom. The company's activities are outlined, a series of questions for further study are presented and then extensive teacher's notes prepare instructors for utilizing the material to best advantage. Aki Energy starts

green businesses in their communities, creating local jobs and growing strong local communities.

Jamie Wilson is a leader to take note of and his accomplishments are outlined by a student who has had the opportunity to be mentored by him. Leadership is always a challenge so it is critical to acknowledge those who are making best efforts of demonstrating emotional intelligence and personal integrity. This is a new addition to this section. Share your profile of our strong leaders in future issues.

Important learning came out of a national gathering focusing on Aboriginal experiences in the cross-cultural workplace. Well-attended by a cross-section of Aboriginal community members, academic and human resource specialists of various ethnicities. A number of speakers set the tone for topics that were then discussed in small sharing circles. Elders were integral to the event and spoke throughout the gathering.

Marilyn Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba is a band councillor who is making a difference in her community. Her focus is on housing needed to improve the foundation for community economic development and she has also dedicated her time to supporting rights and opportunities for Indigenous women and children. She is working to keep their children in the community when family issues make that difficult which also goes to building a strong community.

When communities can partner to the benefit of both, then these experiences need to be shared. Cando and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities are working to promote partnerships between First Nation communities and municipalities. These partnerships offer a means to identifying projects of mutual benefit. Tools to build successful partnerships are also offered to those partnerships accepted into the program. This article offers a short profile of one partnership between Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Town of the Pas and the rural municipality of Kelsey. Some of the challenges and rewards are presented with a final word to encourage persistence in keeping such partnerships alive and healthy.

2016 Economic Developer of the Year Award Winners

Jocelyn Turner
CANDO

Recognize! Celebrate! Honour!

In 1995, the Cando Economic Developer of the Year Award was created to recognize and promote recent or long-standing Aboriginal economic development initiatives throughout Canada. All winners past and present share a common desire to advance their communities as each pursues a vision of sustainable economic self-sufficiency.

Throughout the years, it became apparent that there were a variety of businesses and individuals deserving of recognition for their contributions to the advancement of Aboriginal economic development. That is why today, Cando grants Economic Development of the Year Awards in three categories:

- Individual EDO
- Community
- Aboriginal Private Sector Business

Three candidates exemplifying outstanding Aboriginal economic development were recognized at the 2015 Cando Annual National Conference. Two finalists in each of the categories were selected to present to an audience during a special plenary during the conference. After all finalists were given an opportunity to present, the conference delegates voted via a secret ballot for the finalist who they believed was the most deserving of the top award in each category. It is an honour to present to you the 2016 Economic Developer of the Year Award winners!

Cando Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner

Individual Category
Rob Crow

Rob Crow, Blood Tribe Economic Development

As a member of the Blood Tribe located in Southern Alberta, Rob Crow currently is the Director of Economic Development for the Blood Tribe and has been employed for over 19 years. Rob is a role model in his community and has completed outstanding work using his education to best advantage which includes a Bachelor of Management Degree as well as a Master's of Science in Management.

Rob has served on several provincial and national boards including Cando (Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers) for three consecutive terms and most recently as the co-chair of AANDC (Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada). He also received his Professional Aboriginal Economic Developer (PAED) certification in 2007 from Cando.

Currently, Rob's major projects are the Blood Tribe Land Designation referendum along with the Kanai Marketplace Grocery Store. As the lead on these projects, Rob relies on the buy-in from the Blood Tribe community to get these projects into motion so he takes care of strategic planning, leakage studies, feasibility studies.

The Kanai Marketplace Grocery store is a new, 12,000 square foot, multi-million dollar commercial project on the Blood Reserve. It opened in Fall 2016 and aims to bring affordable, fresh, healthy food products to on-reserve residents. The store is supplied by The Grocery People, the same supplier of Coop grocery stores in southern Alberta.

Kanai Marketplace was built with the help of local construction workers and will employ 20 people, generating income, creating employment opportunities and training, and improving the standard of living for community members of the Blood Tribe.

Although Rob faced some funding issues with the project, his wisdom and diplomacy served him well and he was able to keep the project on track. Kanai Marketplace will service the largest land-based reserve in Canada with an on-reserve population of 10,000 plus residents. The Blood Tribe are neighbours with the Piikani First Nation and the Townships of Fort Macleod, Cardston and Magrath. This marketplace is closer to these communities than the nearby city of Lethbridge, Alberta, and will be of great use to these surrounding nations.

Rob Crow is a deserving individual and has demonstrated his passion for economic development and Indigenous lands management. Rob is an asset to his community and without him, his team and the hard work they do, the Kanai Marketplace simply would not exist.

Cando Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner

Community Category

Teslin Tlingit Council & Village of Teslin

Eric Morris, Richard Sidney & Gord Curran, Teslin Tlingit Council & Village of Teslin

Teslin, Yukon is a century-old village located at mile 804 on the Alaska Highway. Teslin is home to the Teslin Tlingit Council (TTC), an inland, self-governing First Nation that migrated up the Taku River from the coast of Alaska, armed with a comprehensive land claim settlement. The Village of Teslin (VOT) is one of eight municipal governments of the Yukon with a small, active community of 450 people. Hunting and fishing play a key role in the lives of the people who live there.

Teslin's modern economy plays a huge role for these communities in the area of cultural tourism and recreational fishing and hunting. Approximately one third of residents are employed by TTC, VOT or the Yukon government.

The Teslin Community Development Plan 2015–2025 was formalized in 2014 by VOT and TTC. The 10-year plan was approved at a community-wide meeting and put into effect

during the 2015–2016 fiscal year. The plan provides a framework for projects in the next 10 years and is a great example of sustainable community economic development, characterized by its commitment to SERV: social responsibility, ecological sensitivity, cultural respect and economic viability. The goal of the plan is to guarantee people in the community are able to meet their basic needs, support healthy lifestyles, develop a diverse and sustainable economy, cultivate environmental sustainability and enhance and improve knowledge, skills, capacities and capabilities in the community.

In the first year of implementation, the plan created over 110 jobs for local residents, produced 66 contracts for local suppliers and entrepreneurs and generated approximately $7.5 million in new funding for community infrastructure projects.

The collaboration between a First Nation and a municipality like TTC and VOT is a great example of the benefits that are realized when communities come together with a shared vision and become ‘stronger together’.

Prior to the 10-year plan, TTC and VOT were previously working together under another name on their first sustainability plan. Through that collaboration, TTC and VOT saw the benefits of working together, but they faced some obstacles. There is often a learning curve when partnering with others and sometimes the benefits of collaboration are overshadowed in order to fit within the rules and regulations in place by one funding body or another. Since that first joint venture, a steering committee was pulled together which resulted in the creation of a 10-year plan.

The Teslin Community Development Plan 2015–2025 offers hope and promise. It is a plan based on respect for others and many communities can look to this partnership as a model of what can be accomplished through team building, community collaboration and political will.

≈≈≈≈≈≈≈

Cando Economic Developer of the Year Award Winner

Aboriginal Private Sector Business Category

Birch Mountain Enterprises Ltd.

After nearly a decade in business and over 250 employees, Birch Mountain Enterprises (BNE), is a proven and dependable fluid handling and steaming specialist in the Fort McKay area. Specializing in safety and service, the three cofounders and owners of the company know the importance of giving back to the community and supporting Indigenous programs, employees and business.

Primarily serving Fort McMurray’s oil sands clients and area, they are proud to be local and Indigenously owned. With a 60% Indigenous employment rate, BME has created numerous jobs in the community. They utilize Indigenous-owned contractors when possible, they are members of the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association and their mandate is to support children’s health and wellness programs in local Indigenous communities.

Chris Wilson
Birch Mountain Enterprises

Thanks to the generosity of BME, Fort McKay has been able to offer amazing educational, sports, health and wellness programs for youth in the community. The Fort McKay Wellness Director is quoted as saying, "it has helped a lot of our kids to progress in their communication skills in addition to having fun!" Since 2011, BME has been a huge supporter of the community hockey program, resulting in a very successful program with over 80 youth playing the sport.

BME was a great support to the community during the wildfire catastrophe that hit the region in May 2016; they donated truckloads of groceries and supplies to evacuees. BME is constantly striving to touch the lives of their community members and give back in any way they can.

BME is inventive and this is clear with their new Wastewater Treatment Plant project. Their goal is to be the go-to company for these types of services and they hope to streamline their services on hauling sewage, sewage processing, bio solids management and certified laboratory services. This project will also create new job opportunities for community members, increasing the overall wellbeing in the community. BME is committed to environmental sustainability and they view all their activities through a lens of reducing environmental pollution.

BME comes from humble roots and demonstrates that, with all that they do. They are extremely deserving of this award and are a great example of a thriving company that puts community first.

Aki Energy: A Case Study of Aboriginal Social Enterprise

J. Arno Sharpe
PhD STUDENT, NATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

CASE STUDY

This case study is an exploration of AKI ENERGY, an Aboriginal social enterprise based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Aki Energy's vision includes a future for Canada's Aboriginal people built on community economic development and renewable energy. A discussion of Aki Energy's activities requires that confronting a number of issues, including: archaic regulatory models, development's historic relationship with assimilation, the often misunderstood niche that social enterprise occupies, and the necessity for development to alleviate some of the economic issues facing Canada's Aboriginal peoples. To understand Aki Energy's perspective, Mr. Shaun Loney, Aki Energy's director of development, was interviewed.

Social Enterprise, Aboriginal Enterprise, and Development

Aki Energy's role as an Aboriginal social enterprise necessitates a brief discussion of social enterprises & Aboriginal enterprises. Social enterprises have a long historical background, having existed in various forms throughout history, but at the turn of the century there was a surge of interest from various sectors of society looking for innovative solutions to social issues. So what is a social enterprise? There are many definitions, but a common, simple definition is any organization that is "directly involved in the sale of goods and services to a market, but that also has specific social objectives that serve as its primary purpose" ("Social Enterprise", n.d.). They operate under a dual bottom line, both social & economic, making them a hybrid organization, unlike traditional concepts of enterprise that emphasize economic goals. Social enterprises have been closely tied to Aboriginal enter-

Acknowledgements: This case study would not have been possible without the support of Aki Energy and the guidance of Professor Wanda Wuttunee. The author wishes to express their gratitude to Mr. Shaun Loney who took the time to answer numerous questions, and offered invaluable assistance.

prises, with some scholars going so far as to argue that Aboriginal enterprises are inherently social enterprises (Anderson, Dana, & Dana, 2006). Aboriginal enterprises have also been closely tied in Canada to economic development through financing, creation of business relationships, entrepreneurial activities, and job & training opportunities ("Aboriginal Economic Development Fund", n.d.; Madahbee, 2015).

Unfortunately development is not without its criticisms. Emerging in the post World War II era, early development models focused on a modernization paradigm (Peredo, Anderson, Galbraith, Honig, & Dana, 2004). These early development efforts regarded traditional cultures as a hindrance to development, and, based on concepts of social evolution, followed a myopic development trajectory that has become associated with assimilation (Tucker, 1999). In response, dependency theories began to emerge in the 1970s. Though they shifted the focus to localized activities, dependency doctrines continued to emphasize economic and, to a lesser extent, political goals (Fagan, 1999). This has led to anti-development movements, which reject Western development agendas, and post-development movements (including alternative development/alt-development), which seek to modify these agendas by the inclusion of cultural analysis & cultural politics, and the deconstruction of hegemonic development mythology (Fagan, 1999). Many post-development models attempt to offer communities opportunities to incorporate goals that have not traditionally been reflected in development paradigms.

Canada's Aboriginal Peoples & Development

Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) provides the most recent government data regarding Canada's Aboriginal peoples ("Fact Sheet", 2013). According to the NHS's fact sheet, as of 2011, there were more than 1,400,000 Aboriginal people in Canada, roughly 4% of the population. Registered Indians account for 50% of the Aboriginal population, 15% are Non-Status Indians, 30% Métis, and 4% Inuit; with more than 79% of Aboriginal peoples living in Ontario and the Western provinces. Aboriginal peoples are becoming increasingly urban, 56% of them residing in urban areas, with Winnipeg having the highest per capita population at approximately 11% (though other estimates are even higher). The Aboriginal population is, on average, younger than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, almost half (46%) being under the age of 25, as compared to 29% of Canada's non-Aboriginal population.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada face a number of distinct challenges, not the least of which are education and unemployment. Approximately 10% of Aboriginals of working age have a university degree, falling short of Canada's non-Aboriginal population, at 26%; while 29% of Canada's Aboriginal people of working age have less than a high school degree ("Fact Sheet", 2013). The rate of employment for Aboriginal peoples of working age is at 63%, compared to 76% for non-Aboriginal's; and the unemployment rates are 13% and 6%, respectively.

Employment and education challenges play at least some role in the high levels of poverty seen in Canada's Aboriginal communities; according to a study by Willows, Veugelers, Raine, and Kuhle (2008) 33% of Aboriginal households were food insecure, compared to 9% of non-Aboriginal household, 52% did not have homeownership (non-Aboriginals 31%), and 33% fall into the lowest income adequacy category (non-Aboriginals 12%). In a country like Canada, one of the wealthiest nations in the world, it can be surprising to some that poverty is still an issue, and that Aboriginal people are four times as likely to experience

hunger caused by poverty (McIntyre, Connor, & Warren, 1998). Manitoba Aboriginal communities face some of the greatest challenges, with quality of life on Manitoba First Nations, as measured by the UN Human Development Index, being ranked as the lowest in Canada (Puxley, 2015). Manitoba's First Nations more have more than double the national average for child poverty among First Nations (62%), and they are the least likely to complete high school (28%). Faced with these realities, it is unsurprising that development is a focus of the Canadian government, Aboriginal communities, and organizations working to resolve these issues.

Peguis First Nation

> Promoting, planning, and developing Peguis First Nation with a sound economic development strategy
>
> Peguis Development Corporation mission statement
> ("Peguis Development Corporation — Peguis First Nation", 2015)

Peguis First Nation is an Ojibway and Cree community ("About Peguis First Nation", n.d.) located roughly 190 km north of Winnipeg, situated between Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba. As of 2013, the total registered population was 8835, with an on reserve population of 3685 ("Peguis — Connectivity Profile", 2013). The community is a signatory of Treaty 1, signed by Mis-Koo-Kinew (Henry Prince) on behalf of the St. Peter's Band (Peguis First Nation) August 3, 1871 ("Review: Negotiation of a Settlement", 2006). In 2008, Peguis signed the Peguis Treaty Land Entitlement agreement which Chief Glenn Hudson described as "the fulfillment of the treaty promise to land" ("Archived — Canada, Peguis", 2008). The community is somewhat isolated and must cope with higher costs due to transportation issues ("Peguis — Connectivity Profile", 2013). Peguis has access to a variety of services within the community including a fire-hall, emergency operation centre, and health centre ("Departments — Peguis First Nation", 2015). The community's government consists of a Chief and Council, currently (as of 2016) headed by Chief Cindy Spence ("Chief and Council — Peguis First Nation", 2015). In 2013, Peguis, along with Fisher River Cree Nation, working in partnership with Aki Energy, began the process of retrofitting their community to incorporate geothermal heating, making them the first First Nations in the world to do so (Wood, Loney, & Taylor, 2015).

Fisher River Cree Nation (Ochekwi-Sipi)

> The Fisher River Economic Development Corporation (F.R.E.D.), on behalf of the Fisher River Cree Nation members, will identify, develop, and undertake activities that will expand employment, stimulate economic activity, and contribute to overall community investment..
>
> Fisher River Cree Economic Development Corporation mission statement
> ("Fisher River Cree Economic Development Corporation
> — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016)

The Fisher River Cree Nation is a neighbour to the Peguis First Nation, lying just northwest of Peguis, roughly 200 km north of Winnipeg. Fisher River, as of 2013, had a total registered population of 3318 people, with 1783 people living on reserve ("Fisher River — Connectivity Profile", 2013). The community is between 50–350 km away from service centres, but they do have year-round road access. As a community, Fisher River Cree Nation

traces its history back to the 1840s, when Norway House became a fur trade hub for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), which offered employment opportunities for First Nations peoples ("About Us — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). The introduction of steamboats on Lake Winnipeg and the decline of the fur trade in the 1870s put many of these people out of work, motivating them to move further inland. In 1875, these people became signatories to Treaty 5, which provided the present reserve at Fisher River. More people joined throughout the 1880s, and in 1908 the band signed adhesions to Treaty 5, bringing even more people into the community ("About Us — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). Their government consists of a Chief and Council, currently (as of 2016) led by Chief David Crate ("Chief & Council — Fisher River Cree Nation", 2016). In 2013, they became leaders in renewable energy by partnering with Aki Energy and Peguis First Nation to retrofit their community with geothermal heat pumps.

Aki Energy

> Aki Energy works with First Nations to start green businesses in their communities, creating local jobs and growing strong local economies
>
> Aki Energy
> ("Home — Aki Energy", n.d.)

Aki Energy's sense of purpose comes from its executives and its Board of Directors. Aki's Executive Director, Darcy Wood, is a member of the Garden Hills First Nation, where he served as chief. Mr. Wood has been active as both a political advisor to the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Grand Chief, and as a senior policy analyst for the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Shaun Loney is Aki's director of development, Mr. Loney has extensive experience working with social enterprises, having founded BUILD Inc., a social enterprise whose mission is summed up as "BUILD seeks a Winnipeg where bills in low-income housing are affordable and where the residents who live in this housing have gainful, family-supporting employment" ("About Us — BUILD", 2016). He is an Ashoka Fellow, and in 2014, received the Ernst and Young Prairie Entrepreneur of the Year award. Aki Energy's Board of Directors consists of community members from Aki's partners, this helps ensure a plurality of Aboriginal voices are involved in guiding Aki, and helps Aki maintain its relationships with the communities, even after they have completed their installations and training projects. Aki's Board of Directors provides direction through quarterly meetings where they plan a path to the future and create company bylaws.

Aki Energy's vision mandates a triple bottom line of people, planet, profit; put another way, their mission includes social, environmental, and economic goals. A report prepared by Aki Energy (in conjunction with the assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Canadian CED network), titled Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy: a Toolkit for Manitoba First Nations (2015), offers an inclusive definition of social enterprise, believing social enterprises should be defined by their missions, rather than their legal structure, and that social enterprises are "any business with social and/or environmental goals, whether they are a non-profit, a co-op or a for-profit company" (Wood et al., 2015, p.12). Essential to this definition is that a social enterprise benefits both the owners of an enterprise and the communities that they serve. In this view social entrepreneurs operate not only in the social economy, but in the solutions economy (Wood et al., 2015), as social entrepreneurs must often engage in innovative problem-solving to accomplish their goals.

Image: Wood et al. (2015, p.10-11)

The goal of Aki Energy is one of transformation, it is their hope to fundamentally reshape the leaky bucket economies of many First Nations communities into strong local economies. Leaky bucket economies can be described as "a place where money that comes into the community flows right back out again — creating no local jobs or economic benefit" (Wood et al., 2015: 10). This transformation requires developing local businesses and infrastructure that will support endeavours that bring resources into the community, rather than funnelling resources out. Aki Energy emphasizes the positives that exist within difficult situations, what they refer to as the upside of down (Wood et al., 2015). This requires seeing beyond the deficit that, so often, is the focus when discussing First Nations communities, in lieu of seeing a problem, Aki suggests you look for the opportunity. As an example, instead of focusing on the expense of high utility bills, Aki Energy suggests looking at the cost effectiveness of green energy options, and the potential benefits that accompany them. Aki Energy sees social enterprise as a pillar in this transformative process, combining the best qualities of business with a sense of social responsibility.

Capacity Building

Aki's first partnerships were with Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation in 2013. Aki trained 15 people from each community to be geothermal heating installers, with participants obtaining certification through the International Geothermal Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA). Capability development is about more than just training skills, it is about teaching people how to utilize those skills in a multitude of contexts, and helping them find the confidence to apply those skills. Aki recognizes this, and its goals go beyond simple economic development, as Darcy Wood says "it [Aki's training] builds pride in communities" ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). In addition to capacity building Aki Energy provides financing development and project management to help ensure a project's success ("Sustainable Energy — Aki Energy", n.d.). This allows Aki to help build capacity in all phases of the project, providing community members experience that can later be applied in other contexts.

Geothermal Heating, Demand-Side Energy, and Supply-Side Energy

Energy projects fall under two general categories, either demand-side energy projects, or supply-side energy projects. Supply-side energy projects (supply-side management projects) are efforts to ensure the creation and transmission of energy (United Nations Industrial

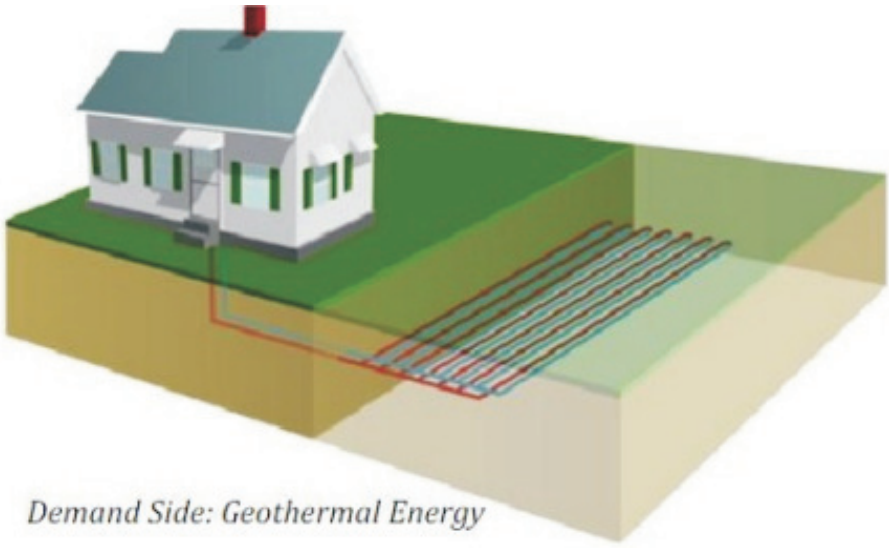


Image: Wood et al. (2015, p.21)

Development Organization (UNIDO), n.d.). Supply-side renewable energy projects require utility providers as clients to purchase the energy they produce. In Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro is the only such utility provider, and at this time they are unable to purchase power and prices that would make green supply-side projects viable, making supply side renewable energy projects infeasible.

Demand-side energy projects (demand-side management projects) don't actually create energy they simply reduce or eliminate the need for it. Geothermal heating and cooling is one of many green technologies being used to reduce our impact on the environment. In Manitoba, the most common geothermal heat pump being used is a horizontal, closed loop heat pump (Wood et al., 2015). This requires that a geothermal loop be installed beneath the frost line, allowing the natural temperature of the Earth to heat and cool a home ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). By allowing the Earth's temperature to cool/heat a home, energy costs will be reduced. This has the added, but not inconsequential, benefit of reducing pollution related to the production of energy. In 2013, Peguis First Nation and Fisher River Cree Nation installed 110 geothermal units in households, in 2014 the number rose to 150, which Aki Energy estimates will save those communities approximately $50,000 a year (Wood et al., 2015).

Manitoba Hydro, Pay As You Save (PAYS), and Social Assistance

Manitoba Hydro offers numerous incentive programs for consumers to save energy and natural gas under their PowerSmart programs ("Be Power Smart", n.d.). Manitoba Hydro has created a number of PowerSmart programs targeted directly at First Nations community, including their Community Geothermal Program ("Power Smart and First Nations", n.d.). This program is designed at making first Nations "active participants in reducing their

energy consumption" ("Power Smart and First Nations", n.d.). First Nations communities are able to work with local businesses, such as Aki Energy, to train community members in the installation and maintenance of geothermal heat pump systems, with homeowners then being able to use the Pay As You Save program to help finance the installation costs.

The Pay As You Save financing program allows homeowners a way to invest in energy efficient technologies that may be beyond their financial reach. Manitoba Hydro will pay the upfront costs for the installation of the green technology, and then charge the homeowner monthly instalments to repay those costs. This program is being used to allow first Nations communities to install geothermal technology without having to pay the upfront costs ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015), as installation of geothermal heating can cost approximately $18,000, well beyond the means of many mid & low income families. Over time, the energy savings will pay for the installation costs, with the savings only increasing as the cost of energy rises.

Aki Energy's methods have met with resistance from government bureaucracy and how that bureaucracy sets parameters on its own mission. The Pay As You Save program was a vital step in achieving Aki's goals, as it allows people who couldn't afford it to install geothermal heating/cooling. Regrettably, the payments do not qualify for social assistance, failing to meet the bureaucratic description of basic assistance, creating a tension between programs intended to assist First Nations peoples (Pay As You Save/PowerSmart) and older programs of dependency.

In Closing

It is difficult to evaluate Aki Energy's performance, simply due to short existence. In spite of this, a look at what has been accomplished in a short time gives a sense of the potential benefits Manitoba's First Nations, and Canada as a whole, may receive Aki's activities. Aki Energy, through its partnerships with Manitoba First Nations, has installed more than $3 million in renewable energy technology ("Sustainable Energy — Aki Energy", n.d.), reducing costs for the communities, and helping our environment. Through the training they have provided, Peguis Construction and Fisher River Builders have been able to offer their services far beyond their community, while providing sustainable employment to their community members. Chief Peguis Construction and Fisher River Builders have become the two largest residential thermal insulation companies in Western Canada (Wood et al., 2015).

Aki Energy is part of an organic community of social enterprises, continuing to grow and expand as it recognizes new opportunities to achieve its driving mission of creating strong First Nations economies. Aki has broadened its scope to include other forms of sustainable energy, including solar energy & biomass ("Aki Energy — Aboriginal Social Enterprise", 2015). Going beyond energy, Aki has also established Meechim Farms, a collaboration with Garden Hills First Nation meant to address the high cost of healthy food in northern First Nations communities ("Local Food — Aki Energy", n.d.).

Aki Energy still faces a number of challenges in their mission to assist First Nations communities. Unfortunately, some of their greatest challenges may come from their successes in finding innovative solutions, an example of first mover disadvantage, as it were. Canada is a modern country with a sophisticated bureaucracy and this bureaucracy can be a hindrance at times, often unable to keep up, or better yet predict, the regulatory needs of innovative social enterprises.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Are there cognitive differences, such as patterns of opportunity recognition, start-up motives, etc., between Aboriginal social entrepreneurs and other types of entrepreneurs? What effect does Aboriginal culture, and the modern realities of Aboriginal life within Canada, have in creating these differences?
2. Does Canada's social assistance policy perpetuate a paradigm of dependency through its refusal to pay the fees involved in the Pay As You Save program? If so, what opportunities, if any, does this offer for Aboriginal social entrepreneurs?
3. How has Aki Energy addressed capacity building within Aboriginal communities?
4. Is Aki Energy's process of capacity building sustainable in the long term? Can the market support labourers with the skills that Aki teaches? Are there less direct benefits?
5. How does Aki Energy fulfil the requirements of a social enterprise?
6. Hypothetical scenario: Assume regulation is passed restricting social enterprise to enterprise models (i.e., excluding NPO's etc.), what benefits/disadvantages would there be for Aki as a social enterprise? As an NPO?
7. Aki Energy operates in an environment where there is tension between the old paradigms of the government & enterprise and the new paradigms of social enterprise. How should social enterprises navigate this tension? Is it realistic for them to expect to transform the old paradigms? How can they operate in the interim?
8. What potential linkages do you see benefiting Aboriginal communities from Aki Energy's activities?
9. Can development approaches avoid being an assimilatory process? What role do the communities of the underdeveloped play in this process?
10. As an Aboriginal social enterprise, how can Aboriginal culture be incorporated into Aki Energy's daily operations?
11. How does Aki's concept of the upside of down affect the ways in which they operate and plan for the future?
12. Hypothetical scenario: To date, Aki Energy has focused its geothermal installation activities on Aboriginal communities. The following questions ask you to consider the repercussions of shifting that specific focus, their service market, to primarily non-Aboriginal communities, in an effort to exploit a wider market (their other missions, such as capacity building, would remain unchanged, and continue to focus on Aboriginal communities).
    (a) What marketing strategies could best benefit Aki Energy? What would be the unique obstacles & advantages for an Aboriginal social enterprise such as Aki Energy?
    (b) How would this change in their service mission affect Aki Energy's status as an Aboriginal social enterprise, if at all? Would it be viable, or would it conflict with their primary missions?

TEACHERS GUIDE

Note to the Teachers

This teachers guide is intended to elaborate on topics that were far too briefly touched on within the case study. Each section of the teacher's guide will, by necessity, also be brief, but will provide an enhanced understanding for teachers in discussing these subjects. Due to the brevity with which these complicated and important issues are addressed, at the end of each section there will be a suggested reading list. This is intended to supplement those materials listed in the reference section at the end of this case study package. These readings are suggested to not only to elaborate on a given topic, and explore underlying concepts, but, when possible, to provide contrasting views with which educators may encourage debate and discussion. These materials can be further supplemented by any that the educator has found to be informative and applicable.

Aboriginal Enterprise and Social Enterprise

As with any emerging scholarly field there are isomorphic forces attempting to dominate and shape definitions of social enterprise (Nicholls, 2010). It has been nearly two decades since J.G. Dees (1998) provided an early definition of social entrepreneurship based on the qualities and characteristics of a social entrepreneur. Since that time, there has been considerable debate in an attempt to shape a more comprehensive definition. J.A. Sharpe (2014) engaged in a study using content analysis of high impact journals to uncover definitions of social enterprise, social entrepreneurship, social innovation, and social entrepreneurs that have emerged since Dees seminal paper. Contrary to much of the literature, Sharpe found that there was considerable consensus as to how to define these terms, and that each was commonly being used within distinctive parameters, though they were at times being used interchangeably, further confusing an already complicated debate (Sharpe, 2014). Sharpe's findings can provide clarity for students by simplifying them to four intuitive categorizations:

1. **Social enterprises** are organizations engaged in social missions.
2. **Social entrepreneurs** are the individuals and communities engaged in social entrepreneurship.
3. **Social entrepreneurship** is the process used by social enterprises to achieve their goals.
4. **Social innovation** is a creative process commonly found within the process of social entrepreneurship.

Sharpe's definitions reflect an academic consensus of largely Western scholars and he noted the absence of opinions of other cultures, especially marginalized peoples. As such these definitions should not be taken as reflective of all views of social enterprise.

Much like social enterprise, there are competing visions as to how to define Aboriginal enterprise. Due to the relatively recent emergence of Aboriginal enterprise theory crafting by academics, it is best to utilize a flexible definition of Aboriginal enterprise at this time, this more easily allows for narrower interpretations to be used in the future, once the variations that an inclusive definition allows have been explored more thoroughly. In that spirit,

Sengupta and Vieta (2015, p.108) offer an open definition of Aboriginal social enterprise in Canada, providing for five basic typologies:

1. Social enterprise led by Indigenous individuals exclusively serving Indigenous clients.
2. Social enterprise led by Indigenous individuals serving Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.
3. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals exclusively serving Indigenous clients.
4. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals serving Indigenous and non-Indigenous clients.
5. Social enterprise led by non-Indigenous individuals exclusively serving non-Indigenous clients.

Though it is unclear how Sengupta and Vieta conceive of the fifth typology fitting into an Aboriginal social enterprise framework, it has been included to prevent misrepresentation. As with social enterprise, Aboriginal social enterprise is linked to a multiple bottom line agenda, Sengupta & Vieta (2015) suggest that Aboriginal social enterprises incorporate a quadruple bottom line of social, economic, environmental, and cultural missions. The argument for the cultural mission as distinct from the social mission is not currently well developed (as of 2016), so this can be an interesting topic of discussion.

Caution should be used when discussing social enterprise/Aboriginal social enterprise and development, and clarity should be a priority when linking the two concepts. A distinction should be made between the development of social enterprises, and social enterprises as a method of development. The first is the discussion of fostering social enterprises, while the second is social enterprise as a mechanism for developing communities, each has economic and political implications, but development as transformation of a society carries with it the burden of an assimilatory past and concepts of colonization (see the section Development & Post-development Theory for a brief discussion as to issues regarding development). While SE/ASE goals are often intertwined with those of development, development's traditional emphasis on economic and political agendas may be limiting.

> **Suggested Reading:** P. Dacin, M. Dacin, & M. Matear (2010), *Social Entrepreneurship: Why We Don't Need a New Theory and How We Move Forward From Here*; J. Mair & I. Martí (2006), *Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Source of Explanation, Prediction, and Delight*; W. Wuttunee (2009), *Aboriginal Perspectives on the Social Economy*; W. Wuttunee (2004), *Living Rhythms*

Development and Post-Development Theory

Indigenous peoples are often presented as opposed to development, but people are not against their own development. Issues arise from people defining development in different ways and the conflicts that can come from our eagerness to solve the problems of the world, which can make it easy to overlook more esoteric concerns for the sake of glaring practicalities. This is particularly true of Western ideas of development that are often unchallenged by the public, academics, and development practitioners who are confronting the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment. The introduction of development into a com-

munity, or a classroom, may be problematic as for some just the word development carries tones of colonialism and assimilation. Keeping this in mind, a critical review of historical paradigms in development and comparison with post-development theories may mitigate some of these concerns. This section will attempt to evaluate some key issues in development and post-development theory, their history, and their consequences.

Development arose in the post World War II era as many colonial powers were surrendering their colonies, voluntarily or otherwise. Development approaches were seen as a means of combating many of the problems of the 20th century, including the poverty and underdevelopment in many of the recently freed nations. Theories of modernization laid the initial groundwork for the development paradigm, which emphasized economic and political goals (Kuznets, 1973), and these theories were based on an evolutionary view of culture and progress (Tucker, 1999). Modernization theory was based on the Eurocentric view of economic rational self-interest that rejected other understandings of rational thought. Modernization discourses were based in theories of cultural evolution, conceptualized as a model of linear progress, where traditional cultures were seen as an impediment to modernity, development, and progress. Modernization approached development through the economic and political lens of the West, and viewed success as incorporating underdeveloped nations into those systems, a process some view as continuing colonization models.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the failures of modernization theory in resolving the issues it was meant to address, and its assimilatory nature, were confronted by the rise of dependency theories (Peredo et al., 2004). Dependency theories argued that investment and aid from Western, industrialized nations actually harm underdeveloped countries, increasing income equality, and impairing attempts at development (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). In response, they encouraged underdeveloped nations to focus on localized activities, rather than operating as an export platform for developed nations, reducing their interaction and reliance on developed nations (Frank, 2008). While dependency paradigms rejected many of the fundamental beliefs of modernization theories, they continued to define success in much the same way, focusing on Western economic and political standards rather than standards based in the traditions of the communities being helped.

As a response to the singular vision that development has offered, the 1990s saw the rise of anti-development and post-development theories, though some scholars equate the two (Pieterse, 2000). Anti-development models are difficult to defend, as they often don't address the realities faced by many of the peoples of the world. While it may be easy for an academic, living in conditions where food sovereignty and clean water are not a concern, to criticize development, and search for utopian ideal, those living without these luxuries haven't the time to wait for theoretical arguments to be resolved (Fagan, 1999). For them, post-development models offer an alternative to abandoning development, and potential alternatives to traditional forms of development. Post-development theory has taken earlier efforts at decolonization and applied them to development. Through this process, the works of Said, Foucault, and others, have influenced the creation of a post-development theory of cultural analysis that attempts to deconstruct hegemonic discourses in development (Tucker, 1999). These discourses have created a conceptualization of the other through the creation of binary opposite terms such as developed (Western cultures) that are contrasted to the undeveloped/underdeveloped (the other). Thus, cultural analysis has allowed for new forms of resistance against the colonial practices that have been embedded within development processes. Unfortunately, theory does not rectify the problems that development was meant to address. In keeping with this, many post-development practitioners encourage some form of practical

post-development process, such as Fagan's (Fagan, 1999) cultural politics, which encourages local initiatives, based on the culture of the region, as the source of solutions to local issues. Within this paradigm, post-development theory envisages a plurality of voices, shifting development from a monologue by the West to a dialogue with the world.

> **Suggested Reading:** F. Fanon (1969), *The Wretched of the Earth; I. Kapoor (2008) the Post-Colonial Politics of Development*; A. Maslow (1943), *A Theory of Human Motivation*; D. Newhouse (2004), *The Challenges of Aboriginal Economic Development in the Shadow of the Borg*; K. Polanyi (1944), *The Great Transformation*; E. Said (1978), *Orientalism*

Aki Energy and the Social Enterprise Toolkit

Aki Energy's Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy provides a brief roadmap for the development of social enterprise (Wood et al., 2015), and this may be useful for students to explore. Aki provides five basic steps to starting a social enterprise: (1) decide on a legal structure, (2) create a business plan, (3) create bylaws and governance structures, (4) start-up capital, (5) get started. Potential social entrepreneurs begin by deciding between three basic legal structures: a non-profit corporation, a cooperative, or a for-profit corporation. They should then consider their business plan, including their mission statement, product/service, customer base, potential competitors, and expenses/revenue flow. Once they've completed their business plan they need to consider the creation of bylaws and a board of directors. Each of these is an important aspect in developing their corporate culture, and can lay the foundations for an enterprise's vision and goals. The final stage is obtaining your start-up capital, which can come from a number of sources, such as: government grants, private grants, or through loans and financing. For more information we refer teachers to Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy: a Toolkit for Manitoba First Nations (Wood et al., 2015), available online (http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/major-initiatives/pubs/social%20enterprise%20and%20the%20solutions%20economy%20(email).pdf). Teachers May use this tool kit to have students develop a plan for a social enterprise of their own.

Canada's Aboriginal People and Development

A snapshot statistical view of Canada's Aboriginal people does not do justice to their current realities. While the current numbers show that many challenges remain, they don't convey how far Canada's Aboriginal peoples have come. Aboriginal peoples in Canada do have lower rates of high school graduation, university education, and employment compared to non-Aboriginal Canadians, but these trends have been changing for the better. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of Aboriginal peoples of working age with a university degree increased 2%, from 8 to 10% ("Fact Sheet", 2013).

Aboriginal peoples have invested in themselves and are increasingly creating their own business opportunities. The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011), Promise and Prosperity — the Aboriginal Business Survey, provides a wealth of information about the growth of Aboriginal entrepreneurship. From 2001 two 2006 Aboriginal self-employment increased by 38%, from 27,000 people to 37,000, compared to 7% for Canadians overall. Ontario and British Columbia have the highest rates of Aboriginal self-employment at 23% and 22%, with Manitoba at 10%. Aboriginal businesses focus on their local

Region	Aboriginal self-employed population (15+)		Total Aboriginal population (15+)	
	N	%	N	%
Atlantic Provinces	1,940	5	50,260	6
Quebec	3,790	10	80,910	10
Ontario	8,750	23	178,170	22
Manitoba	3,925	10	117,205	14
Saskatchewan	2,880	8	91,290	11
Alberta	6,835	18	129,745	16
British Columbia	8,245	22	140,820	17
Territories	1,165	3	35,485	4
Canada	**37,445**	**100**	**823,885**	**100**

Image: The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011) p.1

community (85%) or their province/territory (73%), with half of Aboriginal businesses having clients outside of their home regions, and many operating internationally (26% in the US, 18% outside of North America). A telling fact is that 49% of Aboriginal small business owners consider themselves successes not simply for the profits they make, but because they find their work rewarding, and 61% rank community service as a priority for their businesses.

Suggested Reading: D. MacDonald and D. Wilson (2010), *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canada*; D. MacDonald and D. Wilson (2013), *Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada*; Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee (2009), *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History*; J. Richards (2014), *Are We Making Progress? New Evidence on Aboriginal Education Outcomes in Provincial and Reserve Schools*

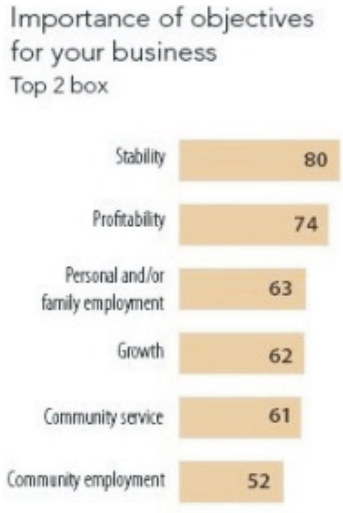


Image: The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business Report (2011) p.21

Capacity Building

Being competent and capable are not the same thing, though there are similarities. Competencies are what people often think of when they consider professional and personal development, and competency development emphasizes refining & improving skills and the acquisition of knowledge (Stephenson & Weil, 1992). These qualities are often easily demonstrated through a simple display of proficiency, or some means of testing. Capability is a less tangible quality, one that is more difficult to define, but that people often feel they can recognize. Capable people exhibit the ability to learn, they show confidence in applying their skills, they have a high degree of self efficacy, and they're able to adapt when working with others or in unfamiliar situations (Stephenson & Weil, 1992). Building competency is an important part of building capability, as it often instills traits that encourage capabilities, such as confidence, to grow.

Competency development utilizes strategies and activities to help individuals and communities achieve a goal, prepare for future challenges, or develop capacities required for change. A simple example of this is the SMART criteria model created by George T. Doran (Doran, 1981). A modified version of Doran's smart goals exists that would allow each person/student to set a goal that produces an observable effect, this version of SMART stands for: specific (S), measurable (M), achievable (A), realistic (R), and time related (T) (see SMART Goals — Quick Overview https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-SvuFIQjK8 [runtime 3m58s] for a more detailed explanation). The simplicity of this model, and its flexibility, allows students to create a goal that can be achieved over the course of a semester. While each individual goal may only be the development of a competency, over time, the development and refinement of competencies can lead to increased capability, as students become more confident, and better able to handle life's challenges.

As difficult as capability development in individuals can be, applying it on a larger, community scale amplifies those challenges. One possible framework for use with communities was developed by the economist Amartya Sen in the 1980s, the capability approach (CA). Sen's capability approach focuses on building competency by assessing people's functions, freedom, and capabilities, and by helping them achieve goals they value (Gigler, 2005). This methodology views people as the goal, not as a means to another goal. A key element is freedom, not to choose between multiple bad options, but freedom that includes effective opportunities to live a good life (Robeyns, 2003). CA doesn't dictate a predetermined list of abilities that need to be developed, instead it suggests that communities should determine how they want to develop. This allows for a methodological flexibility appropriate to the different contexts that Aboriginal peoples live in. Bjorn-Soren Gigler (2005) believes this method is appropriate for indigenous communities because both share a holistic view and CA focuses on well-being, encouraging communities to set their own priorities, and stresses the process of over outcomes.

Suggested Reading: D.A. Clark & M. Qizilbash (2005), *Core Poverty, Basic Capabilities and Vagueness: An Application to the South African Context*; D. Dubois & W. Rothwell (2004), *Competency-Based Human Resource Management*; D. Gasper (2002), *Is Sen's Capability Approach an Adequate Basis for Considering Human Development?*; M. Nussbaum (2011), *Creating Capabilities the Human Development Approach*; I. Robeyns (2003), *The Capability Approach? An Interdisciplinary Introduction*; B. Williams (1987), *The Standard of Living: Interests and Capabilities*

Geothermal Heating, Demand-Side Energy, and Supply-Side Energy

To avoid confusion for students, this paper refers to Aki Energy's services as geothermal heating, or geothermal heating/cooling. This is intended to prevent confusion students may have with other forms of geothermal energy, such as that from geothermal power plants.

Supply-side energy projects are often able to sell energy to utility provider, such as Manitoba Hydro (Wood et al., 2015). Many of the green energy projects that people think of fall into this category, like solar panels, wind farms, etc.; unfortunately for Manitobans, Manitoba Hydro is the only possible buyer within the province, and they do not currently purchase green power at an economically viable price (Wood et al., 2015). The lack of support in Manitoba for supply-side renewable energy projects makes them a poor choice for social enterprises at this time.

Geothermal heating/cooling is a renewable demand-side energy project (demand-side management project), meaning that the project doesn't produce energy, but instead reduces or eliminates the need for energy (Gillingham, Newell, & Palmer, 2004). Geothermal heat pumps have been around since the 1940s and there are two broad categories: closed-loop and open-loop ("Geothermal Heat Pumps," n.d.). Closed-loop systems require a complete loop of plastic tubing be buried, and most circulate a solution of antifreeze through this tubing. Closed-loop systems come in three configurations: horizontal (usually used for residential buildings), vertical (used for larger buildings), and lake/pond (maybe the most cost-effective, but requires access to a body of water). Open-loop systems on the other hand do not require a complete loop, using water from a nearby water source as a heat exchange fluid. There are also a number of hybrid systems that can be created using various combinations of technology.

Another demand side renewable energy choice is solar energy which is often used as a way to heat water for use in the home. Solar thermal systems require a solar collector outside of the house, facing the sun, and a storage tank, which can be the existing hot water tank in the house (Wood et al., 2015). The solar collectors heat a fluid, often an antifreeze solution, and this fluid heats the hot water, which can then be used by the occupants. Additionally biomass systems offer ways to generate heat and/or electricity through the use of technology to efficiently burn wood, brush, or agricultural waste (Wood et al., 2015).

Manitoba Hydro, *The Energy Savings Act* (2012), Pay As You Save (PAYS), and Social Assistance

The Energy Savings Act has a number of provisions related to social enterprise, and specifically missions such Aki's green energy programs. Below are some of the key sections, but teachers are encouraged to refer to the entire document.

> *The Energy Savings Act* of Manitoba
>
> Purposes of the fund
>
> 5(1) The purposes of the funder to provide support for
>
> a) programs, services and projects
>
> i. that encourage and realize efficiency improvements in conservation and the use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsection (3), water,

> ii. that encourage and realize the use of renewable energy sources, including Earth energy, and
> iii. that are designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that result from the use of home heating fuels other than natural gas in Manitoba;
> b) research and development of renewable energy sources and innovative energy technologies; and
> c) social enterprises, community organizations and other business who assist people or neighbourhoods to realize efficiency improvements and conservation in the use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsection (3), water.
>
> Eligibility of social enterprises, etc.
>
> 5(2) To be eligible to receive support from the fund, the corporation must be satisfied that a social enterprise, community organization or other business would use the support to train and employ persons facing barriers to employment in order that they may acquire the skills needed to be employed in activities that realize efficiency improvements in conservation in the use of power, natural gas, other home heating fuels and, subject to subsection (3), water.
>
> Collection of monthly charge
>
> 11(2) the corporation may collect the monthly charge in the same manner, and with the same priority, as it collects charges for power supplied by it under *The Manitoba Hydro Act*, and for that purpose, the provisions of *The Manitoba Hydro Act* that apply to the collection of accounts apply with necessary changes to the collection of a monthly charge.

These provisions empower and assist social enterprise in developing renewable technologies, and to train individuals in their installation and maintenance. *The Energy Savings Act* also enables Manitoba Hydro to assist in funding the installation of green technologies by allowing Manitoba Hydro to bear the upfront costs for clients, and to then receive monthly payments from those clients, resulting in Manitoba Hydro's Pay As You Save program. This empowers people, or communities, who are unable to pay the entire cost of installing agreed technology, to pay smaller monthly allotments over an extended period. Pay As You Save financing's monthly payments are less than estimated annual energy payments, ensuring savings, with the annual interest rate fixed at 3.9% (O.A.C.) for the first five years ("Power Smart PAYS Financing," n.d.). Manitoba Hydro has made sure that the financing is transferable, allowing homeowners to sell their homes without carrying the costs with them. Manitoba Hydro's restrictions include: a minimum financing of $500, maximum financing variable based on the number of upgrades, and the upgrades must be equal to levels recommended by Manitoba Hydro.

Canada's *Social Assistance Statistical Report: 2008* (Federal–Provincial–Territorial (FPT) Directors of Income Support, 2010), describes basic assistance on page 7 of the report:

> **Basic Assistance** — Basic assistance is generally intended to help with the cost of food, shelter, clothing, personal and household items, and may cover regularly recurring special needs ... Variables affecting the amount of shelter allowance payable include the number of beneficiaries in any given household, the type of living arrangement and the cost of fuel and utilities [emphasis added]. In some jurisdictions, the shelter amount varies depending on the season, location and relative remoteness of the area in question.

Though this description allows for some flexibility, social assistance programs in Manitoba have chosen to interpret fuel costs in a restrictive manner. They are willing to pay increased monthly costs for less efficient heating/cooling methods, as long as it qualifies as fuel/utilities, rather than installation costs for green technologies that reduce fuel consumption. This process is detrimental to both the environment and the communities they are meant to serve. By having such a narrow interpretation of their mandate they are increasing our reliance on more traditional forms of energy, with all that that entails. Yet the harm they do to Aboriginal communities is just as relevant. Rather than supporting technologies that reduce Aboriginal peoples reliance on social assistance they perpetuate the old paradigm of dependency, in which the government supplies enough for survival, but little more.

SUGGESTED READINGS, COMPLETE LIST

- D.A. Clark & M. Qizilbash (2005), *Core Poverty, Basic Capabilities and Vagueness: An Application to the South African Context*
- P. Dacin, M. Dacin, & M. Matear (2010), *Social Entrepreneurship: Why We Don't Need a New Theory and How We Move Forward From Here*
- D. Dubois & W. Rothwell (2004), *Competency-Based Human Resource Management*
- F. Fanon (1969), *The Wretched of the Earth*
- D. Gasper (2002), *Is Sen's Capability Approach an Adequate Basis for Considering Human Development?*
- I. Kapoor (2008), *The Post-Colonial Politics of Development*
- D. MacDonald & D. Wilson (2010), *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canada*
- D. MacDonald & D. Wilson (2013), *Poverty or Prosperity: Indigenous Children in Canada*
- J. Mair & I. Martí (2006), *Social Entrepreneurship Research: A Source of Explanation, Prediction, and Delight*
- Make First Nations Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee (2009), *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History*
- A. Maslow (1943), *A Theory of Human Motivation*
- D. Newhouse (2004), *The Challenges of Aboriginal Economic Development in the Shadow of the Borg*
- M. Nussbaum (2011), *Creating Capabilities the Human Development Approach*
- K. Polanyi (1944), *The Great Transformation*
- E. Said (1978), *Orientalism*
- J. Richards (2014), *Are We Making Progress? New Evidence on Aboriginal Education Outcomes in Provincial and Reserve Schools*
- I. Robeyns (2003), *The Capability Approach? An Interdisciplinary Introduction*
- B. Williams (1987), *The Standard of Living: Interests and Capabilities*
- W. Wuttunee (2009), *Aboriginal Perspectives on the Social Economy*
- W. Wuttunee (2004), *Living Rhythms*

REFERENCES

Aboriginal Economic Development Fund — Regional Partnership Grant. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://www.entreprisescanada.ca/eng/program/4891/

About Us — BUILD. (2016). Retrieved March 3, 2016, from http://buildinc.ca/about/

About — Peguis First Nation. (n.d.). Retrieved March 23, 2016, from http://www.peguisfirstnation.ca/about/

About Us — Fisher River Cree Nation. (2016). Retrieved March 23, 2016, from About Fisher River, https://www.fisherriver.ca/

Aki Energy — *Aboriginal Social Enterprise*. (2015). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1LthJf83oA

Anderson, R.B., Dana, L.P., & Dana, T.E. (2006). "Indigenous Land Rights, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Development in Canada: 'Opting-in' to the Global Economy". *Journal of World Business*, 41(1): 45–55.

Archived — *Canada, Peguis First Nation and Manitoba Reach Land Claim Settlement*. (2008). News Release. Retrieved March 20, 2016, from https://www.canada.ca/en/news/archive/2008/07/canada-peguis-first-nation-manitoba-reach-land-claim-settlement.html?=undefined&

Be Power Smart. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2016, from https://www.hydro.mb.ca/powersmart/

Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB). (2011). *Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey*. Toronto: Author. Retrieved from https://www.ccab.com/research/ccab-research-series/promise-and-prosperity/promise-and-prosperity-2010/

Cardoso, F.H., & Faletto, E. (1979). *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Chief & Council — Fisher River Cree Nation. (2016). Retrieved March 23, 2016, from https://www.fisherriver.ca/chief-council

Chief and Council — Peguis First Nation. (2015). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from http://www.peguisfirstnation.ca/about/chief-and-council/

Dees, J.G. (1998). "The Meaning of 'Social Entrepreneurship'", 1–6. Available online: https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/news-item/the-meaning-of-social-entrepreneurship/

Departments — Peguis First Nation. (2015). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from http://www.peguisfirstnation.ca/

Doran, G.T. (1981). There's a S.M.A.R.T. "Way to Write Management's Goals and Objectives". *Management Review*, 70(11): 35–36.

Fact Sheet — 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics, Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes. (2013). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1376329205785/1376329233875

Fagan, G.H. (1999). "Cultural Politics and (Post) Development Paradigm(s)". In R. Munck & D. O'Hearns (Eds.), *Critical Development Theory: Contributions to a New Paradigm*, pp. 178–195. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Federal–Provincial–Territorial (FPT) Directors of Income Support. (2010). *Social Assistance Statistical Report: 2008*. Gatineau, Qc: HRSDC.

Fisher River — Connectivity Profile. (2013). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357840941880/1360161560785

Fisher River Cree Economic Development Corporation — Fisher River Cree Nation. (n.d.). Retrieved Septemer 11, 2017, from https://www.fisherriver.ca/fisher-river-economic-development

Frank, A.G. (2008). The Development of Under-Development. In M. Seligson & J. Passe-Smith (Eds.), *Development and Under-Development: The Political Economy of Global Inequality*, 4th ed., pp. 257–267. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Geothermal Heat Pumps. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from http://energy.gov/energysaver/geothermal-heat-pumps

Gigler, B. (2005). "Indigenous Peoples, Human Development and the Capability Approach". *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on the Capability Approach*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

Gillingham, K., Newell, R.G., & Palmer, K. (2004). *Retrospective Examination of Demand-Side Energy Efficiency Policies*. Washington: Resources for the Future.

Home — Aki Energy. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from http://www.akienergy.com/

Kuznets, S. (1973). "Modern Economic Growth: Findings and Reflections". *American Economic Review*, 63(3): 247–258.

Local Food — Aki Energy. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from http://www.akienergy.com/local-food/

Madahbee, D. (2015, June 30). "Everyone Benefits When Aboriginal Enterprise Succeeds". *Northern Ontario Business*. Retrieved March 15, 2016, from http://www.northernontariobusiness.com/Industry-News/aboriginal-businesses/2015/07/Everyone-benefits-when-Aboriginal-enterprise-succeeds.aspx

McIntyre, L., Connor, S., & Warren, J. (1998). *A Glimpse of Child Hunger in Canada*. Working Paper. Ottawa: HRDC.

Nicholls, A. (2010). "The Legitimacy of Social Entrepreneurship: Reflexive Isomorphism in a Pre-paradigmatic Field". *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 34(4): 611–633. http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00397.x

Peguis — Connectivity Profile. (2013). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357840941907/1360161901781

Peguis Development Corporation — Peguis First Nation. (2015). Retrieved March 20, 2016, from http://www.peguisfirstnation.ca/peguis-development-corporation/

Peredo, A.M., Anderson, R.B., Galbraith, C.S., Honig, B., & Dana, L.P. (2004). "Towards a Theory of Indigenous Entrepreneurship". *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 1(1/2): 1–20.

Pieterse, J.N. (2000). "After Post-Development". *Third World Quarterly*, 21(2): 175–191.

Power Smart and First Nations. (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2016, from https://www.hydro.mb.ca/your_home/first_nations/index.shtml

Power Smart PAYS Financing. (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2016, from https://www.hydro.mb.ca/your_home/power_smart/pays/index.shtml

Puxley, C. (2015). *Grinding Poverty Faced by Manitoba First Nations Worst in Country: Aboriginal Affairs Documents*. Retrieved March 21, 2016, from http://aptn.ca/news/2015/01/29/grinding-poverty-faced-manitoba-first-nations-worst-country-aboriginal-affairs-documents/

"Review: Negotiation of a Settlement, Treaty Land Entitlement of Peguis First Nation". (2006, May). *Peguis First Nation Newsletter*, No. 8.

Robeyns, I. (2003). "The Capability Approach: An Interdisciplinary Introduction". Paper written for the Training Course preceding the 3rd International Conference on the Capability Approach, Pavia, Italy, on 6 September 2003.

Sengupta, U., & Vieta, M. (2015). "Indigenous Communities and Social Enterprise in Canada". *Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research*, 6(1): 104–123.

Sharpe, J.A. (2014). Searching for Consensus in Social Entrepreneurship: Using Content Analysis to Define SE (探索社會企業家的共識: 運用內容分析法定義社會企業).

Social Enterprise. (n.d.). Retrieved March 14, 2016, from http://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/social-enterprise.asp

Stephenson, J., & Weil, S. (1992). "Four Themes in Educating for Capability". In J. Stephenson & S. Weil (Eds.), *Quality in Learning: A Capability Approach in Higher Education*, pp. 10–18. London, UK: Kogan Page Ltd.

Sustainable Energy — Aki Energy. (n.d.). Retrieved March 21, 2016, from http://www.akienergy.com/geothermal-energy/

Tucker, V. (1999). "The Myth of Development: a Critique of Eurocentric Discourse". In R. Munck & D. O'Hearn (Eds.), *Critical Development Theory: Contributions to a New Paradigm*, pp. 1–26. London, UK: Zed Books Ltd.

Willows, N.D., Veugelers, P., Raine, K., & Kuhle, S. (2008). "Prevalence and Sociodemographic Risk Factors Related to Household Food Security in Aboriginal Peoples in Canada". *Public Health Nutrition*, 12(8): 1150–1156. http://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980008004345

Wood, D., Loney, S., & Taylor, K. (2015). *Social Enterprise and the Solutions Economy: A Toolkit for Manitoba First Nations*. Available online: https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/toolbox/social-enterprise-and-solutions-economy-toolkit-manitoba

Jamie Wilson: Today's Indigenous Powerhouse Leader

Ashley Richard
B.COMM., UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

"[A guy in the army] once told me, 'Make sure when you die, it's one of the last things you have to do'"

— Wilson, 2017

The most common reason Indigenous initiatives fail is inadequate leadership. So what makes an Indigenous leader great? A sense of collectivism, strong respect for traditions and teachings, and an awareness of the realities being faced by Indigenous communities today are among some of the characteristics that make a successful Indigenous leader. But adding in the element of economics creates a new realm of problems of which Indigenous leaders must face. Accusations of "selling out" or attempts at character assassination are fallacies commonly faced by Indigenous economic leaders. This is only because Indigenous peoples have been so focussed on salvaging what has been lost in their culture that the majority have not yet had the time or opportunity to understand the importance of economic development and healthy leadership in many impoverished communities across Canada. Once communities understand how important economic strength is, they will understand that modern economic leadership can be in line with ideals of what it means to be Indigenous.

While there are many Indigenous leaders in Canada, there are not as many Indigenous economic leaders. Indigenous leaders lacking expertise in economic theories is the reason why so many communities are on the lowest end of the socio-economic ladder. Indigenous economic leaders are a dynamic and growing group in Canadian society. Indigenous peoples in Canada have faced a plethora of problems related to identity, self-reliance, and sovereignty due to many contributing factors such as the Indian Act, residential schools and other areas related to colonization. Contemporary Indigenous economic leadership that respects cultures and traditions will be a way for communities to alleviate some of the restraints of poverty and the economic sanctions imposed by the Indian Act. Contemporary Indigenous economic leadership requires a modern interpretation of the treaties. The treaties promised Indigenous people their livelihood — but what does this mean in modern terms? Understanding economic development in a contemporary Indigenous context requires a holistic interpretation of the historical and spiritual aspects to the treaties and blending this knowledge together with contemporary societal issues, in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. With this knowledge, we can foster economic leadership in our communities — we can seek guidance from empowered leaders who realize the impact that positive economic development can have on Indigenous communities. Modern day leader Jamie Wilson is an example of this type of leader.

Jamie Wilson is from Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Northern Manitoba. Currently, he holds the position of Deputy Minister of the Economy, Growth, and Trade in the Government of Manitoba. Prior to this position, he was the Treaty Commissioner for Manitoba and the Director of Education for the Opaskwayak Educational Authority Inc. He was also a well-respected Infantry Officer in the Canadian Armed Forces and an Infantry Solder in the US Army for a number of years. With this impressive list of accomplishments, Wilson is the epitome of an Indigenous economic powerhouse. He faces challenge after challenge, but is always eager to take on the next role and strengthen his community.

Being considered a "sell-out" is more common than it should be for Indigenous people in the business world. Wilson has been called a sell-out, but these words do not make him question his indigeneity in any way. Wilson says a huge challenge today is defining our Indigenous identity through economic means. Indigenous people have survived this long by learning how to adapt and grow in an ever changing economy, and business minded leaders are focussed on coming up with solutions to create a stronger future for the next generations. Wilson says, "Having a business mentality does not make you "less Indigenous" or a complacent agent in assimilation, it just enables you to work through challenges in a different way." Yes, Wilson understands the importance of preserving the environment and the harm

of mass oil extraction. But you will never catch him rallying on Parliament Hill; instead, you would see him inside Parliament Hill, coming up with concrete solutions that will make tangible changes. He adopts a "Yes — And" mentality — yes, he understands your grievances, and what do you want to do about it?

A good leader can be defined as someone who encourages a sense of meaning to a collective and empowers a group to achieve a common goal. In order to do this effectively, leaders must embody specific characteristics. One vital characteristic is to have a high level of emotional intelligence and, relatedly, a strong sense of personal integrity. Wilson says one of his greatest accomplishments was building the successful team of staff at the Treaty Commission; he did this through building inter-personal relationships with his staff and empowering them to take on responsibilities. He understood how to read peoples' strengths and areas requiring attention and how to encourage their best work. When leaders want to achieve great things, it is their responsibility to establish a coalition of supporters who also support their vision, and he was able to do that with his staff.

> One of my greatest accomplishments was the team I established at the Treaty Commission. I was able to help create empathy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and I think people started to see the Treaty relationship as double sided — I never wanted to guilt trip anyone.
>
> — Wilson, 2017

Finding balance and harmony in both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous world is tough, but it is something that Wilson has been able to accomplish. During his time as Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba, Wilson was tasked with the mandate to strengthen, maintain, and enhance the Treaty Relationship in Manitoba — a job that literally required working in both worlds every day.

During his time as Director of Education for Opaskwayak Educational Authority, Wilson was starkly aware of the growing gap in First Nations education in comparison with the rest of Canada's population. Wilson knew he needed to set a precedent to cause a disruption in this pattern. He raised the standard for on-reserve education beyond the Province and proved to people that it is possible to set Indigenous standards higher than mainstream standards and come out successful. Education is one of the foundational stepping stones for helping communities out of stagnation and poverty. If a community does not believe in educating and supporting one another, they are only holding each other back.

An advocate of continuing education, Wilson believes that there is always something new to be learned in any role. Wilson admits that it was difficult working on the reserve; he says it presented him with a set of challenges that people who have not worked on reserve could never understand. Being able and willing to move through your fears is the only way to avoid paralyzing behaviours. Many people are handed amazing opportunities, but they turn them down out of fear of failure. Wilson uses fear as fuel — there has not been a challenge he has backed down from and when he is challenged, he confronts it head on. Not being one who has the luxury of remaining out of the public eye, Wilson handles conflict and contention with tact and dignity.

Wilson has a success-oriented mind but his sense of humility sets him apart. It is important to acknowledge that money and titles are good measures of success, but more importantly, it is imperative to realize that success is not something that is achieved, rather, something to be continuously worked at. Achieving success is an ongoing process and there is no amount of money that can make up for feeling stagnated or trapped. Wilson has pro-

gressed from the military, to education, to Indigenous politics, and finally onto economic empowerment. With each role, he has been able to experiment with new processes and test new theories.

A good leader must have an internal locus of control and their confidence must be fostered through a sense of belief that you have control over your own destiny. This internal locus is what gives effective leaders, such as Wilson, the confidence to take risks and encourage personal change. There is an underlying sense of indigeneity in all Indigenous leaders that is woven into every fibre of their actions. For example, Wilson credits his successes and opportunities to the path his father laid out for him and he facilitates the learning of others through storytelling.

Effective leadership characteristics were instilled into Wilson by the guidance of his father. Wilson did not come from a poor background; he came from a very educated background. This fact does not make him any less Indigenous, nor does it mean he should be criticized for his life choices. Wilson's father was an "outside the box" thinker, not unlike himself. Wilson's father quit jobs to pursue higher education and Wilson says he would do the same. When his father was in residential school, a group of his peers built a raft to escape back to the reserve. Wilson's father chose to stay at the school and finish his degree. He was chastised for not joining his peers in their escape, but he knew what was best for the future of his life. He was creating a new path for his life, just as Wilson does today. Having such an influential parent has helped to shape the person Wilson is today; he is an innovative thinker, a leader, and more importantly, not held back by any restraints of jealousy and competition.

> They called him a sell out for not joining. To this day, none of those guys have ever finished high school. They called him a sell out for getting his Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, his doctorate, for working with other people ... People may have called me that behind my back, and for a while it bugged me, but I'm confident in myself — I've fasted, pierced, and I go to ceremony, but I don't need to broadcast it.
>
> Wilson, 2017

It is hard not to notice the high level of respect Wilson has for his father. In every story, his father is brought up as a source of inspiration. Having a role model who can instill good values is a huge determinant of the type of leader people can grow up to be. Family relations and teachings of love and respect are very important in Indigenous culture. Wilson does not explicitly state the Seven Sacred Teachings in his words, he unknowingly gives examples of the teachings in the stories he shares.

Storytelling has always been a huge tradition in Indigenous culture, and facilitating learning is an important aspect of effective leadership. Wilson embodies both of these characteristics; he is often empowering his employees' sense of innovation through storytelling. When asked about personal challenges and accomplishments, Wilson does not rattle off a coherently planned list resembling a resume. Instead, he tells stories of past experiences and creates a visual image for the listener.

Wilson is mindful of Indigenous teachings in every decision he makes, but maybe not the teachings that may first rush to mind. Wilson does not explicitly talk about the Seven Sacred Teachings, he simply just lives them because he believes those teachings should go without saying. The modern Indigenous teachings Wilson says he follows are the teachings of perseverance, hard work, collaboration, grits, accepting diversity, and remembering a greater purpose for your life. Indigenous people have made it this far by learning to adapt to

new surroundings; assimilation may have been the goal of the government at one point, but Indigenous perseverance did not let that happen. Wilson stresses accepting diversity as vital because he is aware that modern business and economics are not seen by most as "traditional", but he believes that getting people working together and building their own wealth is the modern implementation of the livelihood aspect of the treaties.

> The Elders said, 'Treaties are about livelihood.' You know what, it took me a full four years to realize that treaties are about livelihood. But livelihood doesn't mean what people thought it meant before. It means something different. It means economic empowerment and self-reliance; you don't need to be directly involved with the treaties, you just need to live them.
>
> — Wilson, 2017

Contextualizing Lessons Learned from Sharing Knowledge~Building Relationships: Aboriginal Experiences in the Cross-Cultural Workplace

Catherine T. Kwantes and Twiladawn Stonefish
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Wendi L. Adair
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Warren Weir
VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY — COWICHAN CAMPUS

Questioning, seeking information and understanding, and ultimately learning, always occurs within a context, and that context affects what questions are asked, how information and understanding are sought, and ultimately, what learning occurs. Knowing the place, the time, and the people involved in any quest for understanding is to know more about how the learning took place and how new understandings were developed. The larger context for the lessons from research that was facilitated through the *Sharing Knowledge~Building Relationships: Aboriginal Experiences in the Cross-Cultural Workplace* gathering reported elsewhere in this volume (Adair, Kwantes, Stonefish, Badea, & Weir, this volume) is important to consider as it shaped the questions, methods and learning. Personal experiences and societal context prompt questions, inform seeing, and impact understanding. This article, therefore, seeks to set the context for the information shared at this 2 day gathering with a focus on Aboriginal experiences in the workplace, setting the stage for understanding the time and the place for the learning that took place, by explicating the societal context, the location, and the activities of this event.

Personal backgrounds also influence questions and ways of knowing. While many individuals made great contributions to the conference in many ways, our core team for the event consisted of two Industrial/Organizational Psychologists on faculty at universities in Ontario, one educational administrator with experience in Indigenous economic develop-

ment, education, and training from BC and one Applied Social Psychology doctoral student from Ontario. The event included a number of graduate and undergraduate students from the University of Windsor, the University of Waterloo, and Vancouver Island University, Cowichan campus. This involvement offered students the opportunity to learn through helping to organize the gathering, taking notes during the sharing circles, and making connections with the attendees. All members of the team, to varying degrees, had broader personal connections with Aboriginal individuals in Canada and/or Native Americans.

SOCIETAL CONTEXT

Aboriginal Canadians continue to experience substantially lower employment rates than non-Aboriginal Canadians despite the fact that this population is growing at six times the rate of the non-Aboriginal population (AHRC, 2013). This fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population (Universities Canada, 2015) is well poised to fill the labour shortage (AHRC, 2013) anticipated to follow mass retirements of baby boomers. Although numerous social and historical factors have limited the ability of Aboriginal Canadians to receive adequate education and employment, Aboriginal communities and organizations have begun to close education and skills gaps (AHRC, 2013). The continued lower employment rate suggests we need more information to understand how Aboriginal work experiences and outcomes differ from those of non-Aboriginals.

We initiated a conversation to address the dynamics of intercultural workplace encounters and to prioritize indigenous perspectives in workplace research (Gelfand et al., 2007). The first step was to facilitate a roundtable discussion at the 75th Canadian Psychological Association Convention in Ottawa, Ontario in June 2015, just days after the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's report. This national association of psychologists in varying fields has an Aboriginal Psychology Section which is a "community of psychologists and students interested in research, clinical practice, and teaching issues relevant to Aboriginal people" as well as being "an advocate for culturally appropriate research and clinical practice for Aboriginal people across Canada" (www.cpa.ca/aboutcpa/cpasections/aboriginalpsychology/). We held a roundtable discussion titled *Culture, Values, and Success in the Workplace: Understanding Employment Realities of Aboriginal Workers*, aimed at identifying issues relevant to Indigenous people in the workplace. This forum consisted of a designated space and time for interested parties to drop by and join a discussion. While attendance was light (7 attendees, including faculty, graduate students, an organizational consultant, and a representative from the Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board), the outcome of the discussion affirmed that it is important to identify unique cultural factors that may enhance or detract from employment outcomes of Aboriginal workers. The roundtable discussion identified several specific questions for further investigation:

1. How can we make policies of integration a reality in the workplace in a way that is respectful to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadian cultures?
2. What are the underlying values behind real or perceived cultural differences and how can we leverage cultural similarities?
3. To what degree do bicultural identity, identity conflict, and stereotype threat play a role in Aboriginals' workplace experiences and satisfaction?

Second, we organized a 2-day gathering, supported by SSHRC, the University of Windsor, Vancouver Island University, the University of Waterloo, and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology. *Sharing Knowledge~Building Relationships: Aboriginal Experiences in the Cross-Cultural Workplace* was a knowledge-sharing event for over 100 attendees held June 7–8, 2016, at Vancouver Island University's Cowichan campus. The gathering brought together members of the Aboriginal community, academic researchers and human resource professionals (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal). The format of the symposium offered speaker presentations on topics to stimulate critical reflection, followed by small group sharing circles for discussions around the presented information. This methodology was designed to allow participants to work together to identify specific challenges that require further conversations; as well as highlighting best practices and training interventions to benefit Aboriginal workers and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employers. The intent was to integrate both a strengths-based approach to workplace experiences as well as storytelling as a means to convey the richness and variations of experiences of Indigenous employees.

LOCATION FOR THE EVENT

Vancouver Island University, Cowichan Campus, was intentionally selected as the site for the gathering. The campus is uniquely responsive to Aboriginal principles. It was designed and constructed in consultation with local Aboriginal Nations; embodies the teachings of the Medicine Wheel; and prominently displays work (artistic and architectural) by numerous local artists, including many totems hand carved by Elder-in-Residence and master carver, *Yut'xwam* (Harold Joe, translated as "*Always Helping*"). We reached out to surrounding Aboriginal communities to engage their support for this event. Many organizations, municipalities and communities provided support in different ways, including sending letters of support for the event for the SSHRC funding application.

The Aboriginal Psychology Section of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) also provided its support for this event and publicized it to its members. We timed our gathering to facilitate attendance by members of the Aboriginal Section of CPA, or other conference attendees, as the annual Canadian Psychological Association meetings were held in nearby Victoria immediately following our event.

EVENT ACTIVITIES

Cultural Aspects of the Event

All aspects of the event (location, content, ways of sharing, etc.) were planned to respect Aboriginal culture and to reflect SSHRC's key concepts related to Aboriginal research: indigenous knowledge, reciprocity, community, and respect. The conference was attended and blessed by Elders of the Cowichan and Coast Salish Tribes, including VIU Cowichan Elders-in-Residence. Elders *Thiiyus* (Florence James, translated as "*Large Countenance of the Auras*") and *Hwiem'* (Marlene Rice, translated as "*Story Teller*") were a part of all activities during the gathering, and lent their wisdom to our discussions and interactions. The first day opened with a welcome and prayer by Coast Salish Elders Florence,

Marlene, and Harold. Elder Marlene invited participants to attend drumming and smudging on the roof the second day before the event activities began, and many attended. All of these activities enhanced the mindfulness of participants — mindfulness of place, time, and the reason for gathering. The conference was closed at the end of the second day by Elders of the Cowichan and Coast Salish Tribes.

Social interaction was encouraged. Meals were shared both days of the event, and informal coffee time was provided both mornings and afternoons to encourage interaction among participants. A cultural dinner was also an important part of the gathering. It was held at the Quw'utsun' Cultural & Conference Centre, where attendees also experienced traditional Coast Salish dances that told stories of Coast Salish history, as well as stories reflecting ways of knowing and being. The dancers gave a great gift to each person in attendance with the many dances they shared. The head dancer spoke to attendees emphasizing the meaning behind the songs and dances, as well as highlighting the connection between our gathering and the messages in the dances. He spoke of the importance of our gathering and our efforts to build relationships and share knowledge, and commended participants for their willingness to come from different walks of life, to come together in a good way, and to try to impart good on participants' various journeys.

Presenters

Each day of the gathering was planned around a presentation in both morning and afternoon, followed by sharing circles related to the information in the presentations. In addition to the dances, the cultural dinner included a presentation related to Aboriginal employment in Canada. The presenters at the gathering came from a variety of backgrounds and shared a variety of information and perspectives related the topic of our gathering.

Douglas S. White, Director, Centre for Pre-Confederation Treaties & Reconciliation, Vancouver Island University, spoke on *Issues Facing Aboriginal Canadians in the Workplace*. His address highlighted the fact that the workplace is a context that helps people get to know themselves and, maybe more importantly each other, providing an arena where negative historically created stereotypes can be challenged. His address included a history and summary of treaties and legal processes and how these continue to impact how individuals interact with each other. Mr. White pointed out that work forms a part of an individual's self-identity, and therefore changes in work can effect changes in self-identity, and in the larger perspective, a change in workplaces can also effect a change in society.

Dr. Wanda Wuttunee, Professor, Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba, spoke on *Identity and Cultural Alignment*. She focused her address on identity, balance and cultural alignment and shared how the cycle of belonging includes a sense of responsibility, identity, values, and peace. This was followed by a workshop where attendees were encouraged to explore their own identity and cultural alignment, both individually and with others.

John Chenoweth, Dean, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology delivered an address titled *Finding QWEMQW?MT — Balance and Regeneration*. He shared his research and vision and pointed out the need for students and employees to feel self-efficacy, and to have culture reflected in the education systems and in the

workplace. Mr. Chenoweth presented a model of the Cycle of Balance that involves open dialogue and opposition, reciprocally giving information to each other.

Ken Tourand, President, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology, talked about *Dispelling the Myths: Lessons Learned in the Cultural-Cultural Workplace*. Drawing on his experiences in an academic workplace, he talked about the need for bilateral inclusion — challenging discrimination and stereotypes from both sides. Mr. Tourand emphasized that both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees must equally work toward reducing stereotypes and discrimination, noting that Aboriginal institutions are also hesitant to hire non-Aboriginal employees. Reconciliation involves all parties being open to working together productively. In the workplace, it is important to recognize multiple cultures and to evince cultural understanding such as time off for cultural celebrations. According to Mr. Tourand, trust is the number one issue for Aboriginal people in the workplace.

Kelly Lendsay, President and CEO, Aboriginal Human Resource Council spoke on *Workplace Inclusion Leadership*, noting that there is an urgent need to tell stories of strong, economically successful Aboriginal people so Aboriginal youth can know their history and embrace the positive parts of their culture and of Aboriginal success. Mentorship can play a key role in this endeavour. Further, Mr. Lendsay discussed the fact that Aboriginal people have thousands of years of work experience, and mainstream organizations often model their business logos, mottos, and values off of the values held by Aboriginal people (bravery, honour, value, and virtue).

Sharing Circles

Following the speaker addresses, participants broke out into small sharing circles of approximately 8–10 people to discuss topics related to the presentations. More specifically, the topics that were discussed were Aboriginal experiences at work, achieving balance, visions of an Aboriginal-Canadian workplace, and what future directions for collaboration and research would be most effective. The ideas brought up in each sharing circle were written down by "scribes" on large poster boards that could be seen by each member of the sharing circle. This increased visibility of responses and allowed participants to correct or clarify their responses if they wished. The scribes were university-aged youth from a diversity of cultural backgrounds. The sharing circle leaders were either members of local Aboriginal nations or members of the organizing team. The sharing circles provided an opportunity for the voices of every participant to be heard and a great deal of information was shared over the course of the event. After each sharing circle, we gathered as a large group and a designate from each sharing circle reported back to the whole group, providing one or two of the main ideas that emerged from the discussions. In addition, scribes posted their flip-chart pages in the area where we gathered for coffee breaks for people to read about the discussions in each sharing circle in more depth, and to offer the opportunity for continued informal discussions during the breaks. Posting the notes from each discussion was intended both to ensure transparency and to allow each participant to learn in greater depth the knowledge and information shared in each of the sharing circle discussions.

Several common themes across all sharing circles emerged in each discussion. Each sharing circle also had themes that emerged that represented ideas specific to that particular sharing circle.

Sharing Circle 1. *Diversity of Stories: Our Experiences at Work*. This discussion topic followed directly after Douglas White's address "Issues Facing Aboriginal Canadians in the Workplace" and generated a great diversity of stories. Participants told of the importance of relationships in work, and the impact on employees when meaningful relationships were not there. Relationships were discussed as important to obtaining jobs as well as problem-solving and understanding in the workplace. The importance of education and training (both pre-entry and on the job) was cited. A strong and recurring theme related to the need to balance traditional values with workplace expectations. People shared negative experiences of feeling marginalized in the workplace as well as positive experiences related to the expectations that with mutual effort the workplace can be a place of cultural safety for employees.

Sharing Circle 2. *Achieving Balance in a Give and Take World*. The discussion from this sharing circle flowed directly from Wanda Wuttunee's address "Identity and Cultural Alignment" as well as the discussions from the first Sharing Circle. A clear theme that emerged was that achieving balance is a team effort on the part of all involved — both in the workplace as well as outside the workplace (friends, families). It was highlighted that balance involves many arenas — health, family, social life, spiritual health, and taking time for self-care. Two types of "balance" emerged as particularly important in the discussions. The first type of balance noted was balance within an individual — being able to balance multiple identities, responsibilities and expectations. The second type of balance was that within an organization — workspaces where multiple identities are accepted, where family and cultural responsibilities are understood, and where space is provided for employees to balance those responsibilities. Balance was noted as something that is fluid and responsive rather than a static condition.

Sharing Circle 3. *Visions of an Aboriginal-Canadian Workplace*. John Chenoweth's address on "Finding QWEMQW?MT — Balance and Regeneration" set the stage for the third sharing circle. Participants talked about visions of an Aboriginal-Canadian workplace as one where there is teamwork, trust and inclusion. An Aboriginal-Canadian workplace was described as a place where each employee's identity is respected, and where employees model this respect and mentor new employees inclusively. Discussions about inclusivity explicitly brought in the ideas of dialogue and creating an understanding of different perspectives. Making a change toward an Aboriginal-Canadian workplace was talked about as a change toward balance, with the recognition that how to make such a change has no easy answers and involves self-sacrifice. It was noted that this balance must occur at several levels — within individual employees but also within the organization as a whole. An Aboriginal-Canadian workplace can only result if there is a focus on the larger picture of what holds organizations together as well as a focus on the individuals within that organization. This vision was described as one where the notion of "we help one another" is a way of life.

Sharing Circle 4. *Where Do We Go from Here?* Following the final address, where Ken Tourand spoke on "Dispelling the Myths: Lessons Learned in the Cross-Cultural Workplace," participants shared their ideas on what the next steps should be toward creating workplaces with mutual respect, trust, and cultural safety. A strong theme of the need for connection with others emerged from the sharing circle discussions on the next steps. Attendees talked about the importance of identity and awareness, but also the importance of acknowledging individual gifts and strengths as well, highlighting the resilience in Aboriginal culture and communities. The value in hearing other people's stories, learning from them, and celebrating others' successes was stressed. Specifically, participants suggested that more support and mentorship programs in organizations would be beneficial. Such programs would serve to provide social support, as a means for understanding that "we are not in this alone," and as a way to hear other people's perspectives and experiences. This networking could provide a better understanding of barriers faced in the workplace, as well as connections to help overcome them.

Related to this, participants indicated that much more work toward integration in the workplace still remains, and that models of successful integration should be shared and built upon. Organizational cultures should be open to bringing various social cultural values and practices into the workplace, for example, providing the opportunity for Aboriginal individuals to take cultural leave for festivals and gatherings that may be unique to a local tribe or nation. The infrastructure for success and successful integration should be provided within communities to enable job seekers to access mentorship and networking even before organizational entry.

POST EVENT SUMMARY AND FEEDBACK

After the gathering concluded, a summary of the discussions from the conference was sent to each participant in order to give each person an opportunity to make any corrections if required. In addition, attendees were asked to reflect on how the design and location of the event met the stated goals of the gathering. Roughly a quarter of attendees responded, with no corrections noted. The feedback was very positive, with all but one person indicating that they would definitely consider attending another event such as this one. A number of the respondents indicated that the presence and participation of the Elders-in-Residence was particularly important, with one participant adding that "they were valued and treasured for their wisdom." Several respondents noted that the gathering was warm and welcoming. Many noted that the speakers' topics were very interesting, the speakers themselves were knowledgeable, and the sharing was "excellent." Another participant indicated that the notes taken at the gathering would be sent to a number of individuals who were not at the event as the material that was presented and covered was valuable. While respondents indicated that the cultural moments, the exercises, and the academic talks were appreciated, they also offered a number of suggestions for future events of this sort. Most notable among these was more of a presence of Aboriginal individuals in the non-academic workforce, as well as employers. The importance of also hearing from young Aboriginal employees with their stories of how they overcome obstacles in order to seek, gain, and retain employment was highlighted as well.

CONCLUSION

The larger societal context, location, and activities of this event all contributed to the learning that took place. The reason for this gathering was rooted in societal issues, and stemmed from a desire on the part of both the organizing team and participants to share and gain knowledge about culture, values, and challenges for Aboriginal job seekers, employees, and organizations, and to build relationships to further exchange knowledge. The selection of the setting and the activities of the gathering were designed to respectfully draw on traditional connections with the earth and traditional ways of sharing knowledge. Vancouver Island University, Cowichan Campus was the physical location for the gathering, as it was designed to maximize its harmony with nature, to be responsive to Aboriginal principles of relation with nature, to create spaces filled with natural light and natural materials, and to be environmentally sustainable. Vancouver Island University, Cowichan Campus elders were in attendance, and not only opened and closed the event with prayers and song, but were an integral part of every aspect of the gathering, providing guidance throughout. Speakers provided information and frameworks which could be used in discussions, and the use of sharing circles as the discussion protocol provided each participant the opportunity to voice an opinion or a thought if s/he wished to do so. Knowledge from the sharing circles was made available to all attendees through brief reports and access to the scribes' notes. The cultural dinner and dances provided a vivid reminder of the place and time of the gathering, as well as the importance of understanding and respecting ways of knowing and being.

Much knowledge was shared during this event — from dyadic conversations between individuals, to informal group discussions, to formal sharing circles, to the presentations of speakers and dancers. Individuals who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to interact shared both their knowledges, and their ways of understanding. Thus, the participants, the place, and the time all came together to provide the specific context from which the knowledge was gathered and interpreted for the research reported elsewhere in this volume (Adair, Kwantes, Stonefish, Badea, & Weir, this volume) on culture, values, and challenges for Aboriginal employees in the current Canadian workplace.

REFERENCES

Aboriginal Human Resource Council (AHRC). (2013). *It's good for Canada*. Retrieved from https://indigenousworks.ca/en/about/its-good-for-canada

Adair, W., Kwantes, C. T., Stonefish, T., Badea, R., & Weir, W. (2017). "Conversations about Aboriginal work experiences: Reflections for community members, organizations, and the academy". *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 10(2): 53–72.

Gelfand, M. J., Erez, M., & Aycan, Z. (2007). "Cross-cultural organizational behavior". *Annual Review of Psychology*, 58: 479–514. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.58.11045.085559

Universities Canada. (2015, June 29). "Universities Canada principles on Indigenous education". *Media Room News & Commentary*. Retrieved from https://www.univcan.ca/media-room/media-releases/universities-canada-principles-on-indigenous-education/

Marilyn Courchene: An Indigenous Leader Focusing On Wellness

Marida Brown
MASTER'S STUDENT, INDIGENOUS STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

I hold great hopes and inspiration for my community. I believe we can be the trailblazers for other Indigenous communities. We can't allow anyone to determine our destination; we define ourselves and we work with our own Constitution and Laws. This way Canada sees us as an autonomous and sovereign.

Marilyn Courchene (2017)

Marilyn Courchene is an Anishinaabe ikwe (woman) and one of four elected councillors for Sagkeeng First Nation. For fifteen years Marilyn worked with and trained Manitoba Justice Judges, Crown attorneys, and legal counsels on sentencing circles and was featured in *Maclean's Magazine* for her work. Marilyn went on to attend Red River College where she focused on Indigenous studies. During her time at Red River College she worked with a network of Indigenous students to produce change within their program as it did not accurately convey or meet their needs as First Nations peoples. As well as being a councillor, Marilyn is a mother to three daughters and grandmother to nine grandchildren. In order to protect her treaty rights she never married.

Marilyn has dedicated her life to promoting healing and economic growth within her community with a substantial focus on family, children, elders, and women. As a leader she has worked tirelessly to serve her community's needs through compassion, bringing spirituality and tradition into her role, and constant communication with both the members of her community and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders. She is active on social media to engage the members of her community both on and off reserve to inform and receive input for events and plans for Sagkeeng. Her overall vision in her role as an Indigenous leader is to work towards making Sagkeeng an autonomous and self-sustaining community. She is currently working towards this in a variety of ways by improving housing, child welfare, and promoting the equality of women.

HER COMMUNITY

Sagkeeng First Nation is an Anishinaabe community located 120 kilometres north of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The community is a signatory of Treaty 1. Currently there are over 7,500 registered members with nearly half living on-reserve. Marilyn is currently the only woman on chief and council, first being elected in April of 2015 after running against thirty-seven other candidates. On April 4, 2017 she was re-elected as a councillor and is the first woman in her community to serve as councillor for two consecutive terms.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Marilyn details that one of the biggest hindrances to economic development for her community is a lack of suitable housing. It is often forgotten or ignored that poor health caused by unsafe housing conditions can impact the ability to work or go to school which in turn can have a detrimental effect on economic development. For Marilyn it is a source of pain for her to see overcrowded homes, children who are constantly ill from mould, and the overall impact this is having on the wellbeing and prosperity of her community.

Only six new houses are funded and built each year by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in Sagkeeng, a minuscule number for the growing community. The houses are often built of cheap materials which in turn impacts the overall quality of the housing. Marilyn's aspires to improve the poor housing situation in her community by moving away from CMHC's approach. Her vision is to have Sagkeeng design their own homes with family input and potentially move towards building traditional log housing rather than suburban homes. This could be done by having CMHC funnel the money to the community where Sagkeeng will follow a Habitat for Humanity model to building homes.

Homelessness is an issue within Sagkeeng due to the unsafe and minimal number of homes and many community members have no choice but to move to Winnipeg. This has impeded Sagkeeng's ability to grow economically and gain independence from the federal government. Marilyn's vision for housing could also potentially include working with other Indigenous communities. If Sagkeeng is one day able to create a successful housing plan and other communities follow their example, it could create an opportunity for partnerships and economic growth. For example, one community could focus on making windows while another would run a lumber mill to process the lumber for the homes. Each community would sell and purchase the needed items and construct their own homes. This would create a source of capital, jobs, and a potential solution for the housing shortage in Sagkeeng. It would also provide the opportunity for other communities to engage in economic development and take control of their housing and economic future. Although there are no concrete housing plans currently in place in Sagkeeng, Marilyn is eager to approach her community in the future with her proposal.

As well as being committed to economic development within her community, Marilyn has always been devoted to the rights and opportunities of Indigenous women and children. As an Indigenous woman and leader she has faced prejudice and discrimination based on gender both outside and within her community. Marilyn relays that Sagkeeng had historically been a matriarchal society where women were respected and seen as integral leaders in the community. Anishinaabe communities traditionally governed themselves through a communal system and were heavily reliant on the clan mothers in choosing the leaders and ensuring the wellbeing of their clan and community. The removal of the clan mothers and women in general as leaders in Sagkeeng through the *Indian Act* has led Marilyn to dedicate herself towards improving the rights and status of Indigenous women.

Currently Marilyn is working with fifteen families in Sagkeeng on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Marilyn is not only a councillor in government, but a councillor for the members of her community. This is heavily reflected in her work with these families. Helping these families heal and working to bring their daughters, sisters, and mothers home shows a level of drive and compassion that many leaders lack. Matriarchs are vital to make all these changes and Marilyn states she is only their voice for when they cannot speak for themselves. In order for Sagkeeng to successfully engage in economic development and be a sovereign community, the health and wellness of all its members is integral and Marilyn is committed to ensure this is met by committing herself to work towards improving the lives of women and children in her community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Since she has been elected as a councillor in 2015 Marilyn has focused most of her time on the improvement of child welfare within her community. The welfare and safety of children has been one of Marilyn's main priorities as a leader in her community. Marilyn has always been passionate and dedicated to keeping children within their communities. One of the projects that Marilyn and her community are currently working towards is customary care of their children which would include keeping children within their community in Anishinaabe families through customary adoptions. The health and wellbeing of the next generation of leaders is vital from her position as a councillor, an Indigenous woman, and both a mother and grandmother.

Keeping children in Sagkeeng and educating them on their language, culture, and teachings are all necessary aspects of the prosperity and autonomy of Sagkeeng. Marilyn alongside the clan mothers have successfully pushed for change in the child welfare system in order to protect and teach the children of Sagkeeng their language, culture, and stories. Before a child is apprehended, Child and Family Services will approach the clan mothers to decide on the best course of action for the family and child. Marilyn herself has been successful in keeping children in the community. She worked closely with one family in particular to address and solve the challenges they were facing and the child was ultimately kept in their home. There is still more change that needs to occur in the child welfare system to ensure the wellbeing of Sagkeeng's children, however Marilyn still remains optimistic and determined.

Marilyn is currently working towards Sagkeeng's long-term goal of becoming a sovereign community by being a part of the change to enact Sagkeeng's own constitution and laws. Sagkeeng had always had its own laws and a constitution; however they were removed by the federal government in favour of the current Chief and Council System outlined in the *Indian Act*. As Marilyn states, the *Indian Act* does not represent her community and it is vital to Sagkeeng's success that they replace it with their own laws and constitution. By returning to traditional Anishinaabe governance it will allow Sagkeeng to take control of its political, social, and economic future. Ultimately it is up to the community to ensure it is reviewed, approved, and accepted.

Although Sagkeeng's constitution and laws have not yet been enacted, Marilyn ensures she brings aspects of this system of governance into her position. She is at the forefront of council meetings and will not start a meeting without smudging or saying a prayer and will never close a meeting with these medicines until everyone has spoken. She also follows and incorporates the Seven Teachings into both her role as a leader and within her own personal life as well.

MOVING FORWARD

For Marilyn Courchene and Sagkeeng First Nation the future is bright. In spite of numerous impediments, Sagkeeng has been successful in many of their economic and social endeavours. Marilyn continues to work towards the overall betterment of her community and brings purpose, resilience, and humility into everything she does to ensure the betterment and healing of her community. By focusing on the health and wellbeing Sagkeeng's women, children, and homes she is ensuring the future prosperity of her community. Marilyn Courchene is living proof that as long as Indigenous leaders continue to show strength and determination, change will be made and the day will come where the economic gap will close.

Stronger Together: First Nation Community/Municipality Collaborations

Wanda Wuttunee
PROFESSOR IN NATIVE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

> "My experience is that it takes time, patience and resilience to build successful partnerships; as municipalities we have a lot to offer and more to receive...."
>
> Vicki Blanchard, Economic Development Manager
> Municipality of Sioux Lookout, ON[1]

Partnerships work well when each partner brings something to the table and is committed to the success of the project. Sometimes history, distance, or other obstacles effectively remove any thought of working together and achieving mutual benefits. First Nations communities are struggling for the most part, in the areas that promote well-being and form the basis for a vigorous economic profile. Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health are often taxed to the limit. Individuals are often not healthy, which impacts family, community and ultimately the ability to engage in work successfully. The Indian Act, residential schools, poverty and corollaries of suicide, drugs and gangs have a long legacy that continues to negatively impact communities today. To be accurate, there are some First Nation communities that are bright economic lights across the country for supporting their citizens and benefiting surrounding communities.[2] Examples include Westbank First Nation BC, Osoyoos Indian Band, BC, Membertou First Nation, NS and Lac La Ronge Indian Band, SK.

The recent National Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls To Action recognize municipalities specifically as essential to successful reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Eight recommendations focus on "all levels of government", and five refer to municipal governments. "The context for working together is positive and encouraging with a means to

---

This is an excerpt from a soon-to-be-released book called Case Studies in Collaborative Governance, Edited by Claude Rocan and published in the fall by Invenire Books. Dr. Wanda Wuttunee shares her interest in community economic development strategies that make a difference for the partner communities.

[1] Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *Building First Nations-Municipal Community Economic Development Partnerships*. Available online: http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/reports/CEDI/cedi-tkag-en-screen.pdf

[2] Make Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee, *The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History* (Ottawa, ON: Assembly of First Nations, 2009) p. 6.

set the stage for collaboration discussions. Most of the Calls to Action require federal, provincial and territorial government leadership, and municipal governments to roll up their sleeves to support reconciliation as a national challenge that is felt deeply at the local level."[3]

Communities have been reaching out to their neighbours to explore potential partnerships when doors are open and attitudes are positive. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) built on their own history to develop a program that supports First Nation communities and neighbouring municipalities in developing collaborations. They partnered with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) in the Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI). FCM has a 2000 municipality membership base while Cando has a broad membership of more than 500 Indigenous economic development officers, economic organizations and academics interested in all aspects if Indigenous community economic development.

The six partner collaborations for CEDI Phase One were geographically diverse and demonstrated a likelihood that they would have a successful collaboration. They can be accessed on FCM's website under the Participating Communities section.[4] The Manitoba collaboration will be explored more thoroughly in the next section of this excerpt from perspectives of two project champions.

OPASKWAYAK CREE NATION (OCN), TOWN OF THE PAS AND RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF KELSEY, MANITOBA

Starting Conditions

These communities have come together despite a history of independence and some animosity. On behalf of The Pas a community of 5,500 people, a municipal employee took up FCM's offer of applying to be part of CEDI. They then were required to have surrounding communities send letters of support to the application. Both OCN (3198 on reserve and 2099 off reserve) and the RM of Kelsey (2272 pop.), determined that it was a great opportunity with possibilities of mutual benefit. The Pas and OCN play roles in meeting the needs of communities in the northern region. Recent struggles have resulted from the closure of Tolko's paper and lumber mill, the IGA store and the possibility of other business closures. The Pas is land-locked with the RM and OCN on three sides as well OCN is across the river, so if the Pas wants to expand they must work with both partners.

The CEDI process brought a brainstorm of ideas to the table that were narrowed to ways to attract investors and joint strategies to attend to infrastructure issues. Without a clearly framed relationship, the brainstorming process got bogged down. A suggestion was made to consider a Friendship Accord which was agreed to and was eventually signed in 2014 by the parties. The Accord's (Three Communities, One Heart) key terms include a

---

[3] Federation of Canadian Municipalities Pathways to reconciliation: Cities respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, 2016 (p. 3). (Released on September 30, Orange Shirt Day). Retrieved June 8, 2017, from http://email.fcm.ca/m/1/11133000/02-b16277-0895074ce12e4c80a128fd80205182a8/5/993/7a7157bd-6d1c-4b66-a02e-2676071b759e

[4] *First Nations–Municipality Community Economic Development Initiative*. Retrieved from https://fcm.ca/home/programs/community-economic-development-initiative.htm

desire to strengthen the social, spiritual and economic ties that support mutual respect of interests that are beneficial to all communities including the signatories and neighbours. This agreement acknowledges government to government relations where wisdom can be shared for a better future for children and grandchildren. It also commits to building mutual trust and respect while acknowledging their history, past experiences and differences that impact current perspectives and opinions. These communities agree to come together twice a year for open dialogue and to agree on priorities.

OCN member and Special Projects officer, Paskwayak Business Development Corporation, Duncan Lathlin calls the Friendship Accord a strong foundation in the partnership that opened needed dialogue (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). Town councillor Brian Roque notes "There has always been a need to help each other but bad feelings from the past, got in the way" but the Friendship Accord turned the page and allowed each partner to move forward (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). Lathlin points out that the OCN and The Pas high schools studied their community Friendship Accord and then created their own Friendship Accord that was signed by students in both communities as they met on a symbolic walk to the middle of the bridge that divides the two communities (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). They are developing relationships through joint activities and as future leaders this step is remarkable. This is also very exciting for the town, according to Roque (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). A recent Reeve report shed some light on the shifting young family demographics where an equal number live in The Pas and work in OCN and vice versa. This ties the two communities together in a newly recognized way. Roque concludes that the Friendship Accord is moving forward but not in the ways that everyone might have expected (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

Institutional Design

The collaborative attitude launched quarterly meetings under the purview of a Tri-Council in 2015. The Tri-Council's main CEDI-supported projects were an investor-focused brochure and website. At the Tri-Council launch of these efforts, Town Councillor Brian Roque noted,

> It has been a learning process, but I found it exciting and have enjoyed the networking and the connections I've made with other participants. You learn more about them and how they feel. There is a positive energy here. Tonight is called a launch because it's just a beginning. Now with what we learned today we can move forward and continue on with the process. The ultimate goal is let's make a better community, let the tri-Council region become stronger because of working together and sharing our resources and situations.[5]

Duncan Lathlin shared further benefits from the collaboration (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). He characterized the initial relationship with The Pas and the RM as neighbourly from a distance and one where you really didn't know each other well. That has been improved from feeling like OCN was operating in a bubble as described by Lathlin to one where they knew more about the way their neighbours did business, their organizational structure and their operating environment. Despite the differences, the partnership has greatly expanded what OCN factors into decision-making that might impact one or the other

[5] J. Cook, "Tricouncil.ca Launched", *Opasquia Times* (April 1, 2016), p 1.

of their partners. For example, if they have a large project they will ask questions around the capacity of The Pas to handle the project and are prepared to help improve needed changes to the infrastructure.

Unfortunately the change in economic climate referred to earlier, made some of their efforts obsolete. The brochures were archived and the website removed. There is an example of a communication issue around the website at the time of these interviews. Lathlin said that an agreement existed where OCN was to pay for the website in the first year which was honoured, The Pas was to bear the financial costs in the second year and the RM agreed to carry the costs in the third year (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). Unfortunately, OCN does not know why the website was not continued after the first year as there has not been any communication with the Pas on this decision. Lathlin hypothesizes that the reason might include recent economic impacts with the mill and other businesses closing (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

The lack of communication about the website will not impact Lathlin's "to do list" which includes a call to the appropriate person at The Pas. In the past, this lack of communication could be chalked up to something potentially more detrimental but the strength of the relationship keeps the doors of communication open (Lathlin, Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). According to Roque, another example of the collaboration having impact, is on the way they do business. For example, The Pas' community development corporation (CDC) which focuses on municipal business was resurrected but didn't stop there. Discussions are occurring with an eye to ways to bring OCN to broaden the scope of CDC's work (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

The Tri-Council identified a landfill as a critical project as the landfills in the area aged out and alternatives that were up to code were needed. When the partners discussed the mutual issue, it was determined that OCN had an appropriate parcel of land that would be the best option for a regional landfill that expanded the area of concern to approximately 20 other communities. Roque outlines the steep learning curves that occur (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017) He points to relationships with other governments including the federal government relationship with OCN and the municipal government relationship with the provincial government. That means for this project, OCN can work with the federal government and the town will work with the provincial government so that a master plan is developed that works most effectively for all involved.

Collaborative Process

The Tri-Council meetings are attended by general managers from each community where relevant issues are discussed and recommendations passed to the leadership. Once a consensus is reached then recommendations are ratified by the respective leadership. If there are such things as by-laws or government permits involved, then the leadership makes final decisions. Lathlin reveals that each person's commitment is strong in doing the best they can and "what we got out of it was a really great relationship" (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). A leadership approach that is most effective according to Roque is to listen. While it is easy to talk about one's own issues, it is more valuable to listen what the other person wants first. The partnership is strengthened as independent decisions disappear in situations that are more suited to the collaboration. As the relationships are strengthened, identifying where overlaps occur will be streamlined.

An important part of the relationship is the RM of Kelsey. OCN now has a more complete idea of where mutual interests lie. They thought that the RM was only involved in agriculture that occurred on land that was quite removed from OCN. They were surprised to find out that the RM owns land close to OCN. They are now working on coordinating commercial development on contiguous land that each was developing separately until the partnership opened up discussions. Lathlin notes, "We have similar goals that we had no idea of before" (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

Facilitative Leadership

Lathlin states that change in leadership does impact the success of the Tri-Council (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). A challenge to the collaboration's health, is how new leaders are brought up to speed on the partnership. Some perceptions of change in leadership for example occurred when an eager champion that connected well with the partners to a new leader who has a more "hands off" style. This is not a deal breaker so long as the lines of communication are open. There are always pressures that are hidden to outsiders and as Lathlin states, "Because we are friendly, doesn't mean that I can poke by nose in their business" (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

Roque adds that changes in leadership do not stop the momentum because each partner has goals to accomplish that drive the process. The methods of communication can cause issues when setting meetings. For example, if an effort to schedule a meeting is not successful because there was no response to the email invitation, Roque states "call me old-fashioned but there is such a thing called the telephone. Problems occur when assumptions are made that others prefer to do things the same way that I do. It is better to realize that some people might do things a little differently" (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

Both Lathlin and Roque are collaboration champions. They work hard to inspire others and bring their experience to the table to help the Tri-Council move forward. Roque thought a meet and greet after the new chief of OCN was recently elected made sense. He organized it himself despite the inability to set Tri-Council meetings successfully. Fifteen out of 22 leaders showed up across the three partnerships. The new chief met the mayor and many useful contacts were made for the benefit of all concerned (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

At OCN, Lathlin and another employee were enthusiastic and passionate about building relationships so they modelled the behaviour to others in various departments. This was picked up as the value became clear so now it is a common means of doing business and people feel comfortable to include the town in the process. This is done independently without leadership having to give directions (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017).

The collaboration future looks promising according to Lathlin and Roque as it can only improve, grow and become stronger. The inevitable shift as young people step into leadership roles will require space for the wisdom of the experienced, older citizens who have much to offer. It makes sense to access all assets even while generation practices, communication and use of technology may stretch older people's abilities. It is a work in progress that will adapt from generation to generation.

Roque's advice to municipalities interested in developing collaborations is to know their list of projects well enough so that opportunities for working together are quickly identified (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). This is a collaborative process that relies on relationship building and not going in with a demanding attitude where the focus is on vent-

ing with the purpose of winning disagreements. Speaking up quickly without the facts or bringing gossip into the picture are injurious.

Lathlin's advice to First Nations communities interested in this type of partnership is to pursue it persistently (Personal Communication, June 9, 2017). "You will find common interests and goals. The paths that lead to achieving those goals will be vastly improved with collaboration. No one has loses anything from collaboration. Instead it is multiplied for the better."

Introduction

David Newhouse

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conversations about Aboriginal Work Experiences: Reflections for Community Members, Organizations, and the Academy

Wendi L. Adair
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Catherine T. Kwantes and Twiladawn Stonefish
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR

Ruxandra Badea
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Warren Weir
VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY — COWICHAN CAMPUS

ABSTRACT

The authors relate how they reflected upon, understood, and shared conversations about Aboriginal experiences at work across time and with different audiences. They found nuances in their understanding and interpretation as their audience changed from sharing circle members, to Cando conference attendees, and finally the Academy. Whereas initial impressions highlighted concepts of strength and resilience, which the authors translated into practical recommendations for mentorship and cultural safety, the results from an academic analysis highlighted how conversational focus changed when participants discussed work experiences in the past (systemic barriers emphasized), present (Indigenous worldviews emphasized), and future (all concepts discussed equally). The authors offer suggestions for continuing the conversation and new ways of understanding Indigenous employees' experiences at work.

Organizational growth and community health are indicators of economic development that are facilitated through employee well-being, most commonly defined within the Academy as growth and satisfaction at work (Huang, Ahlstrom, Lee, Chen, & Hsieh, 2016; Newhouse, 2004; Rajaratnam, Sears, Shi, Coberley, & Pope, 2014; Reijseger, Peerers, Taris, & Schaufeli, 2017). Aboriginal worldviews on well-being, growth, and satisfaction that focus less on material gain and more on learning from, connections with, and giving back to the community and land, are distinct from these conceptualizations (Archibald, 2008; Julian, Somerville, & Brant, 2017), as Juntunen and colleagues found in their conversations about careers with Native Americans (Juntunen, Barraclough, Broneck, Seibel, Winrow, & Morin, 2001). Thus, management practices rooted in European worldviews and individualistic goals of a capitalist system may be a poor fit for Aboriginal employees. The lived experiences shared in the edited volume *First person, first peoples: Native American college graduates tell their life stories* (Larimore, 1997), provide context for our interest in understanding how Aboriginal employees in Canada experience work. Lori Arviso Alvord, a surgeon who grew up in Crownpoint on the Navajo reservation, attended Dartmouth University, and later completed medical school and a residency at Stanford writes:

> It is as though I am living in two parallel worlds that exist side by side but only rarely intersect. Native American friends who see me in action at the hospital or hear me speaking "medicalese" on the phone often have a hard time integrating that doctor with the woman they know. Surgeons and others I work with rarely see the woman who goes to a medicine man for advice during her pregnancy. My roles are complicated and even I get lost in them sometimes. Yet I have found a unique place in my culture as a role model for young people and as a human cultural "bridge" for Navajo people. (Alvord, 1997, p. 228)

Dr. Alvord's story evokes feelings of discomfort and identity conflict. Bill Bray, a Creek from Oklahoma, also educated at Dartmouth and Stanford, offers a more visceral account of his experience as Executive Director for the Native American Preparatory School.

> I flew across the country from New York to L.A., had meetings at private clubs and on yachts where no one looked like me, and asked people to donate money to Indian education, because Indians are the people of the future. And then I would go home and cleanse myself and vomit, because that is what you do if you are Creek and believe in our traditional ways and find yourself living in a world that is increasingly strange. Then I would return to work and laugh myself through another day, clinging to thirty-five thousand years of dances and stories and philosophy and thought and the comfort, joy, pain, and work that its survival implies. (Bray, 1997, p. 40)

As industrial organizational psychologists trained in the Academy, the first and second authors have observed, interviewed, and surveyed employees from many different national cultures to learn about the impact of national culture on job satisfaction, trust, communication, and conflict at work (e.g., Adair & Brett, 2005; Kwantes, 2010). The third author introduced us to the Aboriginal communities in Canada, whose values are typically more collectivist, egalitarian, family-oriented, and flexible than non-Indigenous peoples' (Redpath & Nielsen, 1997; Juntunen & Cline, 2010, Verbos, Gladstone, & Kennedy, 2011, Stonefish, 2013). We wanted to learn more about Aboriginal worldviews and how they are related to Aboriginal employees' experiences at work in Canada.

We began reading statistics reported by Canadian and Aboriginal sources which agree that employment rates for Aboriginal populations lag well behind the rates for non-

Aboriginals in Canada (Environics, 2010; Mendelson, 2004; Usalcas, 2011; National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, 2015). True to our European epistemology, we saw a problem that we wanted to understand and solve, and so we began by examining previous research on employment success for different social and ethnic groups, for example women versus men, African American vs Caucasian American, and a few limited publications in mainstream academic journals about Aboriginal populations in the U.S. and Canada, mostly in the field of career counselling. We also read literature by Aboriginal authors and first-person accounts of Aboriginal employees in Canada and the United States, (e.g., Alvord, 1997; Bray, 1997). Along with systemic barriers to education and training and prejudice, an issue that seemed to be prominently related to dissatisfaction at work was identity conflict.

Identity conflict is defined as the degree to which one's cultural identity, the sense of who a person is as a cultural being, an aspect of the self that is fundamental to an individual's self-concept and self-esteem (Giddens, 1991; Yagi & Kleinberg, 2011), is recognized and validated at work (Purdie-Vaughns, Steele, Davies, Ditlmann, & Crosby, 2008; Swann, Johnson, & Bosson, 2009). Related to identity conflict, the connection with the working environment was another theme we saw in the literature. Person-organization fit, defined by people's feeling that they (including their culture) fit comfortably within the organization and that the organization's system, structures, and working environment fulfil their needs (Judge, 1994; Kristof, 1996), is another organizational construct we thought might inform our inquiry. We know that in North American and Western European organizations, employees who experience identity conflict and poor fit are likely to have lower job satisfaction and performance as well as higher turnover rates (Kristof, 1996; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008; Judge, 1994).

Identity is a recognizably complex construct for Aboriginal peoples in Canada and a major focus for contemporary urban Aboriginal scholars (see Peters, 2011 for a review). Native American conversations about careers also allude to moving between two worlds, having to adjust oneself to be effective off the reservation, and needing to reconnect with one's community (Juntunen et al., 2001). Master's thesis research supervised by the first author found that Aboriginal employees in Southwest Ontario who experienced more cultural identity conflict, described by feelings such as "I am conflicted between the Aboriginal and Canadian ways of doing things," also reported greater work exhaustion (Racine, 2016). This relationship, in turn, was mediated by role conflict, defined by Peterson and colleagues (1995) as incongruence in role expectations or incompatibility between role expectations or job requirements. Thus, personal identity conflict can be compounded by role conflict, resulting in the highest level of reported work exhaustion. These findings suggest that Aboriginal employees in non-Aboriginal organizations may experience role conflict when they experience identity threat based on expectations to abandon their primary cultural identity to satisfy role demands. Julien and colleagues (2017) conducted interviews with 56 Aboriginal employees across Canada and concluded: "Thus, it was challenging for them to develop a strong linkage to their culture, and their self-identity. Often their identity had to be subsumed into a persona that "fit" better with what the organization wanted to see" (Julien et al., p. 173).

Based on this prior work, we might hypothesize that identity conflict at work explains lower employment rates for Aboriginal versus non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. We then might conduct a survey of Aboriginal full-time employees in a variety of organizational forms to test our hypothesis. But this approach would be using our lens and our ways

of knowing to solve something that we defined as a problem. How accurate are the employment statistics cited above? Do Aboriginal experiences at work influence satisfaction and retention? Would it be helpful for us to facilitate a conversation about these issues? We did not know. Guided by readings on Indigenous research methodologies (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008), we refrained from defining research questions and developing hypotheses. We aimed to remove our own biases, begin a conversation, and listen to Aboriginal voices share their experiences, challenges, and questions in the realm of work. As Shawn Wilson notes, "Research is all about unanswered questions, but it also reveals our unquestioned answers" (p. 6). In this work, we did not presume to know an answer. We did not assume a question.

We took as our guiding principle the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC, 2012) final report and Calls to Action 92: Business and Reconciliation that highlights the importance of meaningful consultation and respectful relationships in understanding workplace issues and ensuring that Aboriginal peoples have "equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities." It is in response to this call that we organized the *Sharing Knowledge~Building Relationships: Aboriginal Experiences in the Cross-Cultural Workplace* conversations (see Kwantes et al., 2017) to stimulate reflection, sharing, and discussion about the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian workplace. JoAnn Archibald recounts in her *Indigenous Storywork* (2008, p. 48) how Chief Leonard George of Tsleil-Waututh First Nation near Vancouver taught that contemporary academics who engage in respectful, reciprocal, and relational research are like hunters in the forest, who gather only what they need, bring it back home, and share it with all who can use it. Thus we invited participants to share their experiences and thoughts about work and now we are sharing them with you.

Following, we describe three versions of how we reflected upon, understood, and disseminated these shared experiences one month, four months, and one year after our conversations at the VIU Cowichan campus. As David Newhouse wrote, re-conceptualizing our understanding of economic development requires thinking through, debating, experimenting, and finding out what works (Newhouse, 2004). In this light, we hope to begin a conversation about Aboriginal experiences at work to think, debate, and invent new ways of understanding management practices and enhancing employee experiences at work.

SHARING WITH THE COMMUNITY OF PARTICIPANTS

Context

Our first audience was the people who attended our meetings in June 2016. All conference participants were informed about, and consented to, our summarizing and sharing the general content of our discussions. As discussed by Kwantes and colleagues (2017), four sharing circles were held, each with a different focus on Aboriginal experiences in the workplace, and discussion notes were taken in each circle. Sharing circle notes did not contain any identifying information nor any direct quotes and were reviewed and approved by all conference attendees for use and dissemination by our team. Each author participated in a sharing circle, and immediately following the gathering we shared notes and reflections in person and over email, having a conversation about our impressions and lessons from the discussions. Based on these discussions, the first author drafted a brief conference summary

to share with participants that included knowledge we wanted to share from the academic field of Industrial-Organizational Psychology (IOP) that speaks to the concepts our participants discussed.

This draft was shared with all team members for additional input. One team member shared and discussed the summary with community members at Vancouver Island University — Cowichan Campus. Once we had feedback from community members, all team members participated in crafting the final document summary, and the third author disseminated it via email to all conference participants. She invited participants to reflect and respond to our own understanding of the discussion themes (we did not receive any responses).

Themes

One major theme that emerged from our initial post-event reflections was the power of resilience among Aboriginal peoples. Sources of resilience identified by participants included a strong cultural identity, spiritual foundation, and pride in heritage. It was noted that some youth fear losing their Aboriginal identity when joining the contemporary urban workforce. All sharing circles discussed balance within the individual, supported by the community and the workplace through authenticity, as another piece of resilience. They also discussed the importance of today's youth learning the history of individuals, families, and nations. Sharing stories about challenge and success in families, schools, communities, and at public events like ours can help build resilience in today's and tomorrow's youth.

The discussion of resilience among Aboriginal peoples reminded us of the IOP concept of social resilience, whose "unique signature is the transformation of adversity into personal, relational, and collective growth through strengthening existing social engagements, and developing new relationships, with creative collective actions" (Cacioppo, Reis, & Zautra, 2011, p. 44). Resilience has been discussed as a process — a positive developmental trajectory characterized by demonstrated competence in the face of, and professional growth after experiences of, adversity in the workplace (Caza & Milton, 2012). Resilience has been related to positive work outcomes including work happiness, organizational commitment, job satisfaction (Yousseff & Luthans, 2007), and job performance (Meneghel, Borgogni, Miraglia, Salanova, & Martínez, 2016).

Across sharing circles, the topic of Aboriginal youth's self-confidence was discussed. One sharing circle recorded that "youth feel that outside the reserve they are unwanted and undervalued." Several sharing circles touched on the concept of trust. To inspire Aboriginal employee trust in the organization, participants remarked that companies should understand Aboriginal history, culture, and values. A related belief, that companies hire Aboriginal employees as tokens, contributes to low trust and feeling unappreciated. These concepts of self-confidence and trust in the organization are addressed in several areas of IOP.

Another term for self-confidence in IOP is "self-efficacy" — the belief in one's ability to complete a task or succeed in a given situation (Bandura, 1977). One factor related to self-efficacy at work is stereotype threat, a concept social psychologists uncovered when trying to understand why African-American students in the U.S. often performed below their ability level. Stereotype threat explains why minority employees who feel they don't belong or are undervalued at work tend to develop negative self-perceptions consistent with their group stereotypes (e.g., I am not competent to perform in this role) that affect job seeking and job performance (Polzer, Minton, & Swann, 2002; Roberson & Kulik, 2007; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Interventions to reduce stereotype threat include positive self-affirmations

and supporting a sense of belonging (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006; Walton & Cohen, 2007).

Related to self-efficacy at work is psychological safety, a workplace climate characteristic that exists when employees feel valued and safe to voice their opinions (Edmonson, Kramer, & Cook, 2004). Rewarding relationships between coworkers and supervisors have been shown to increase psychological safety, which in turn increases employee engagement, trust, and learning (Carmeli, Brueller, & Dutton, 2009). Beyond organizational initiatives, IOP research suggests that community and interpersonal efforts to activate resilience and promote balance should also help to boost Aboriginal youth self-efficacy at work.

Summary

Based on our initial post-event reflections, we identified themes of resilience and self-efficacy as possible topics for future conversations, research, and training. Participants offered examples of meaningful efforts, including organizational leaders consulting with local elders, demonstrating respect for the culture and the land, and providing cultural leave options.

SHARING AT CANDO ANNUAL MEETINGS

Context

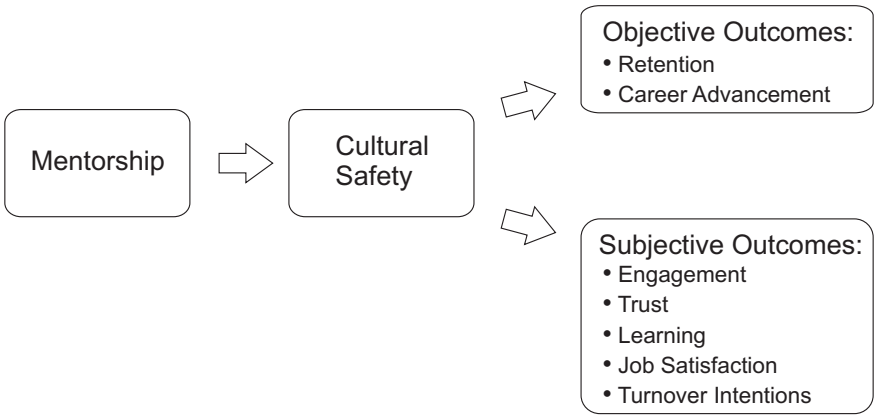
In October 2016, we had the opportunity to share our reflections and implications for Aboriginal employment at the 23th annual meetings of the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers (Cando) in Whitehorse, Yukon, hosted by dänä Naye Ventures, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Ta'an Kwach'an Council and Council of Yukon First Nations. Over 300 delegates gathered for three days of panels, addresses, meetings, and shared meals at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre.

Our audience members were development officers, business owners, employers, youth, and community members from across Canada. Whereas previously our goals were to convey a sharing circle summary and related concepts from the field of IOP, in this case our goals were to convey the format and content of our discussions with an emphasis on practical applications and ideas for the future. Over approximately four weeks, the research team revisited the sharing circle notes and held conversations about workplace implications until we reached consensus to frame our story around promoting Aboriginal youth employment, work engagement, and career advancement.

Themes

At the Cando meetings, we briefly summarized the format of our event and the sharing circle discussions and then explained how we integrated the concepts into a model of mentorship and cultural safety at work (see Figure 1). We proposed that the main issues discussed in the sharing circles — low self-confidence, low trust, tokenism, and stereotyping — can be addressed by organizations through a culture-based form of psychological safety. As noted above, psychological safety is a workplace climate characteristic based in mutual respect and understanding that increases employee trust and learning (Edmonson et al., 2004). We proposed Cultural Safety, a term used to describe medical provider — Indigenous

FIGURE 1
Mentorship and Cultural Safety at Work



patient interactions in the field of nursing (*cf* Williams, 1999), could also be a workplace climate characteristic that exists when employees feel their culture is valued and it is safe to express their cultural identity.

Cultural safety requires understanding, supporting, and promoting the integration of Aboriginal culture into organizational ways of knowing and being. Cultural safety is not an organizational policy or ideology like multiculturalism, which is a recognition of equality of all cultures in Canada today (Canadian Multiculturalism Act; http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-18.7/). In contrast, cultural safety requires recognition of the cultural identity of Indigenous peoples within the historical legacy of power relations and colonialism. Similar to the cultural mosaic team climate characteristic (Chuapetcharasopon et al., 2010), workplace cultural safety is a climate in which Aboriginal employees feel their identity may be freely expressed, accepted, and utilized in their work. A positive, safe, and supportive work context has been shown to impact employee resilience and job satisfaction, which in turn impact job performance (Meneghel et al., 2016).

We proposed to our audience that mentorship programs offer one way to create a workplace climate of cultural safety. Mentorship offers less experienced protégés career and psychosocial support from more experienced mentors. Career support includes coaching, sponsorship, and exposure to organizational units and opportunities. Psychosocial support includes modelling appropriate workplace behaviour, offering advice on work issues, and friendship (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Importantly, mentorship has been shown to build self-efficacy in existing organizational research. This occurs through learning from observing the mentor, identification with the mentor, additional access to knowledge and social networks, as well as opportunities to display talent and skills (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Also importantly, mentorship is a reciprocal, mutual opportunity for growth and learning.

Through conversation, relationship building, and reciprocal sharing, mentors and mentees gain a holistic sense of the organizational environment at a given time as well as reasonable short- and long-term reciprocal expectations. Tying the mentorship model to the

stories told at our sharing circles, we proposed that mentorship initiatives should focus on three key areas. First, mentorships should help build cultural knowledge among Aboriginal youth by providing examples of successful Aboriginal careers, either through historical accounts, forging connections, or the mentor's lived experiences. Second, the mentor should recognize and help build resilience through translating Aboriginal history to the contemporary and translating that learning to the contemporary organizational landscape. Third, the relationship should strengthen and affirm the Aboriginal employee's personal and cultural values to interrupt the potential of stereotype threat. Finally, we recommended that supervisors hold responsibility and accountability for implementation and oversight of mentorship programs. Research on mentorship programs in the workplace has found that organizational responsibility through oversight and accountability is essential for the success of such programs, and that these mentorship programs are more effective than management anti-bias training programs (Kalev, Dobbin, & Kelly, 2006).

Summary

Following the Cando meetings, we disseminated our PowerPoint presentation along with complete speaker notes to those who had expressed interest. This document was also posted to the Cando conference website (http://www.edo.ca/downloads/promoting-aboriginal-youth-employment.pdf). Our recommendations for formal mentorship programs are supported by Julien and colleagues' recent research on work-life enrichment among Aboriginal peoples. These authors note that Aboriginal employees across Canada reported that supervisor support, access to Elders, formal employee assistance programs and employee resource groups were essential for working towards work-life enrichment (Julien et al., 2017). Such programs, the authors note, are part of Aboriginal peoples' self-determination, their "desire to balance work and family obligations through a different lens where their cultural practices are seen as vital to work-life balance" (Julien et al., 2017, p. 174).

The first author shared our reflections with Jean Becker, Senior Advisor for Aboriginal Initiatives at Wilfrid Laurier University, and Myeengun Henry, Manager of Aboriginal Services at Conestoga College, in Southwest Ontario. Jean is of Innu, Inuit, and English ancestry and a member of the Nunatsiavut Territory of Labrador. The first author shared her prior experience researching workplace communication in national cultures around the world and gave examples of different communication styles leading to misunderstanding and conflict at work. Jean indicated that distinct communication styles are a challenge for many Aboriginal University students seeking employment. They discussed the role of listening and asking questions, the purpose of communication and relationality, and how people address their superiors and view conflict. The first author spoke of mentorship, and Jean Becker also shared the importance of staying in touch with alumni who can share their work experiences with current students.

Reflections were also shared with Lori Campbell, Director of the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre at St. Paul's University College. Lori is of Cree/Métis heritage and her ancestral lands are in Treaty 6 Territory in northern Saskatchewan. Lori expressed interest in finding Indigenous alumni of post-secondary institutions in Canada to learn more about how their indigeneity may intersect with communication within their place of work. She also felt it important to invite them back into the circle of learning whereby they could have opportunity to engage in a mentorship relationship with current Indigenous students. Lori spoke about the importance of incorporating Indigenous research perspectives as being fundamen-

tal to moving forward in a meaningful way as engaging with Indigenous participants in a Euro-centric fashion might only provide for the Indigenous experience to be reflected from a translation into a Euro-centric lens.

SHARING WITH THE ACADEMY

Context

Our third look at the sharing circle conversations from our June 2016 meetings took the form of a qualitative analysis that one of the first author's students conducted as an Honours Psychology thesis. Under supervision of the first author, the student received approval for her qualitative analysis and knowledge dissemination by the University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board. She then spent three months developing a content code and training two coders (one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal) to reliably classify the anonymous sharing circle notes into content categories. Finally she conducted statistical analyses to examine the frequency with which different concepts and categories were mentioned in the sharing circles to examine whether some concepts were discussed more often than others. Below we present a brief version of the methods and the interpretations (a full account of the methods and results are available by request from the first author).

Methods

We employed a grounded theory approach that allows ideas to emerge from qualitative data guided by a specific theoretical lens (Locke, 2001; Simmons, 2010; Glasser & Strauss, 1967). As with the *Sharing Knowledge~Building Relationships* program format, this research approach begins with broad questions to aid identification of concepts and linkages between theoretical constructs and the data. It is important to note these qualitative methods are rooted in European positivism and not traditional Indigenous epistemologies and holistic worldviews (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Our inductive inquiry was guided by social identity theory, according to which categorization processes place the self within groups of similar others, for example cultures or race (Tajfel, 1978; Turner, 1982; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). An underlying assumption was that sharing circle participants recognized the existence of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural identities, which may or may not have impacted their experiences at work.

Using open coding principles (Simmons, 2010), we began with exploratory coding, an unstructured examination of the data to identify and define themes to be coded in stage two (Saldaña, 2015). This inductive qualitative analysis resulted in a content coding scheme consisting of four higher level concepts rooted in IOP and a total of eight sub-categories reflecting Aboriginal experiences at work (see Table 1).

Descriptions of Concepts and Categories

Trust

The concept of trust emerged from repeated references to collaboration and understanding between individuals and within the organization in general. Aboriginal peoples' history

TABLE 1
Code Developed from Inductive Data Inquiry and Used for Content Analysis

CONCEPTS	CATEGORIES
Trust	1. Respectful Collaboration (Interpersonal trust) Example: "Experts/authority can be arrogant and despite good intentions do not collaborate." • Employee can rely on co-workers • Respect in teamwork • Inclusive communication, no stereotyping 2. Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work (Trust in one's organization) Example: "Companies don't understand their workers." • Organization protects individual employees' cultural identity • Organization recognizes and appreciates diversity • Tokenism
Values	1. Understanding and Acknowledgement of Balance (Cultural values for balance) Example: "It is important to connect with Elders." • Organization understands importance of work–family balance • Balance between community, education, and employment. 2. Understanding and Acknowledgement of Indigenous Worldviews (Indigenous or non-Indigenous cultural values, other than balance) Example: "How do you align cultural traditions with the employer?" • Organization recognizes Aboriginal values • Respect for holidays and traditional ceremonies • Organizational operations acknowledge and respect Aboriginal values for land
Person–Organization Fit	1. Time Perspectives: Looking Forward-Looking Back (Time perspectives directly influencing employee actions or organization practices.) Example: "Leadership has to bring back traditional ways." • Organization establishes relationships with Elders • Organization recognizes importance giving back to community, work for future generations 2. Cultural Values in the Workplace (Cultural values, other than time perspective, directly related to employee actions or organization practices.) Example: "Mismatch between work expectations can impede goals." • Different time management styles • High vs low context communication • Individual vs group oriented goals and achievement • Different approaches to learning
Barriers	1. Financial/Economic Barriers Example: "Lack of access to transportation, educational experiences." • Access to education and training • Employee assistance programs 2. Identity Stereotypes and Racism Example: "Racism is a huge barrier to employment." • Stereotypes • Discrimination and social exclusion

with colonists makes trust an elusive yet essential element of respectful engagement in social and organizational settings (Herring, Spangaro, Lauw, & McNamara, 2013). Two particular categories emerged from the comments that were related to this concept. The first category contained comments related to interpersonal trust. In the workplace, characteristics of interpersonal trust include integrity, competence, loyalty, consistency, and openness (Schindler & Thomas, 1993). This category within our coding scheme is named Respectful Collaboration (Interpersonal trust). The second category refers to trust in the organization, for example perception that an organization respects and supports an employee's cultural identity. This category was called Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work (Trust in one's organization).

Values

The concept of values emerged from sharing circle conversations that addressed Indigenous worldviews in general, without reference to a specific workplace behaviour or organizational policy. Human values are defined as desirable goals that serve as guiding principles in life (Kluckhohn, 1951) and are related to workplace motivation (Ros, Schwartz, & Surkiss, 1999). We included two categories of values: (1) Understanding and Acknowledgement of Balance and (2) Understanding and Acknowledgement of Indigenous Worldviews. For Indigenous employees, family and community needs come before work needs which can make it difficult to find work-life balance in a non-Indigenous workplace (Brayboy, 2005; Julien et al., 2017). Balance means having time for family, elders, and spirituality without ascribing to non-Indigenous priorities for material gain and career prestige (Brayboy, 2005; Clark, 2001; Julien et al., 2017; Juntun & Cline, 2010). The Balance category was applied to comments about work-life balance whereas the Indigenous Worldviews category was applied for any other value comments (e.g., Indigenous connection to the land) that did not specifically address a workplace behaviour or policy.

Person-Organization Fit

The concept of person–organization fit emerged from conversations about Indigenous worldviews or values that referred to a specific work context, behaviour, or organizational policy. Person–organization fit is defined by a congruence between the values and needs of an employee and their organization (Kristof, 1996) and, at least in part, can be impacted by cultural values and norms (Kwantes, Arbour, & Watanabe, 2012). When an employee's values do not align with organizational values, this lack of congruency can cause identity conflict and dissatisfaction at work (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). Two categories emerged most strongly in the sharing circle discussions: 1) Time Perspectives: Looking Forward-Looking Back and 2) Cultural Values in the Workplace. The category of Time Perspectives was applied to comments about the need for or experiences with the past informing current work or current work contributing to the future. The category of Cultural Values in the Workplace was used for comments about the fit or lack of fit between Indigenous and/or Western attitudes in the workplace, for example clock versus event time or direct versus indirect communication norms.

Barriers

The barriers concept emerged from conversations about systemic or structural hindrances to Aboriginal employment, experiences at work, and/or career advancement. These

practical barriers to opportunities include individual and institutional discrimination, which prevent access to social assistance and other structural foundations (Smye & Browne, 2002). Two categories of barriers were found: Financial/Economic Barriers and Identity Stereotype/Racism Barriers. The category Financial/Economic Barriers was applied for structural constraints such as lack of transportation, educational experiences, employment centres, and other urban development features. Such barriers can sway people from pursuing employment outside the reserve or force them to move far from their communities for sustainable employment (Juntunen & Cline, 2010; Juntunen et al., 2001). The category Identity Stereotypes/Racism was applied to comments about systematic discrimination against an employee and/or their cultural group. Negative stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples can cause apprehension about entering a workplace and ostracism within the workplace.

Two research assistants, one Aboriginal and one non-Aboriginal, were trained over two months to interpret comments and assign codes using the same lens. They coded all concepts and categories, (Interrater reliability Cohen's *Kappa* 0.89), and discussed any discrepancies until reaching consensus.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

We first examined the overall number of comments made within each concept throughout the conference (Figure 2). The majority of comments addressed the concept of Trust, followed by Person/Organization fit, Barriers, and lastly Values. As well, an analysis of the frequency of comments per category illustrates that Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work, Time Perspectives: Looking Forward Looking Back, and Financial/Economic Barriers were discussed most often (Table 2).

FIGURE 2
Total Concept Frequencies

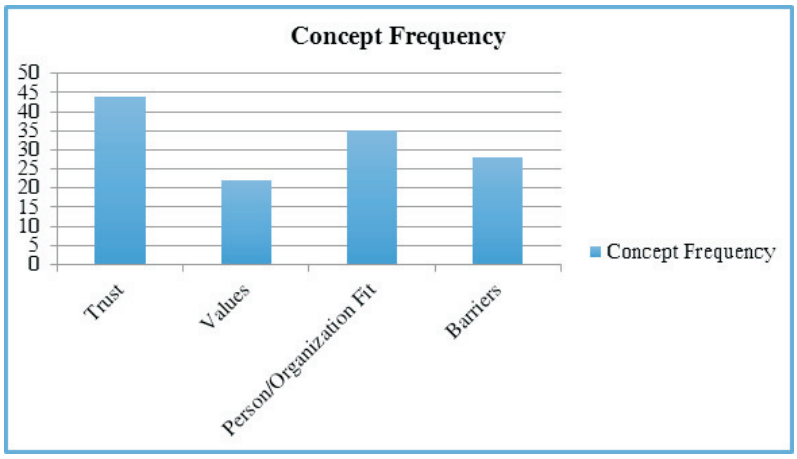


TABLE 2
Total Category Frequencies

Category	Percent of Overall Comments
Respectful Collaboration	10.1%
Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work	24.0%
Understanding and Acknowledgement of Balance	12.4%
Understanding and Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Worldviews	4.7%
Time Perspectives: Looking Forward-Looking Back	16.3%
Cultural Values in the Workplace	10.9%
Financial/Economic Barriers	15.5%
Identity Stereotypes/Racism	6.2%

Analytical Statistics

We conducted cross-tabulation analyses comparing observed versus expected frequencies of concepts and categories within each of our three different themed sharing circles (Krippendorff, 2004). Statistically significant differences between an observed count and expected count indicates that participants commented more (or less) frequently about a particular topic than would be expected if the comments were distributed with perfect proportionality (i.e., people talked about all categories and concepts with equal frequency across all sharing circles).

Our results showed that in the first sharing circle, *Diversity of our Stories: Experiences at Work*, at the concept level Values were discussed significantly less than expected (*Observed* = 2, *Expected* = 10.4, *Standardized Residual* = –2.6) and Barriers were discussed significantly more than expected (*Observed* = 20, *Expected* = 13.2, *Standardized Residual* = 1.9). At the category level, we found Balance (*Observed* = 1, *Expected* = 7.6, *Standardized Residual* = –2.4) and Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work (*Observed* = 9, *Expected* = 14.7, *Standardized Residual* = –1.5) were discussed significantly less than expected. Financial/Economic Barriers were discussed significantly more than expected (*Observed* = 14, *Expected* = 9.5, *Standardized Residual* = 1.5). In other words, the significant Barriers effect at the concept level was driven by a high frequency of discussion about Financial/Economic Barriers. Only at the narrower category level, we did find an effect related to the concept of Trust, namely the category of Organization Respects and Supports Employee's Identity at Work that was discussed less than expected. Together, these data suggest that conversations about past experiences at work were significantly coloured by barriers — external and systemic factors that negatively impacted access to and experiences at work. Participants did not associate experiences in the workplace (e.g., values or trust) with this sharing circle topic.

Our second sharing circle, *Achieving Balance in a Give-and-Take World*, was marked at the concept level, not surprisingly, with more comments about Values than expected (*Observed* = 18, *Expected* = 7.3, *Standardized Residual* = 3.9) and fewer comments about Barriers than expected (*Observed* = 3, *Expected* = 9.3, *Standardized Residual* = –2.1). At the category level, we found that Balance was discussed more often (*Observed* = 15, *Expected* = 5.3, *Standardized Residual* = 4.2) and Financial/Economic Barriers less than

expected (*Observed* = 2, *Expected* = 6.7, *Standardized Residual* = –1.8). Because the sharing circle theme included "Balance," we re-analyzed the data excluding any comments coded as "Balance" that might confound other significant relationships. The results showed that Understanding and Acknowledgement of Aboriginal Worldviews were discussed more often and Financial/Economic Barriers less than expected, although these differences did not reach statistical significance. Together, we see that participants talked about achieving balance in terms of both Aboriginal worldviews related to balance across work and community and also workplace acknowledgement of Aboriginal worldviews more generally. Participants did not associate financial or economic barriers to work with this sharing circle topic.

In our third sharing circle, *Visions of an Aboriginal-Canadian Workplace*, there were no concepts or categories that were discussed significantly more or less than expected. These findings suggest that when thinking about work in the future, participants felt trust, values, person–organization fit, and barriers were all important considerations.

Summary

Interestingly, the conclusions we draw from our look at sharing circle conversations using quantitative academic methods are two-fold. When viewing the conversations using a descriptive lens, a pure frequency count of topics across all sharing circles highlighted issues related to organizational respect for cultural identity at work (a facet of trust), time perspectives: looking forward looking back (a facet of person–organization fit), and financial/economic barriers (a facet of barriers), but not balance or Aboriginal worldviews. In contrast, controlled statistical analyses of conversations within each sharing circle suggested that balance and Aboriginal worldviews were primary topics of conversation in the sharing circle about achieving balance in a give-and-take world. These same analyses suggest that financial/economic barriers were emphasized in conversations only in the sharing circle about experiences at work, and when reflecting on the future, participants discussed all concepts and categories equally. In other words, there appears to be a temporal influence on the conversation topics.

These analyses suggest some similar and some novel ways of seeing our knowledge sharing experiences. The different ways in which we interpret and understand our sharing circle conversations is like a kaleidoscopic lens that may inform how we move forward with conversations about Aboriginal experiences at work. The variation of topics in reflections about the past, present, and future highlight the importance of looking back to understand the historical context and barriers that helped shape the experiences Aboriginal employees have today. One way to do this is to talk with Elders about the meaning and understanding of traditional work, to hear stories of work before and after colonization and to understand the words associated with work in Aboriginal voices. Our conversations suggest that in learning about contemporary work experiences, traditional values for balance and time perspectives: looking forward-looking back can provide an organizing framework to understand workplace stories that are told in employees' voices and in employees' workspaces, accounting for time and place.

In moving ahead, we can take a more holistic view of workplace experiences, using Indigenous models of interconnectedness to guide our listening, for example a framework of self, family, community, and nation growth or one of intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional well-being (Archibald, 2008). For example, whereas academic researchers have

found person–organization fit related to trust (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011) reduced turnover, increased citizenship behaviours, and organizational commitment (Gregory, Albritton, & Osmonbekov, 2010), for Aboriginal employees, the concept of person–organization fit may need to be redefined, reframed, and understood in terms of a more holistic person–family–community–organization fit. Another consideration for future conversations is the role of language and dialecticalism (Kovach, 2010), as a Western binary mindset and language that emphasizes "either/or" and cannot see or express "both/and" may blind us to a holistic Indigenous understanding of work.

Several limitations of these analyses should be considered. First, all of our conversations proceeded in the same temporal sequence over our two days together. Therefore, we cannot say whether participants discussed certain topics less as time progressed simply because they had already shared about those topics. Second, our sharing circle participants were both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. We maintained confidentiality and did not track who offered what comment. Thus, we cannot infer salience of the topics for Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal participants. Finally, while it is interesting to consider what topics were shared more or less than expected, it is also important to consider what topics were shared consistently or equally across sharing circles and time, namely respectful consideration, cultural values in the workplace, and identity stereotype/racism. These topics transcended the specific discussion themes and were part of the conversation in all sharing circles.

CONCLUSION

With this work, we share our process of thinking, listening, and beginning to learn about Aboriginal experiences at work. We describe the ways in which we framed and disseminated shared knowledge to three different audiences in three different contexts. Guided by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action (TRC, 2012), we gathered shared lived experiences of work and visions for the future. In conclusion, we reflect on the ways in which our distinct audiences and contexts shaped the messages we shared. We then consider how our work complements and goes beyond existing research on Aboriginal experiences at work. Finally, we offer considerations for research moving forward. With the basis for learning grounded in the stories that were told, an iterative approach to understanding was possible. Friedland and Napoleon (2015) note that using and analyzing stories for answers to a specific question "does not mean those stories are frozen or forever reduced to only one simplistic and immutable "answer" or rule" (p. 25). Thus, using the stories in three different ways, and at three different times, provided a progression of learning, and more understanding than a single effort would have.

The learning that we gained from this research process was enhanced by the iterative nature of the activity. With each different round and type of approach, the team gleaned new knowledge. First, based on our perceptions immediately following the event, we reached consensus on four primary themes as important to the conversation about Aboriginal experiences in the Canadian workplace: youth self-efficacy, psychological safety at work, resilience as an Aboriginal trait, and balance in life. Second, and after a few months, we regrouped and revisited our sharing circle notes after having thought for some time on our own about our experiences. We considered what messages might be most important to share with an audience of business people and development officers. We thought about how our

themes related to organizational practices, and we framed our message around cultural safety in the workplace and mentorship. The third interpretation of the knowledge shared at the 2016 event was prepared according to the theoretical foundations and methodological approaches taught in the Academy. Using qualitative and quantitative content analysis, we found that trust and self-identity at work were the most frequently discussed themes, but financial/economic barriers and balance were the only categories discussed significantly more than others when controlling for the overall number of comments within each sharing circles.

While these themes may appear to be different, the underlying message is the same. Our team's initial impressions of the shared stories included specific messages of strength and resilience that we could translate into practical recommendations to promote cultural safety and employee mentorship programs. The results from an academic analysis and theoretical approach suggested that conversations focused more on systemic barriers to work in the past and Aboriginal worldviews in the workplace today. Taken together, these three approaches reflect three different levels of subjectivity. Whereas our team's initial impressions were coloured by our own experiences within a particular set of relationships and in a particular place, the qualitative content coding provides a more objective and abstract interpretation of the words and messages shared. It is important to note that our team also listened to four keynote addresses (see Kwantes et al., 2017) that were not included in the qualitative content coding but may have influenced our own perceptions and interpretations of our experiences.

How our overall reflections relate to existing research on Indigenous experiences at work can also inform our learning. Some concepts that arose in our work and other recent research on work–family conflict (Julien et al., 2017) and careers (Juntunen et al., 2001; Juntenen & Cline, 2010) include systemic barriers that impact experiences at work and the importance of balance. The concept of cultural safety is related to our opening discussion about cultural identity conflict at work that is also reported in the work–family conflict and career research. Themes that arose for us that are not present in the work–family conflict and career research in the Academy include self-efficacy and resilience. Most notably, our conversations suggest that stories about Aboriginal experiences at work may be distinct from stories about bridging work and non-work lives or stories about careers.

Continuing these conversations may help us learn about Aboriginal employees' experiences at work with respect to topics such as effective communication, respectful relationships, and organizational trust. We may begin to understand what workplace experiences are related to employment retention, organizational growth, and economic development in Aboriginal communities and Canada. When the first author shared our interest in understanding Aboriginal experiences at work with Myeengun Henry, who is also an Aboriginal Traditional Counsellor from Chippewa of the Thames First Nation near London, Ontario, Myeengun advised that the first step is to create a spark and start a conversation about these real and important topics. We hope that sharing this work with the event participants, Cando, JAED readers, and the authors' communities, will spark conversations and learning about Aboriginal worldviews and Aboriginal employees' experiences at work.

REFERENCES

Adair, W.L., & Brett, J.M. (2005). "The Negotiation Dance: Time, Culture, and Behavioral Sequences in Negotiations". *Organization Science*, 16: 33–51.

Alvord, L.A. (1997). "Full circle". In C. Larrimore (Ed.) *First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories*, pp. 212–229. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Archibald, Jo-ann (2008). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Ashforth, B.E., & Mael, F. (1989). "Social Identity Theory and the Organization". *Academy of Management Review*, 14(1): 20–39.

Bandura, A. (1977). "Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change". *Psychological Review*, 84(2): 191.

Bardi, A., & Schwartz, S.H. (2003). "Values and Behaviour: Strength and Structure of Relations". *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(10): 1207–1220.

Boon, C., Den Hartog, D.N., Boselie, P., & Paauwe, J. (2011). "The Relationship between Perceptions of HR Practices and Employee Outcomes: Examining the Role of Person–Organisation and Person–Job fit". *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 22(1): 138–162.

Bray, B. (1997). "Refusal to Kneel". In C. Larrimore (Ed.) *First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories*, pp. 23–42. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Brayboy, B.M.J. (2005). "Toward a Tribal Critical Race Theory in Education". *The Urban Review*, 37(5): 425–446.

Cacioppo, J.T., Reis, H.T., & Zautra, A.J. (2011). "Social Resilience: The Value of Social Fitness with an Application to the Military". *American Psychologist*, 66(1): 43.

Carmeli, A., Brueller, D., & Dutton, J.E. (2009). "Learning Behaviours in the Workplace: The Role of High Quality Interpersonal Relationships and Psychological Safety". *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 26(1): 81–98.

Caza, B., & Milton, L.P. (2012). "Resilience at Work: Building Capability in the Face of Adversity". *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Organizational Scholarship*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Chuapetcharasopon, P., Brodt, S., E., Adair, W.L., Lituchy, T.R., & Lowe, M. (2010). *Cultural Mosaic in the Workplace: Conceptualization and Measurement*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Organizational Behaviour Division. Montreal, Quebec.

Cohen, G.L., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., & Master, A. (2006). "Reducing the Racial Achievement Gap: A Social-psychological Intervention. *Science*, 313>(5791): 1307–1310.

Edmondson, A.C., Kramer, R.M., & Cook, K.S. (2004). "Psychological Safety, Trust, and Learning in Organizations: A Group-level Lens". *Trust and Distrust in Organizations: Dilemmas and Approaches*, 12: 239–272.

Environics Institute (2010). *Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study*. Toronto: Environics Institute Publishing. Accessed at: http://www.uaps.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/UAPS-Main-Report.pdf

Friedland, H., & Napoleon, V. (2015). "Gathering the Threads: Developing a Methodology for Researching and Rebuilding Indigenous Legal Traditions". *Lakehead Law Journal*, 1(1): 17–44.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. London, UK: Weidenfield & Nicolson.

Gregory, B.T., Albritton, M.D., & Osmonbekov, T. (2010). "The Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment on the Relationships between P–O Fit, Job Satisfaction, and In-role Performance". *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(4): 639–647.

Herring, S., Spangaro, J., Lauw, M., & McNamara, L. (2013). "The Intersection of Trauma, Racism, and Cultural Competence in Effective Work with Aboriginal People: Waiting for Trust". *Australian Social Work*, 66(1): 104–117.

Huang, L-C., Ahlstrom, D., Lee, A. Y-P., Chen, S-Y., & Hsieh, M-J. (2016). "High Performance Work Systems, Employee Well-being, and Job Involvement: An Empirical Study". *Personnel Review*, 45(2): 296–314. doi:10.1108/PR-09-2014-0201

Judge, T.A. (1994). "Person–Organization Fit and the Theory of Work Adjustment: Implications for Satisfaction, Tenure, and Career Success". *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 44(1): 32–54.

Julien, M., Somerville, K., & Brant, J. (2017). "Indigenous Perspectives on Work-life Enrichment and Conflict in Canada". *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 36(2): 165–181.

Juntunen, C.L., Barraclough, D.J., Broneck, C.L., Seibel, G.A., Winrow, S.A., & Morin, P.M. (2001). "American Indian Perspectives on the Career Journey". *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 48(3): 274.

Juntunen, C.L., & Cline, K. (2010). "Culture and Self in Career Development: Working with American Indians". *Journal of Career Development*, 37(1): 391–410.

Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). "Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies". *American Sociological Review*, 71(4): 589–617.

Kluckhohn, C. (1951) "Values and Value-orientation in the Theory of Action: An Exploration in Definition and Classification". In T. Parsons and E. Shils (Eds.), *Toward a General Theory of Action*, pp. 388–433. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674863507.c8

Kovach, M.E. (2010). *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kraft, J.M., & Kwantes, C.T. (2013). "The Road to Fulfillment: The Importance of Trust in Contract Types". *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communications, and Conflict*, 17(2): 137–150.

Kram, K.E., & Isabella, L.A. (1985). "Mentoring Alternatives: The Role of Peer Relationships in Career Development". *Academy of Management Journal*, 28(1): 110–132.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kristof, A.L. (1996). "Person Organization Fit: An Integrative Review of Its Conceptualizations, Measurement, and Implications". *Personnel Psychology*, 49(1): 1–49.

Kwantes, C.T. (2010). "The Facets of Job Satisfaction: A Nine-nation Comparative Study of Construct Equivalence". *Applied Multivariate Research*, 13(2): 146–160.

Larimore, C. (Ed.) (1997). *First Person, First Peoples: Native American College Graduates Tell Their Life Stories*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Locke, K. (2001). *Grounded Theory in Management Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Mendelson, M. (2004). *Aboriginal People in Canada's Labour Market: Work and Unemployment, Today and Tomorrow* (Vol. 1). Ottawa: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Meneghel, I., Borgogni, L., Miraglia, M., Salanova, M., & Martínez, I.M. (2016). "From Social Context and Resilience to Performance through Job Satisfaction: A Multilevel Study Over Time". *Human Relations*, 69(11): 2047–2067

National Aboriginal Economic Development Board, (2015). *Aboriginal Economic Progress Report*. Gatineau, QC. Accessed at: http://www.naedb-cndea.com/reports/NAEDB-progress-report-june-2015.pdf

Newhouse, D. (2004). "The Challenges of Aboriginal Economic Development in the Shadow of the Borg". *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 4: 34–42.

Peters, E. (2002). "Aboriginal People in Urban Areas". In C. Andrew (Ed.), *Urban Affairs: Back on the Policy Agenda*, pp. 45–70. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Peterson, M.F., Smith, P.B., Akande, A., Ayestaran, S., Bochner, S., Callan, V., … Viedge, C. (1995). "Role Conflict, Ambiguity, and Overload: A 21-nation Study". *Academy of Management Journal*, 38(2): 429–452.

Polzer, J.T., Milton, L.P., & Swann, W.B. (2002). "Capitalizing on Diversity: Interpersonal Congruence in Small Work Groups". *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 47(2): 296–324.

Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C.M., Davies, P.G., Ditlmann, R., & Crosby, J.R. (2008). "Social Identity Contingencies: How Diversity Cues Signal Threat or Safety for African Americans in Mainstream Institutions". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94(4): 615.

Racine, A.A. (2016). "Bicultural Identity Integration at Work: Effects of Identity Conflict on Role Conflict Perceptions and Exhaustion". Master's thesis, University of Waterloo. Accessed at: https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/handle/10012/10520.

Rajaratnam, A.S., Sears, L.E., Shi, Y., Coberley, C.R., & Pope, J.E. (2014). "Well-being, Health, and Productivity Improvement after an Employee Well-being Intervention in Large Retail Distribution Centers". *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 56(12): 1291–1296. doi:10.1097/JOM.0000000000000349

Redpath, L., & Nielsen, M.O. (1997). "A Comparison of Native Culture, Non-native Culture and New Management Ideology". *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 14(3): 327.

Reijseger, G., Peeters, M.C.W., Taris, T.W., & Schaufeli, W.B. (2017). "From Motivation to Activation: Why Engaged Workers Are Better Performers". *Journal of Business Psychology*, 32(2): 117–130. doi:10.1007/s10869-016-9435-z

Roberson, L., & Kulik, C.T. (2007). "Stereotype Threat at Work". *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, 21(2): 24–40.

Ros, M., Schwartz, S.H., & Surkiss, S. (1999). "Basic Individual Values, Work Values, and the Meaning of Work". *Applied Psychology*, 48(1): 49–71.

Saldaña, J. (2015). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Schindler, P.L., & Thomas, C.C. (1993). "The Structure of Interpersonal Trust in the Workplace". *Psychological Reports*, 73(2): 563–573.

Simmons, O.E. (2010). "Is That a Real Theory or Did You Just Make It Up? Teaching Classic Grounded Theory". *The Grounded Theory Review*, 9(2): 15–38.

Smye, V., & Browne, A.J. (2002). "'Cultural Safety' and the Analysis of Health Policy Affecting Aboriginal People". *Nurse Researcher*, 9(3): 42–56.

Steele, C.M., & Aronson, J. (1995). "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5): 797.

Stonefish, T. (2013). "Discovering the Meaning of Leadership: A First Nations Exploration". Master's thesis, University of Windsor. Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. MR87396).

Swann, W.B., Johnson, R.E., & Bosson, J.K. (2009). "Identity Negotiation at Work". *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 29: 81–109.

Tajfel, H.E. (1978). *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge, MA: Academic Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2012). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action*. Retrieved from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Turner, J.C. (1982). "Towards a Cognitive Redefinition of the Social Group". In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, pp. 15–40. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.

Tyler, T.R., & Degoey, P. (1996). "Trust in Organizational Authorities". In R.M. Kramer & T.R. Tyler, *Trust in Organizations: Frontiers of Theory and research*, pp. 331–356. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Usalcas, J. (2011). *Aboriginal People and the Labour Market: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2008–2010*. Statistics Canada, Labour Statistics Division.

Verbos, A.K., Gladstone, J.S., & Kennedy, D.M. (2011). "Native American Values and Management Education: Envisioning an Inclusive Virtuous Circle". *Journal of Management Education*, 35(1): 10–26.

Walton, G.M., & Cohen, G.L. (2007). "A Question of Belonging: Race, Social Fit, and Achievement". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(1): 82.

Williams R. (1999). "Cultural Safety: What Does It Mean for Our Work Practice?" *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 23(2): 213–214.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*. Blackpoint, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Yagi, N., & Kleinberg, J. (2011). "Boundary Work: An Interpretive Ethnographic Perspective on Negotiating and Leveraging Cross-cultural Identity". *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5): 629–653.

Corporate Agricultural Investment in First Nation Reserves in Canada: The Case of One Earth Farms

David C. Natcher and Tom Allen
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE ECONOMICS,
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

ABSTRACT

In 2009, One Earth Farms (OEF) established farming operations on First Nation reserves in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Canada. The partnership that was created with First Nations was seen by some as a new model for Canadian agriculture; one that reduced agribusiness risk while enhancing the economic and social welfare of First Nation communities. Notwithstanding the purported social and economic advantages, by 2014, OEF discontinued its contracts with its First Nation partners. The failings of OEF have since been attributed to a flawed foundation, built on a culture and people with a sense of entitlement. Yet this research has found that conflicting timelines, the misalignment of goals, and failure to deliver on what was most important to First Nations are most attributable to the failing of OEF. In this paper we present important lessons learned that if considered can result in more informed and sustained partnerships between First Nations and the private agricultural sector.

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, One Earth Farms (OEF) established farming operations on First Nation reserves in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Starting with 4 employees, approximately 18,000 acres, and 1,558 head of cattle, OEF grew in only 4 years to having over 100 full and seasonal employees, 103,002 acres of cultivated farmland, and was leasing over 115,881 acres of pasture to support a herd size of 17,557 head of cattle. This expansion was made possible through private investment of over $70 million, making OEF one of the largest corporate farming operations in Canada.

The basis for OEF's initial growth rested in establishing partnerships with First Nations who served as landlords, business partners, equipment operators, and ranch support. According to senior management of OEF, the partnership that was created with First Nations represented a new model for Canadian agriculture; one that reduced risk through economies of

scale, while enhancing the economic and social welfare of First Nation communities. Notwithstanding the purported social and agri-business advantages, by 2014, OEF discontinued its contracts with its First Nation partners. Soon after, farm machinery was sold, First Nation employees were let go, and most of the reserve farmland that had been leased to OEF went back to being farmed by non-Aboriginal farmers.

The objective of this paper is to trace the development of OEF and identify the challenges associated with corporate agricultural ventures on First Nation reserves. It is our hope that the results of this research will enhance public and private sector understanding of the factors that contributed to the failed OEF venture. By identifying some of the challenges of agricultural development on First Nation reserves, we hope that more effective policies can be developed that reduce agri-business risk, and create more private investment and sustained economic development for First Nations in Canada.

BACKGROUND

The literature on First Nation agriculture in Canada is limited. The few sources that do exist depict a history of exclusion where the attempts of First Nations to participate in the agricultural economy have been thwarted by Government policies. This history can be traced to the late 1800s when, following the eradication of buffalo from the northern plains, First Nations had little choice but to adjust their way of life and adopt livelihoods suitable for changing times. With few other options available, First Nation leaders viewed agriculture as a viable strategy for the survival of their people; a population that was being ravaged by disease, starvation, and a general assault on their cultures and economies (Daschuk, 2013). The Canadian Government also considered agriculture a remedy for the conditions inflicted upon First Nations. In particular, Hayter Reed, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (1893–1897), believed that agriculture was the great panacea for the ills of Canada's Aboriginal populations. Believing that agriculture could help reverse the conditions plaguing the First Nations of western Canada, the historic treaties included provisions that would facilitate First Nation entry into the agricultural economy. Some of those provisions, known generally as the cows and ploughs provisions, included the issuing of farm equipment, including two hoes, one spade, and one scythe to each First Nation family, and one plough for every 10 First Nation families. First Nation Governments were also provided one bull, four cows, and an annual supply of seed for the benefit of all members (Buckley, 1992, p. 35). Even with this minimal level of support, First Nation farmers proved successful at adapting to their new vocations in agriculture, and by the turn of the century, many were out producing their non-Aboriginal neighbours. Tang (2003) has noted that the success of First Nations in agriculture could in large part be attributed to their collective use of land, labour, and supplies.

The success of First Nation farmers did not go unnoticed, and soon drew criticism from European settlers who had been enticed west by the Canadian Government with the promise of land and wealth. Believing that First Nations were benefiting unfairly from their collective supply of land and labour, settlers petitioned the Federal Government for change. Under political pressure, the Canadian Government set out to undermine its own assimilationist policies by introducing a number of measures that would effectively exclude First Nation involvement in agriculture. The first of these policies is known as Severalty Policy, which divided reserve farmland into 40-acre plots. Under the Severalty Policy no First Nation

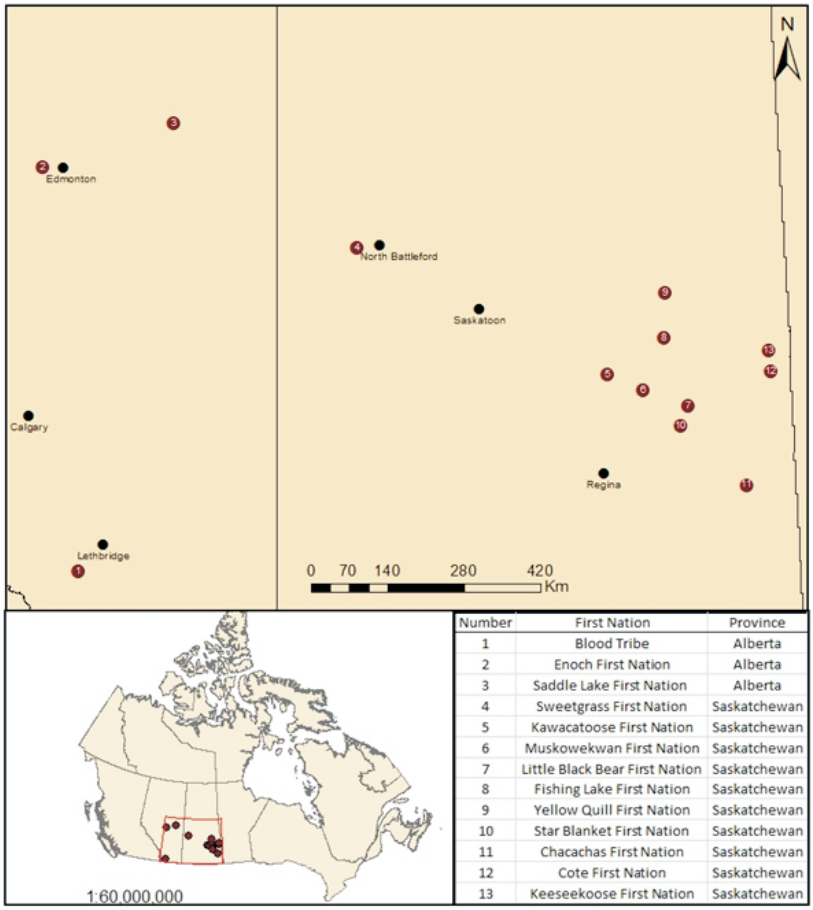
farmer was permitted to hold more that 40-acres, and First Nation families were limited to no more than 160 acres. This policy was motivated by Government's desire to breakup the collective land base of First Nations and instil a sense of individualism within First Nation economic affairs. The Severalty policy was also used to determine the amount of 'excess' land that could be surrendered to Government and made available for sale to European settlers. This policy, in effect, resulted in the loss of thousands of acres of First Nation reserve land.

Accompanying the Severalty Policy was the introduction of more sweeping legislation that became known as the Peasant Farming Policies (1889). Premised on the belief that First Nations should first learn basic agricultural skills, only the most rudimentary farming technologies were permitted. In combination with the Severalty Policy, which reduced the acres available to First Nation farmers, Peasant Farm Policies guaranteed that farming on First Nation reserves would function at no more than a subsistence level. To further ensure First Nations were excluded from commercial agricultural opportunities, the Canadian Government introduced a Permit System which required First Nation farmers to first acquire approvals from a Government representative (e.g., Indian Agent) before they could legally sell their products in the market. Together these policies removed any opportunity for First Nation farmers to participate in the agricultural economy in western Canada. By the early 1900s, settler farmers enjoyed a virtual monopoly over agricultural markets in western Canada (Bateman, 1996, p. 220). Today, the exclusionary tactics of Government are reflected in the gap that exists between First Nations and non-First Nations farmers. For example, Champ, Bitner and Nicholat (2010) found that of the approximately 37,000 farms in Saskatchewan, less than 1% (< 500) are owned and operated by First Nations. Of the 4 million acres of agricultural land owned by First Nations in Saskatchewan, over 80% (3.2 million) is leased to, and farmed by, non-First Nations farmers (Champ et al., 2010). Contributing further to the exclusion of First Nations from agriculture are the changes occurring in the agricultural sector as a whole, as farm exits increase and farm size and corporate farm ownership expands (Olfert & Natcher, 2016). These changes have made it even more difficult for First Nations to gain entry into the agricultural sector and develop successful commercial operations.

It is against this historical backdrop that One Earth Farms (OEF) emerged. The origin of OEF can be traced to Kevin Bambrough, then president and CEO of Sprott Resource Corporation (SRC), who travelled to Saskatchewan to explore opportunities for oil and gas development on First Nation reserves (Sorenson, 2010).Through his discussions with First Nation leadership, Bambrough learned that much of the reserve lands of First Nations was either underutilized for agricultural purposes or was being leased to non-First Nation farmers. To Bambrough this seemed like an obvious business opportunity. If SRC could gain entry into the agricultural sector via First Nation reserves, lands that are federally regulated under the Indian Act, SRC could circumvent provincial landownership restrictions prohibiting publicly traded companies from establishing farming operations in prairie provinces (Somerville & Magnan, 2015). If this could be accomplished, SRC could not only capture a significant portion of the agricultural industry in western Canada but they could also help to reduce the disparity that exists between First Nation land holdings and the negligible agricultural benefits they have historically enjoyed (Magnan, 2012).To attract First Nation partners, SRC committed an initial financial investment of $27.5 million to secure long-term leases. Leases ranged from 5 to 10 years at fair market value. This arrangement differed considerably from the experience of many First Nations who often lease their lands on an

annual basis, below market value, and under buckshee arrangements, which carries considerable risk for all involved. Buckshee leases are informal agreements entered into between a member of a First Nation or the First Nation itself and another party, where the lease is not formally approved of by the Federal Government, as is required by the Indian Act. Entering into formal and federally approved leases creates greater certainty for First Nations while ensuring competitive lease values for their lands. To further entice First Nations into leasing their reserve lands, SRC offered First Nations shares of equity stock in OEF and promised career and training opportunities for First Nation members. With these incentives, SRC was able to attract 13 First Nation partners who agreed to lease portions of their reserve lands to OEF. These First Nations included the Blood Tribe, Enoch First Nation, Saddle Lake First Nation, Sweetgrass First Nation, Kawacatoose First Nation, Muskowekwan First Nation, Little Black Bear First Nation, Fishing Lake First Nation, Yellow Quill First Nation, Star Blanket First Nation, Chacachas First Nation, Cote First Nation, and Keeseekoose First Nation (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
Listing and Location of First Nation Partners in One Earth Farms



Number	First Nation	Province
1	Blood Tribe	Alberta
2	Enoch First Nation	Alberta
3	Saddle Lake First Nation	Alberta
4	Sweetgrass First Nation	Saskatchewan
5	Kawacatoose First Nation	Saskatchewan
6	Muskowekwan First Nation	Saskatchewan
7	Little Black Bear First Nation	Saskatchewan
8	Fishing Lake First Nation	Saskatchewan
9	Yellow Quill First Nation	Saskatchewan
10	Star Blanket First Nation	Saskatchewan
11	Chacachas First Nation	Saskatchewan
12	Cote First Nation	Saskatchewan
13	Keeseekoose First Nation	Saskatchewan

Those First Nations who agreed to partner with OEF saw this as a unique opportunity that would bring about economic and social benefits; a 'cultural match' that was considered necessary for community support. As noted by Dale Awasis, former Chief of the Thunderchild First Nation, the partnership with OEF will "bring the investment dollars for building agricultural capacity ... where eventually we will be able to manage and maintain our own lands." Chief Awasis further noted that their partnership with OEF represented a prime opportunity to utilize Thunderchild's 120,000 acres of reserve land for the band's long term economic gain." Clarence Bellegarde, former Chief of the Little Black Bear First Nation, highlighted the employment and training opportunities that would be made available to First Nation members, and the opportunity in the future to assume senior management positions in OEF (above quotes found in Lappano, 2009).

Aboriginal scholars, including Calvin Helin also weighed in, noting, "OEF gives Aboriginal people the opportunity to control their own destiny and their own resources in a way that is consistent with their own environmental and social values." Further support was offered by Clint Davis, President and CEO of the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business (CCAB), who saw OEF as an opportunity for "First Nations people [to] utilize their own land as a significant asset for economic benefit in a sustainable and responsible way. The fact that Aboriginal people are equity owners and are integrated in the operation is significant." Adding additional credibility to OEF was the appointment of Phil Fontaine, former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, to the OEF Board of Directors. Fontaine expressed his excitement "to be part of a unique and transformative company that will help move First Nations directly into the farming industry and create new training, employment and business opportunities" (above quotes found in Lappano, 2009). With these endorsements, the March 2009 announcement of OEF was met with considerable media interest, as reported in Canada's Globe and Mail: "Bay Street investors and a group of Chiefs from Saskatchewan and Alberta formally announced the unlikeliest of marriages, one that would make them the most influential farmers in all of Canada, with a super-sized one-million-acre operation that could rival the largest corporate farms in the world (Friesen, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

In order to trace the development of OEF and identify the challenges associated with corporate agricultural ventures on First Nation reserves, a multi-method approach was adopted. Interviews were conducted with senior managers from OEF (3), OEF employees (5) and First Nation leaders (5). These semi-structured interviews explored the challenges that OEF encountered in developing farming operations on First Nation reserves, the difficulties in meeting the needs and expectations of both investors and First Nation members, and any recommendations that may be used to inform future agricultural development on First Nation reserves. In addition to interviews, annual and quarterly reports from OEF were reviewed, as were public press releases and popular news sources. These reports were used to trace annual investments, financial losses, the expansion and contraction of acres under production between 2009–2014, and public statements made by OEF senior managers.

RESULTS

In its first year of operation (2009) OEF set a goal of seeding 50,000 acres. However, by August of 2009 OEF had only seeded 12,000 acres on three First Nations reserves in Saskatchewan (SRC, 2009). Although this was fewer acres than intended, it was not surprising given that the initial capitalization and the official launch of OEF occurred only four months prior. By comparison OEF still managed to seed a land base larger than most other Saskatchewan family farms. With this relative success, and with optimism high, OEF announced in September 2009 that it planned to lease an additional 100,000 acres, making OEF "... the largest corporate farm in Canada, and among the largest in the world, giving First Nations a definitive role in the management of some large swaths of arable land (SRC, 2009)." The expansion of OEF was made possible through an additional investment of $15 million, including $3 million from the CAPE Fund. The CAPE Fund was established by former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, who noted that "This transaction ... will support a unique model for Aboriginal business, allowing First Nations to participate actively and with a strong degree of influence in helping to build a successful, world-class enterprise" (Cape Fund, 2010).Other investors included Alliance Grain Traders, the world's largest lentil and pea-splitting company (OEF Website — News, January 22, 2010), and Ag Growth International Inc. (AGI) that purchased $2 million in OEF common shares and secured grain supply handling, storage and conditioning services for OEF operations (AGI, 2009).

In the spring of 2010 OEF started its first full year of farming operations on First Nation reserves, including the Blood reserve in southern Alberta and the Muskowekwan, Little Black Bear, and Star Blanket reserves in Saskatchewan. These operations included 35,100 acres of cropland (8,554 that were custom farmed), 23,730 acres of pasture, and 1,900 head of cattle (SRC, 2011a). To support these operations, OEF grew from 4 to more than 80 employees, 32 (40%) of who were First Nation members.

Despite its rapid growth, OEF failed to show a profit following the 2010 season, citing high start-up and overhead costs, coupled with an exceptionally rainy planting season that resulted in only 60 per cent of OEF's farmland being seeded. Notwithstanding its failure to turn a profit, in December 2010, SRC announced that it would be investing an additional $30 million into OEF. This investment was based on the corporate belief that OEF was "an exceptionally unique, scalable agribusiness that will command a high valuation" in the future (SRC, 2010).

By the spring of 2011, OEF announced that it would again be leasing approximately 100,000 acres of cropland and an additional 50,000 acres of pasture to support a herd size of 13,000 head of cattle. This expansion was made possible in part through the leasing of a turn-key farming operation in central Alberta, which consisted of 31,000 acres of farmland, along with $10.2 million of selected farm equipment, a building machine shop, and two grain storage elevators with a total capacity of 400,000 bushels (SRC, 2011c). In addition to this investment, OEF finalized its agreement with the Blood Nation in southern Alberta, which involved the leasing of more than 50,000 acres of reserve croplands. The significance of this partnership was ceremonially recognized with the bestowing of an Honorary Chieftainship and gifting of a traditional Chief's headdress to Kevin Bambrough. According to Charles Weaselhead, then Chief of the Blood Nation, the significance of this honour is based on "Kevin Bambrough's sincere efforts to engage Canada's First Nations peoples in pursuing genuine partnerships in agriculture, which have created increased employment, revenues for First Nations, and the environmental sustainability of our lands" (Chief Charles Weaselhead, in SRC, 2011b). This expansion marked a significant accomplishment in secur-

ing large tracts of First Nation land, and also indicated to some that OEF was nearing the turning point where it could achieve the margins necessary to cover its start-up and operation costs. Despite strong support from the First Nations, combined with a growth in acres and livestock numbers, OEF recorded net losses of $11.1 million in 2010 and $14.0 million by year end 2011 (SRC, 2012). While lower-than-planned crop yields, and hence profits, can be attributed to inclement weather, the acquisition and integration of new land and labour also created challenges. In many cases reserve farmland required improvement before optimal yields could be attained. In other cases First Nation reserves required surveying and designation of boundaries. This included the determination of the legal land locations of First Nation reserves, which required additional time to ensure that operations were actually occurring on land that belonged to the First Nations. New labour also meant that production took longer than anticipated and sometimes challenged the efficiency of the operation. For example, OEF employed real-time information gathering technologies. OEF farm managers relied on iPads to give directions to equipment operators, and equipment operators used iPads to track operations and locate fields. In many cases new employees lacked adequate training and were unfamiliar with these technologies. Further, unlike family farming operations, where generations of land-based experience have been accrued, many OEF equipment operators were employed on reserves other than their own and were unfamiliar with the areas in which they were working.

By 2012, OEF's corporate strategy began to promote operational efficiency over expansion, and a commitment to moderate growth. Moderate growth was the new mantra for a company that had grown so rapidly in its first three years. While the million-acre mark was still a long-term target, it was no longer considered achievable in the near-term. Moderate growth also involved a reduction in operation costs and efficiencies in its value chain. In its move towards streamlining its value chain, OEF began to explore opportunities to develop premium-branded products from its crop and cattle operations (SRC, 2012).In 2013,OEF acquired Toronto based Beretta Farms, a purveyor of hormone free and antibiotic free natural and organic branded meat products in Ontario and British Columbia (SRC, 2013a). This move represented OEF's first step towards vertical integration and entry into branded food products. With the purchase of Beretta Farms, SRC's relinquished 46% its ownership in OEF (SRC, 2013b). In addition, Mike Beretta, who at that time was the CEO of Beretta Farms, was appointed President and CEO of OEF. Soon after the acquisition of Beretta Farms, the on-line corporate description of OEF was changed to read: "OEF operates a series of cattle and grain/oil-seed farms across the prairie provinces of Canada to support the OEF's goal of ensuring absolute food traceability from the farm to the consumer's fork (OEF Corporate Website, 2013)." This corporate description reflected OEF reorientation towards branded cattle products and is the first time that OEF fails to mention its partnership with First Nations. Later that year (2013) OEF acquired Toronto-based Sweetpea Baby Food Ltd. marking a continued shift from primary production to the value-added sector in order to improve shareholder returns. Amidst these changes, the Blood Nation informed OEF that they would no longer be leasing 50,000 acres of reserve lands. With the loss of these acres, OEF's Lethbridge, Alberta field office was closed and the staff and Farm Manager were terminated.

Changes at OEF carried over into 2014 with the departure of Kevin Bambrough from SRC. Bambrough's departure signalled OEF's continued restructuring, which involved the scaling back of its crop farming operations and a more concerted focus on vertical integration of its cattle and branded food divisions, which according to OEF's new management,

better aligned with the company's long-term growth strategy" (SRC, 2013b). Later that year OEF announced that it would be exiting its crop farming operations and all proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment related to crop operations would be used to expand its branded food business. By May 2014 OEF had sold its machinery and terminated leases for thousands of acres of First Nation reserves across western Canada. In just over 4 years, OEF lost an estimated $70 million dollars and went from leasing over 103,000 acres of cropland in 2011, to zero acres in 2014.

In a series of interviews, Mike Beretta explained "Crop production just didn't seem to fit in with our strategy going forward. And to be honest, we [OEF] didn't show any ability to generate anything remotely resembling profitable numbers. I never bought into [the idea] ... on a corporate scale, that it would work" (in Cross, 2014). In a later interview with The Western Producer (Pratt, 2014) Beretta further explained that the problem with OEF was that is was built on "... a flawed foundation. If you don't have the right culture and people, things can go awry. I'm very big on culture and people and relationships and partnerships, and the way One Earth had created it, it was strictly an employee-based scenario and there was little tied to performance. A sense of entitlement permeated the business, which doesn't work well for a company that was operating on a scale of One Earth Farms. It's like pouring gas on a fire" (in Pratt, 2014). Today there is virtually no trace of First Nations ever being involved with OEF.

DISCUSSION

While the failure of OEF has been attributed to a flawed foundation, built on a culture and people with a sense of entitlement, other factors are perhaps more deserving of attention. First it is important to recognize that SRC is a venture capital firm. As a venture capital firm, SRC provides early-stage financing to start-up companies and then realizes a return at the time of a sale or a public offering of shares. This type of investment strategy has a relatively short timeline, where five years would be considered at the upper range of direct participation. At the time of its second round of investment (2010), SRC was already touting the prospect for OEF to command a high valuation as Canada's largest operating crop and cattle farm. However, by 2013, four years after its start-up, OEF had yet to show any sign that it would be profitable to a third party. Undoubtedly the inclement weather in 2009 and 2010 presented a challenge to meeting its expected margins, but the mounting financial losses emanating from farming operations were an indication that it never managed to achieve the desired plateau even within a favourable economic climate. In fact, OEF's financial losses continued to mount even during 2011–2013 when most of Western Canada was enjoying high crop yields and record high prices. While OEF's relationship with First Nations was a considerable advantage in accessing reserve land holdings, it also positioned OEF differently from other farmland investment funds whose investors were benefiting from rising agricultural land value. Increasing land values are welcomed by landowners, but for OEF this meant additional operational costs. For SRC and its investors, the ultimate profit would be determined at OEFs exit from the venture and the value investors placed on the company's secure access to reserve farmland.

Those First Nations who partnered with OEF were certainly aware of SRC's objectives, and accepted that there would be a transfer of ownership. However, according to First Nation leaders, they were promised that they would become shareholders in OEF through

the distribution of equity shares and potentially could secure sole ownership of OEF farm operations. Although the Saskatchewan Securities Commission approved their equity stake in OEF in 2010, equity distribution to First Nations never occurred.

From the outset the success of OEF was measured in acres, specifically the number of additional acres that could be added to the rental portfolio each year. The pressure on OEF to grow was motivated by a number of factors, most notably the ability to market OEF to investors and for raising additional capital. Because of this, land acquisition was opportunistic. First Nations own a significant amount of high quality farmland. However, the vast majority of quality farmland is either farmed by First Nation members, or under rental agreements to local producers who have established positive long-term relationships with First Nations. Several First Nation Chiefs stated that they would consider making their best lands available if OEF was able to demonstrate success over the long-term, but were unwilling to relinquish their best lands or jeopardize the positive relationships with other tenants for an untested venture. Due to this reluctance, SRC was forced to offer above market lease rates, even for lands with very marginal agricultural value. These contracts were then inherited by OEF who were then challenged to recoup those initial inflated investments.

The rapid growth of OEF also required a large number of labour positions to be filled. While efforts were made to ensure that the best people were hired, the economic climate of western Canada created a number of human resource challenges. Due to the strength of the resource sector in Saskatchewan during this period, many of the best workers were not available to OEF, while those who were available required training and skills development before they could be fully utilized. This required time. Several First Nation members who were offered positions with OEF chose to wait to see how OEF performed before they were willing to leave high paying, full-time, and more or less stable positions. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, OEF was competing with oil and gas wages for good workers. The agriculture sector does not have the margins to compete with that industry in terms of wages and career opportunities. As a result OEF's employment goal of 250 First Nation jobs was missed by more than 200 positions.

As their partnership evolved, and OEF continued to produce negative financial returns, First Nations were being increasingly relegated to the role of landlords and not business partners. By 2013 OEF was merely operating on First Nation leases with increasingly dissatisfied 'landlords'. As one former Chief stated: "The intent with OEF was to have some of the Chiefs at the decision making tables — that never happened, so they [OEF] started making decisions that were communicated to the Nations once they were decided. We started to feel like "who are you to tell us how things will work on our land?"

It would be misleading to suggest that OEF was a failure for First Nations. Although not what was originally envisioned, First Nations did benefit in some ways from their involvement with OEF. For example, prior to partnering with OEF, several First Nations lacked information on the rental status, soil classifications, and even the boundaries of their reserve land base. Through their partnership with OEF, reserve lands were surveyed, and legal land locations, farmable acres, and other details were recorded. These data were mapped and are now being used by First Nations to make more informed decisions concerning on-reserve development. Four First Nations have used this information to establish their own band-operated farms. Each of these operations has significant land holdings and employ band members, some of whom were directly involved in the OEF venture. One of these First Nations has established a partnership with a local rancher, and acknowledged that they would likely never have considered such a partnership prior to their experience with OEF.

It is also important to note that despite the fact that OEF terminated their leases with First Nation partners, those leases were recorded and guaranteed by the Federal Department of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). When the OEF leases were terminated the terms of those agreements were subsequently enforced by DIAND and all payments and outstanding obligations were honoured by OEF. Had these leases been agreed to under buckshee arrangements, First Nations would have had no protection or recourse to secure outstanding payments.

Perhaps most importantly for all First Nations is the fact that OEF brought to light the below market lease rates that First Nations were receiving for their lands. In many cases this has resulted in the doubling of lease rates for First Nations. At the time of the writing of this paper, these rates are still in effect. Based on their experience with OEF, First Nations are able to apply a more accurate formula for calculating and charging fair market value for their lands.

CONCLUSION

For the past century First Nations in Canada have been drawn into agriculture with the promise of opportunity and economic inclusion. The historic treaties included specific provisions for the development of First Nation agricultural economies. These provisions included equipment, training, and support that would enable First Nation farmers to participate and compete in the agricultural economy of western Canada. However, soon after those provisions were made the Federal Government bowed to the influence of settler farmers who claimed First Nations were benefiting unfairly from the collective use of land and labour. In response the Federal Government introduced a series of crippling policies that effectively excluded First Nation involvement in agriculture, while providing optimum financial and political advantage to settler farmers. Such hypocrisy served to protect the incomes of settler farmers and removed any potential for First Nation competition (Natcher & Allen, 2011).

A century later OEF was created with a similar promise of integrating First Nations into the agricultural economy of western Canada. Through a unique combination of financial investment, agri-business expertise, and an extensive reserve land base, OEF set out to address the disparity that has long existed between First Nation land holdings and the negligible agricultural benefits they have historically enjoyed. To date, no other corporate farming venture in Canada has used the same combination of land, labour, and ownership structure. By fully integrating First Nations into the enterprise, OEF seemed committed to forging a genuine partnership and a new model for agricultural development in western Canada. Yet after 5 years, OEF failed to achieve the profit margins that were expected by investors and failed to deliver on the social and economic benefits promised to First Nation partners. Soon after the leases that were negotiated with First Nations were cancelled, farm equipment was sold, and First Nation employees let go. It would be easy to attribute the failing of OEF to the belief that the wrong culture and people were involved, and a sense of economic entitlement created a precarious foundation to build upon. However, one can point to conflicting timelines, the misalignment of goals, and failure to deliver on what was most important to First Nations as responsible for the significant challenges, that in the end, could not be overcome. Even with the substantial financial backing of SRC, together with the political influence of a former Canadian Prime Minister and former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, OEF failed to delivery on the

promises made to First Nations. Despite this set back, First Nations continue to seek out economic opportunities and secure their rightful place in the agricultural sector of western Canada. With the experience of OEF, First Nations are now more aware of the challenges of developing and sustaining corporate partnerships, and useful lessons have been learned. These lessons include the need to move more slowly, or as one First Nation leader said, "not so loud". This necessarily involves a commitment to 'slow growth' with an emphasis on relationship building over acres gained or profit margins achieved. This is not to suggest that First Nations are not interested in expansion and growth, but rather those measures of success must be built on a foundation of mutual respect and a shared commitment to the social and economic well-being of First Nation communities. The decision made by the Blood Nation to honour Kevin Bambrough with an Honorary Chieftainship and gifting him with a traditional Chief's headdress was not a trivial gesture. Rather it was a sign of respect and gratitude for what they saw as a pledge to advance the betterment of the culture and economy of the Blood Nation. It is this type of commitment that will be necessary for future corporate-First Nation ventures to succeed.

As Canada works to meet the food needs of growing global population, the demand for agricultural land will only intensify. First Nations, who control a significant portion of those lands, will once again be standing ready take advantage of such opportunities. It will be to the benefit of the corporate world to take note of the lessons learned from the OEF experience, and be better prepared as new opportunities for First Nation partnerships present themselves in the future.

REFERENCES

AGI (2009, December 23). Ag Growth International announces investment in One Earth Farms [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.aggrowth.com/news/200/ag-growth-international-announces-investment-in-one-earth-farms?return=press-releases&page=5.

Bateman, R. (1996). Talking with the plow: Agricultural policy and Indian farming in the Canadian and U.S. prairies. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 16(2), 211–228.

Buckley, H. (1992). *From wooden ploughs to welfare*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press.

Cape Fund (2010, January 22). CAPE Fund L.P. announces $3 million investment in One Earth Farms Corp [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.capefund.ca/en/about-capefund/press-releases.html.

Champ, J., Bitner R., & Nicholat, C. (2010). First Nation and Métis farming in Saskatchewan. Western Development Museum, Research Paper No. 7. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Cross, B. (2014, May 15). One Earth Farms restructure: CEO says efforts will now be focused on beef production. *The Western Producer*. Retrieved from: http://www.producer.com/2014/05/one-earth-farms-restructures/.

Daschuk, J. (2013). *Clearing the plains: Disease, politics of starvation and the loss of aboriginal life*. Regina: University of Regina Press.

Friesen, J. (2009, March 26). Natives, Bay Street form country's biggest farm. *Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from: http://nationtalk.ca/story/natives-bay-street-form-countrys-biggest-farm-globe-and-mail/.

Lappano, J.E. (2009). Growing capital. *Corporate Knights*, Fall Issue. Retrieved from: http://www.corporateknights.com/channels/food-beverage/growing-capital-12522509/.

Magnan, A. (2012). New avenues of farm corporatization in the prairie grains sector: farm family entrepreneurs and the case of One Earth Farms. *Agriculture Human Values*, 29: 161. doi:10.1007/s10460-011-9327-9

Natcher, D.C., Allen T., & Schmid, T. (2011). Canadian policy interventions during the mad cow crisis: Cause and consequence of First Nation exclusion**.** *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 7(2): 70–78.

OEF website — News (2010, January 22). CAPE Fund L.P. Announces $3 million investment in One Earth Farms Corp. Retrieved from: http://www.oneearthfarms.ca/about_us/news/cape_fund_announcement_2009/.

Olfert, R., & Natcher, D.C. 2016. Adaptation in a resource-based economy in the northern great plains. *Great Plains Research*, 26, 35–49.

Pratt, S. (2014, November 27). Size isn't always the answer: One Earth. *The Western Producer.* Retrieved from: http://www.producer.com/2014/11/size-isnt-always-the-answer-one-earth/.

Sommerville, M., & Magnan A. (2015). Pinstripes on the prairies': Examining the financialization of farming systems in the Canadian prairie provinces. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 42(1), 119–144.

Sorensen, C. (2010, September 23). Investment house on the prairies. *Maclean's*. Retrieved from: http://www2.macleans.ca/2010/09/23/investment-house-on-the-prairies/.

Tang, E. (2003). *Agriculture: The relationship between Aboriginal farmers and non-Aboriginal farmers*. Western Development Museum/Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre Partnership Project. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

SRC. (2009, August 13). Sprott Resource Corp announces second quarter 2009 results [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122549.

SRC (2010, December 16). Sprott Resource Corp to invest additional $30 million in One Earth Farms — Canada's largest farm in 2011 [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122523.

SRC. (2011a, March 28). Sprott Resource Corp [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122517.

SRC. (2011b, July 18). Kevin Bambrough receives honourary chieftainship and chief's headdress from the Blood Tribe [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122508.

SRC. (2011c, August 15). Sprott Resource Corp announces second quarter results [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122507.

SRC (2012, March 29). Sprott Resource Corp announces 2011 annual results [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122495.

SRC. (2013a, February 19). Sprott Resource Corp announces acquisition of Beretta Farms Inc. by subsidiary OEF Corp. [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122613.

SRC. (2013b, May 13). Sprott Resource Corp announces 2013 first quarter results [Press Release]. Retrieved from: http://www.sprottresource.com/investors/press-releases/press-release/?prId=122619.

"What About the Salmon?" A Critical Analysis of the Pacific Northwest LNG Project in British Columbia

Hillary A. Beattie
MASTER'S STUDENT, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the ecological, social, and political implications of the Pacific Northwest liquefied natural gas (LNG) project, which was approved in September 2016 to be built on Lelu Island, British Columbia. The paper situates this LNG project in Canada's settler colonial history and in recent debates over pipelines in British Columbia. Following a description of the approved project, the paper explores the perspectives of industry leaders, government officials, environmental experts, and First Nation communities. Industry leaders support the development, citing economic growth and a reduction in global carbon emissions as benefits. Governments officials largely agree with industry leaders, stating the project would create jobs. They also argue that the project would have limited environmental impacts. However, environmental experts disagree, stating that the project would increase global carbon emissions and have irreversible damages on the local environment. Finally, First Nation communities are divided: some see the project as an economic opportunity while others believe it will result in environmental degradation. However, despite the range of concerns raised by these actors, significant issues have been overlooked. The paper explores these oversights, which include the fact that 'buried' colonial epistemologies underlie the debate and that Lelu Island is unceded Indigenous territory. Overall, the research presented in this paper suggests that the project should not precede until (all) members of the affected First Nation communities have been properly consulted.

Acknowledgements: This paper is the indirect result of many conversations about Indigenous history and environmental politics with Vina Brown and other members of the Heiltsuk Nation. Without their patience, insight, and passion, this paper would not have been written.

INTRODUCTION

On September 27, 2016, the federal government of Canada approved a liquefied natural gas (LNG) project known as the 'Pacific NorthWest LNG' facility. If constructed, the project would include a natural gas liquefaction and export facility on Lelu Island, which is on the central coast of British Columbia near Prince Rupert. It would also involve the construction of a pipeline to move LNG from northeast British Columbia across the province to the facility. The project approval included 190 conditions, which were designed to protect the natural environment as well as the communities located near the project. Despite these legally binding conditions, the government's decision to approve the project was met with mixed reactions: while some industry leaders, government officials, and First Nation communities celebrated the news, many environmentalists and other First Nation communities vocally decried the project and the pipeline. The arguments put forth by both proponents and opponents of the project raise important ecological, social and political questions. In this way, the Pacific NorthWest LNG project could be considered a microcosm of the broader debates that Canadians are having about economic development, environmental degradation, and sovereignty.

Given its relevance, this paper will explore the arguments for and against the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. In order to properly contextualize these arguments, the author will precede these arguments with a discussion of settler colonialism and pipelines in British Columbia. Following this, the author will describe both the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility and the associated Prince Rupert Gas Transmission pipeline. After this, the author will explore the perspectives of industry leaders, government officials, environmentalists, and First Nation communities. Finally, the paper will conclude with a critical analysis of the arguments. In doing this, the author hopes to present a balanced discussion and analysis of the Pacific NorthWest LNG project and its ecological, social, and political implications for Canadians.

BACKGROUND

Settler Colonialism in British Columbia

Prior to the colonization of the territory now known as British Columbia, many Indigenous Nations thrived on the lands and waters for thousands of years. This has been affirmed both by oral histories, which describe how First Nation communities have inhabited the land since time immemorial (White, 2006), as well as by recent archeological findings, which demonstrate that the coast has been inhabited for over twelve thousand years (Pringle, 2015). Over this period of time, the Nations developed rich bodies of traditional ecological knowledge. These bodies of knowledge included not only specific observations and 'facts' about the natural world but also a holistic worldview that emphasized interconnections between human beings and the natural world (Turner, 2005; Berkes, 2008). Significantly, it was this traditional ecological knowledge that allowed the Nations to sustain themselves over millennia.

Beginning the late eighteenth century, European settlers explored and colonized the coast of present-day British Columbia. Along with deadly diseases such as smallpox, which killed thousands of Indigenous people, these settlers introduced worldviews and theories that were unfamiliar to the Indigenous inhabitants they encountered. These included different

epistemological understandings of what nature was and how humans should relate to it (Braun, 1997). It also involved now-defunct theories like Social Darwinism, which was the belief that certain 'races' were evolutionarily superior to others (Hawkins, 1997). This theory was used to justify an assortment of assimilation policies and practices that were introduced in the nineteenth century. One example of these was the Potlatch Ban, which was implemented in 1885 in order to prevent communities from practising their traditional culture (Cole & Chaikin, 1990). Residential schools, which began opening in the late nineteenth century, were another example of the government's attempt to "kill the Indian [...] and save the man" (T.R.C., 2015, p. 137). When combined with the introduction of European diseases and the work of Christian missionaries, who came to save the 'heathens' from 'savagery' (Hare & Barman, 2006), these assimilation policies and practices had devastating cultural, social, and political impacts on all Indigenous communities in present-day British Columbia.

The ultimate goal of this forced assimilation was to remove Indigenous people from their land so that Europeans could settle, develop and profit from it. However, according to the Royal Proclamation of 1763, colonial governments had to extinguish Native rights to the land through treaties prior to settling it (Harris, 2002). For this reason, the Dominion government negotiated the Numbered Treaties, which covered much of the prairie provinces, throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, the same process did not occur in British Columbia, with the one exception of the Douglas Treaties, which were signed in the 1850s and covered the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Additional treaties were not negotiated due to the geographical distance and chief commissioner of land and works Joseph Trutch's belief that it was unnecessary (Tennant, 1990). This meant that most of the land in British Columbia was unceded territory, an issue that increasingly garnered the attention of Indigenous and non-Indigenous citizens through out the twentieth century. In order to resolve this issue, the Government of British Columbia began negotiating modern treaties, also known as comprehensive land agreements, with Indigenous Nations in the 1990s. However, to this day, only eight First Nation communities have signed modern treaties with the Government of British Columbia (BC Treaty Commission, 2015). This effectively means that much of the province, including the land under the approved LNG facility and proposed pipeline, remains unceded.

Pipelines in British Columbia

Over the past decade, industry leaders, government officials, environmentalists and First Nation communities have disagreed about pipeline proposals in British Columbia. One example of this was the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, which would have transported up to 525,000 barrels a day of bitumen from Bruderheim, Alberta to Kitimat, B.C. Enbridge stated that the pipeline would have created up to 3,000 jobs during construction as well as 1,200 long-term positions (Northern Gateway, n.d.; Council of Canadians, 2016a). Despite these economic benefits, many environmentalists and First Nation communities were concerned about the possibility of an oil tanker spill on the coast and protested the pipeline's construction. Though the pipeline was approved by the National Energy Board in December 2013, the Supreme Court of British Columbia overturned the ruling in June 2016, citing a lack of proper consultation with impacted Indigenous communities (Proctor, 2016). This decision serves as a reminder of the importance of meaningful consultation when proposing major projects on Indigenous lands.

The proposed Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion has also been met with mixed reactions. The pipeline, which runs from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, B.C., currently carries 300,000 barrels of oil a day. Kinder Morgan has proposed to expand its capacity to 890,000 barrels a day. This would almost triple the amount of oil passing through the pipeline (Council of Canadians, 2016b). While industry and government proponents argue that the expansion would support economic growth in the country, many environmentalists and First Nation communities are concerned that it would increase the potential for an oil tanker spill. Currently, the proposal is expected to be approved. However, the dispute is ongoing: in October 2016, thirty environmental groups wrote a led to B.C. premiere Christy Clarke, urging the government to reject the proposal (The Globe and Mail, 2016). Like the Northern Gateway proposal, this project highlights the conflicting perspectives on economic development and environmental conservation in British Columbia.

A third example of a disputed pipeline is the Pacific Trails Pipeline. This pipeline, which is currently being reviewed, would carry a billion cubic feet of natural gas per day from Summit Lake to Kitimat, B.C. (Council of Canadians, 2016c). Pipeline proponents argue it would create up to 1,500 jobs during construction and would help transport natural gas, which is a cleaner-burning fuel, to markets in Asia, thereby reducing global carbon emissions. However, opponents argue that the potential for a leak in the pipeline is too great to risk. The most visible opposition to the project is the Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en Nation, who have camped along the proposed pipeline route in protest since 2009 (McSheffrey, 2015). Considered alongside the Northern Gateway and Trans Mountain proposals, the Pacific Trails Pipeline demonstrates how highly contested the land near the recently approved Pacific NorthWest LNG facility is.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pacific NorthWest LNG Project

If constructed, the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility would convert natural gas into LNG for export to Asia. The facility would be operated by Petronas and located on Lelu Island, which is on the central coast of British Columbia near Prince Rupert. It would receive roughly 3 billion cubic feet of natural gas a day from northeast British Columbia, and would produce up to 18 million tonnes of LNG per year. According to Petronas, the facility would include a natural gas reception system, three natural gas liquefaction trains, three LNG storage tanks, a marine terminal, two LNG carrier berths, a bridge and access road, and pipeline connections (see Figure 1). The first phase of the facility would be operational by the end of 2018. Natural gas from northeast British Columbia would be transported to the facility via a new pipeline, which would be a separate project known as the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project.

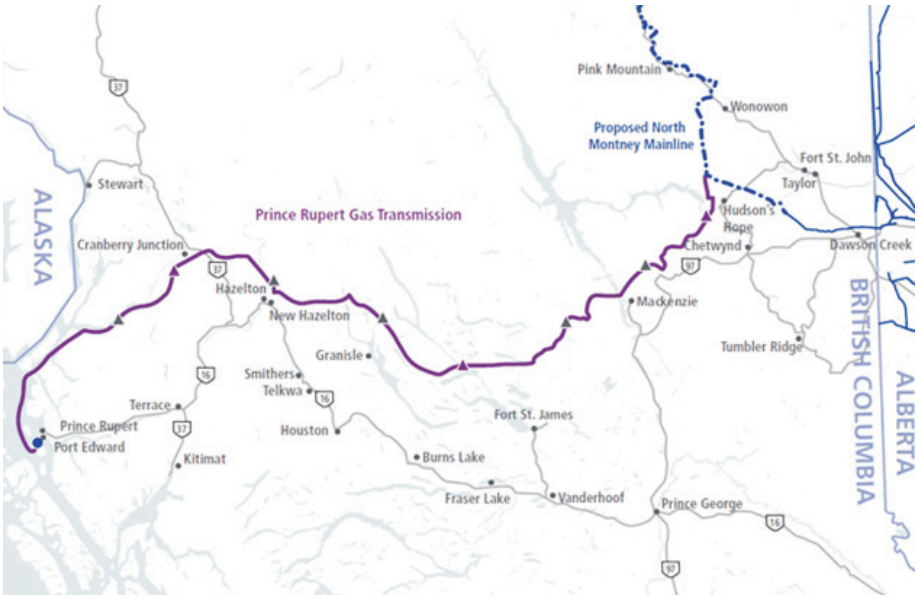
Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project

Though this paper is not specifically focusing on the Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project, it is worth briefly describing for context. The project would involve the construction and operation of a 900 kilometre pipeline from Hudson's Hope, British Columbia to the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility. This pipeline would be both land- and marine-based, with 780 kilometres on land and the remaining 120 kilometres on water (see Figure 2). In addi-

FIGURE 1
Renderings of Pacific NorthWest LNG Facility

Source: Pacific NorthWest LNG, 2016e

FIGURE 2
Proposed Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Route



Source: TransCanada Corporation, 2016c, 2016a

tion to the pipeline, the project would involve the construction and operation of a metering station and three compressor stations. The project received approval from the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the BC Oil and Gas Commission in 2015. It will be constructed if the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility is built (TransCanada Corporation, 2016a).

PROJECT PERSPECTIVES

Industry Leaders

Industry leaders at Petronas fully supported the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility, citing national economic growth and global environmental improvements as positive outcomes of the project. For example, the company stated that the Pacific NorthWest LNG project would create up to 4,500 jobs at its peak including positions for carpenters, electricians, labourers, land surveyors, and engineers. In addition, Petronas reported that the project would create up to 350 long-term jobs for technicians, engineers, administrators, and others (Pacific NorthWest LNG, 2016d). The company also promised to sponsor First Nation and local community members to pursue education and training to work in the facility (Pacific NorthWest LNG, 2016c). Given the historically high rates of unemployment in rural Indigenous communities and the current economic recession that parts of the country are facing, these training and employment opportunities should not be understated (Stuckler, Basu, Suhrcke, Coutts, & McKee, 2009; Wilson & Macdonald, 2010). Indeed, the companies could contribute to economic growth and community development in rural British Columbia.

From an ecological perspective, Petronas argued that the LNG project could be positive as it will help reduce global air pollution and climate change. This argument is based on the fact that the LNG will be exported to Asian countries, where coal is still used to meet much of the growing energy requirements. As a result of coal usage, Petronas reported there are "4,000 deaths per day in China due to air pollution" (Pacific NorthWest LNG, 2016b). In this way, the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility would help Asian countries transition away from coal to a cleaner source of energy. The company also emphasized that LNG produces fewer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per unit than other carbon-based energy sources. As GHG emissions contribute to climate change, this means that switching from other carbon energy sources to LNG could reduce global climate change (Pacific NorthWest LNG, 2016a). Finally, industry leaders argued that using LNG could help countries transition to renewable energy sources. Indeed, in a CBC article on the Pacific NorthWest LNG project, the CEO and president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Tim McMillan, stated: "LNG could support the expansion of renewable energy such as solar and wind by complementing their intermittent output" (CBC News, 2016d). For these reasons, Petronas argued that the LNG project would benefit not only the economy but also the environment.

Government Officials

Similar to industry leaders at Petronas, federal and provincial government officials also emphasized the economic and environmental benefits of the Pacific NorthWest LNG facility. When the Environment Minister, Catherine McKenna, announced the federal government's decision to approve the facility in 2016, several other government officials spoke up and emphasized economic benefits of the project. For example, Natural Resources Minister Jim

Carr announced that the project "represents one of Canada's largest resource developments" (CBC News, 2016c). He said that when all related developments are considered, the project could involve a total capital investment of $36 billion (CBC News, 2016c). Alberta Premier Rachel Notley also publicly applauded the decision, stating that the project will help energy producers and contractors in Alberta. Kent Hehr, a Member of Parliament in Calgary, said the project could contribute $2.4 billion to the country and called it "an exciting day for western Canada" (CBC News, 2016d). Hehr also spoke of the importance of supporting economic growth through international exports, stating:

> This is going to open up two markets ... this will create opportunities both in the North American continent as well as in the far east. We have to understand the world economy is becoming increasingly focused on Asian development and we have to get resources to market in a sustainable fashion in the 21st century. (CBC News, 2016d)

In this way, Hehr connected Pacific NorthWest LNG to the government's broader goal of securing Canada's role in the increasingly globalized world economy. This is the difference between the economic narratives of industry leaders and government officials: while the former emphasized local economic growth and community development, the latter emphasized national economic growth and global trade.

Government officials also emphasized a different environmental narrative than industry leaders did. While industry leaders focused on the global ecological benefits of LNG, government officials instead emphasized how ecologically safe the new facility would be. In particular, government officials like Catherine McKenna focused on the 190 conditions that the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) recommended after reviewing the project. These 190 legally binding conditions focus on GHG emissions, air quality issues, wetlands, fish, marine mammals, migratory birds, terrestrial species, and human health issues. Some of the conditions also relate to monitoring the cumulative environmental impacts of the project and decommissioning the facility (McKenna, 2016). At the press conference announcing the government's decision, McKenna stated: "I am confident with the 190 legally binding, and scientifically determined conditions, that we will address the most important environmental impacts to ensure this project proceeds in the most sustainable manner possible" (CBC News, 2016b). In this way, government officials like McKenna emphasized the importance of balancing the environmental risks with the economic benefits associated with the project.

Environmental Experts

In contrast to industry leaders and government officials, many environmental experts did not support the government's decision to approve the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. Their main objections to the project were its carbon emissions and its potentially negative impact on the local environment near Lelu Island. In a letter to Catherine McKenna, 90 climate change scientists and policy experts disagreed with industry leaders' claim that the project's LNG exports could reduce global GHG emissions by replacing more carbon-intensive fuel sources like coal. The experts argued that there was no proof that the LNG would actually replace coal, and stated that it would likely displace renewable sources of energy elsewhere. The letter also stated that the GHG emissions associated with 'upstream' and 'downstream' activities like fracking, processing, liquefaction, regasification, and transportation all reduce the environmental benefits of LNG over coal. Moreover, the climate scientists

and policy experts argued that the project would increase British Columbia's GHG emissions by up to 22%, making it almost impossible for the province or the country to meet its reduction targets (Harrison et al., 2016; CBC News, 2016b). In short, the environmental experts disagreed with most of the purported ecological benefits that industry leaders promoted.

Environmental experts also expressed concerns about the projects potential impacts on the local environmental and marine species near Lelu Island. When the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency released a draft of the project's assessment in February 2016, hundreds of environmental experts criticized the draft, writing that it misrepresented "the importance of the project area to fish population, especially salmon" (Jang & McCarthy, 2016; Moore et al., 2016, p. 1). The experts also argued that the assessment relied too heavily on science funded by the proponent, and did not thoroughly consider the cumulative effects of multiple project impacts on the local environment (Moore et al., 2016). Likewise, in a separate analysis of the draft, retired federal fisheries biologist Otto Langer warned about the negative impacts the project would have (Langer, 2016). Referencing Langer's report, Green Party of Canada leader Elizabeth May stated that "pile driving, dredging, lights, ship and dock noises, and potential spills will devastate the fish and bird habitat near Lelu Island" (May, 2016, n.p.). Overall, environmental experts who analyzed the late draft agreed that it understated the risks to the local ecosystem and should not be used to make policy decisions. Since the project's approval was announced, these experts' arguments have been widely cited by environmental organizations and political parties (May, 2016; Wilderness Committee, 2016; Smith, 2016).

First Nation Communities

In First Nation communities located across British Columbia, there are a wide range of opinions on the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. Among members of the Lax Kw'alaams First Nation, which has unceded Aboriginal title over Lelu Island (Diewart, 2016), these different opinions also exist. In a series of three votes in May 2015, band members rejected an offer from Petronas of $1.15 billion for their consent to operate on Lelu Island. At this point, most of the band members, council members, and hereditary chiefs opposed the development because of the negative impacts it could have on the local environment and on the salmon that spawn there (CBC News, 2015a; CBC News, 2015b). In September 2015, members of the Nation began camping on Lelu Island in order to protest and prevent the project from happening (CBC News, 2015c; Trumpener, 2016).

However, in November 2015, a new mayor and band council were elected. Though they initially opposed the project, they changed their mind and offered their support for their project in March 2016. This was done without the consent of most band members (Kelly, 2016). In response, a group of band members, including the former mayor, went to Ottawa in April 2016 to announce that Lax Kw'alaams support for the project was not unanimous, as the new mayor had suggested (Jang B. , 2016). Over the summer, community members reported that the Nation was divided and that there was a lot of pressure to support the project for economic reasons (Kelly, 2016).

More recently, in August 2016, band members were once again asked to vote on whether they supported the project. The poll found that 65% of voters were in favour. However, of the approximately 3,700 registered band members, only 812 voted. This means that only 532 members, or 14% of the total membership, voted in favour. Later reports found that

band members living off reserve were not well-informed about the vote and many did not have time to submit a ballot (Berman, 2016a; Berman, 2016b). In this way, even though Lax Kw'alaams band council formally consented to the project, band members remain divided over whether to prioritize short-term economic gains or long-term environmental health.

This tension between economics and the environment reflects the broader division in First Nation communities located across British Columbia. For example, four First Nation communities on the central coast — Kitselas, Metlakatla, Kitsumkalum, and Gitxaala — all supported the project, citing economic development opportunities for their communities as the main reason (Trumpener, 2016). Furthermore, the elected chief of Kitselas First Nation, Joseph Bevan, said the project consultations were well-done and inclusive (Hunter, 2016). However, others disagreed: an alliance of hereditary leaders from several First Nation communities, including the Heiltsuk, Gitxsan, Gitanyow, and Wet'suwet'en Nations called the assessment process "deeply flawed" (The Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams, 2016). They stated that First Nation communities were not meaningful consulted and the science that the assessment was based on was biased in favour of the company. Wet'suwet'en hereditary chief Na'Moks stated that:

> the proponent's research was conducted by hired consultants tasked with trying to come up with justifications for an incredibly foolish decision by the Prince Rupert Port Authority to site a massive industrial development on top of irreplaceable salmon habitat. The work done to date by Petronas' consultants has been rejected by [the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency] at least five times as being flawed, but now CEAA seems to be buying into the deeply flawed justifications for a project that was simply sited in the worst possible place. (The Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams, 2016)

In short, Na'Moks argued that the project's environmental assessment was flawed and should not have been used to justify the project's approval. These disagreements remain unresolved, with Indigenous proponents in favour of the economic benefits associated with the project and opponents upset with the project's potential ecological threats.

Summary

As this section demonstrates, stakeholders in British Columbia are deeply divided over the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. Industry leaders from Petronas and TransCanada support the development, citing economic growth and community development as well as a reduction in global carbon emissions as project benefits. Governments officials largely agree with industry leaders, stating that the project would create much needed jobs. They also emphasize that the 190 legally binding conditions would ensure that the project has limited environmental impacts. However, environmental experts largely disagree with industry leaders and government officials. They say that the project would increase, rather than decrease, global carbon emissions and would likely have irreversible damages on the local environment. Finally, First Nation communities are divided: some see the project as an economic opportunity for their communities, while others believe it will result in long-term environmental degradation. However, despite the range of concerns raised by industry leaders, government officials, environmental experts and First Nation communities, some significant issues have been overlooked in the debates. Specifically, no stakeholders have emphasized the fact that 'buried' colonial epistemologies underlie the overall project debate, and that Lelu Island is unceded Indigenous territory. In the next section, I will critically analyze these two oversights.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS

'Buried Epistemologies'

Currently, many Canadians believe that our nation-state is in a 'post-colonial' period, in which the horrors of colonialism can be relegated to our history books and museums. However, some Canadians like critical geographer Bruce Braun would disagree. For Braun, colonialism still lingers in 'buried epistemologies', which are normalized ways of categorizing and understanding the world around us (Braun, 1997). These epistemologies were introduced by settlers, and continue to shape how we think and act on issues like the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. In particular, Braun argues that the geologists and ethnologists who explored British Columbia in the nineteenth century separated the landscape into two realms: the natural and the cultural. In doing so, they introduced and eventually normalized a particular way of thinking of nature as something that is distinct from human culture (Braun, 1997). Importantly, this is only one of many ways of understanding what 'nature' is and how we should relate to it. Indeed, in many coastal Indigenous communities, individuals understand 'nature' as something that is interconnected with everything else. The idea of separating it into a discreet realm, as modern society does, is absurd at best and dangerous at worst (V. Brown, Personal communication, July 2015). Braun goes farther, arguing that in modern society, nature has been separated from 'culture' and inserted into "the abstract spaces of the market, the nation, and, in recent ecological rhetorics, the biosphere and the global community" (Braun, 1997, p. 3). In doing so, we have narrowed the way we think and talk about 'nature' and 'natural resources'.

Braun's argument is applicable to the Pacific NorthWest LNG project. As I demonstrated in the previous section, the project is primarily discussed by industry leaders, government officials, and environmentalists in relation to the market, the nation, and the global community. Though these are arguably all important aspects to consider, focusing primarily on these topics silences other perspectives on the project. This is why Tsimshian First Nation member Christine Smith-Martin showed up at the press conference where Catherine McKenna announced the project's approval with a jar of salmon in her hand, stating: "The salmon that we're talking about in our community is a very important piece, and you're not addressing the salmon, what about the salmon?" (Beaumont, 2016). Through this small act of defiance, Smith-Martin highlighted the cultural significance of salmon, which coastal First Nation communities have depended on for millennia and which would be threatened by the project. This is an important piece of the conversation that was marginalized at the press conference amidst narratives of the market, the nation, and the global community. In this way, Smith-Martin's statement emphasized the importance of considering 'culture' in all discussions about 'nature', rather than relegating it to a discreet realm. In my opinion, this is an important lesson for all natural resource development projects in British Columbia.

Unceded Territories

Equally important to this is the question of land rights and sovereignty, which often gets overlooked in conversations about natural resources amidst discussions over the nation, the market, and the global community. Indeed, in their study of the Northern Gateway pipeline in British Columbia, Rossiter and Wood argue that in most of the pipeline discussions, the question of sovereignty was silenced and replaced by a neoliberal political discourse. In

doing so, the various actors involved, including the provincial and federal governments, "reinforced the silencing of Aboriginal voices in the debate by ignoring the question of Aboriginal title and focusing exclusively on environmental and economic questions" (Rossiter & Wood, 2016, p. 911). The result is that most of the discussions about the Northern Gateway pipeline overlooked the question of land ownership and authority. Put differently, it silenced the uncomfortable fact that what happens, or does not happen, on unceded Indigenous territories should be decided by the First Nation communities who have Aboriginal title to the territory and not by industry leaders, government officials, or environmentalists.

This point is equally applicable to the Pacific NorthWest LNG project as it is to the Northern Gateway pipeline. In both cases, the development takes place on unceded territories and, in both cases, this important issue has been minimized in discussions. In fact, I could not find a single reference to the fact that Lelu Island is unceded territory in any of the articles I read about the project, even in the more purportedly progressive publications. This is significant, as the Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams, who claim Lelu Island as their traditional territory, have not signed any treaties with the Government of British Columbia or the Government of Canada. Currently, they are in stage two of six in treaty negotiation process, and have not made any progress on the negotiations since 2005 (B.C. Treaty Commission, 2016).

As discussed in the previous section, members of Lax Kw'alaams gave their consent to the project. However, members of the Nation have complained that they were not aware of the vote and therefore did not have time to participate. Indeed, only 532 of the 3,700 band members voted 'yes' to the project (Berman, 2016a). If Lelu Island's unceded status was more emphasized in project discussions, it would be more difficult to ignore the fact that only 14% of the band consented to the project. For this reason, I believe that any discussion over natural resources in British Columbia should be preceded by, and situated within, a broader discussion about land rights and sovereignty. Put differently in the words of Rossiter and Wood: "any development depends on clarification of sovereignty, which depends on resolving the unsettled matter of Aboriginal title and its specific claims" (2016, p. 913).

CONCLUSION

The Pacific NorthWest LNG project raises a number of important ecological, social, and political questions about economic development, environmental degradation, and sovereignty, among other topics. As demonstrated in this paper, there are no simple answers to these questions. Rather, there are a number of important, valid issues raised by each of the actors involved, which need to be thoroughly and respectfully considered. First, as industry leaders and government officials have argued, this project would undoubtedly contribute to economic growth and community development, at least over the next few decades. Considering much of western Canada is in an economic recession and many rural Indigenous communities in British Columbia have struggled with high unemployment rates over the last few decades, this point should not be underemphasized. Many families live in impoverished conditions and this project could economically benefit thousands of them. That being said, there are serious environmental issues associated with the project that need to be considered. Considered globally, this project might help improve the environment as the LNG exports may replace 'dirtier' forms of fuel and help countries transition to a more sustainable economy.

However, as environmentalists have pointed out, there is no proof that this will actually happen. Furthermore, from a national perspective, the 'upstream' and 'downstream' carbon emissions associated with the project will make meeting out country's climate commitments very difficult. The project also has the potential to negatively impact the local environment and the salmon that depend on it. In short, the project raises important ecological, social, and political questions about Canada's present and future.

Overall, the arguments presented by environmentalists and some First Nation communities suggests that the project is problematic for several reasons. First, as environmentalists argued, the potential harm the project could cause to the local environment and the salmon is difficult to justify. Second, recent research and developments in the renewable energy sector suggest that this LNG project is neither the only nor the best way to support economic growth and community development while transitioning to a more sustainable society. If these were truly the goals of industry leaders and government officials, these actors could financially support further research and development of renewable energy sources, rather than relying on LNG. This could provide economic opportunities for rural communities, and help the country transition to greener forms of energy. Given the research presented in this paper, this would be a better solution to these issues than the LNG project.

That being said, there were important issues missing from the overall conversation about the project. This is why the author included the critical analysis on 'buried epistemologies' and unceded territories, which raise several points. First, it is important to remember that the ways we think and talk about 'nature' are very western. That is, settlers introduced and normalized the division of landscapes into the 'natural' and the 'cultural'. This is not the only way to think about 'nature' nor is it necessarily the most sustainable. Rather, nature can be understood in a more holistic way that is informed by coastal traditional ecological knowledge. This epistemological shift would ensure that when 'nature' is talked about, individuals also consider how that 'nature' is connected to local communities. Second, the fact that Lelu Island is unceded should be emphasized more in project discussions, as it means that (all) band members of Lax Kw'alaams should be deciding whether or not the project takes place instead of the Canadian state. Overall, the arguments presented in this paper suggest that the project should be developed, at least at this point. Rather, all band members of the Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams should be able to engage in meaningful discussions about the project in the context of a larger conversation about land rights and Indigenous sovereignty.

POST SCRIPT

This essay was originally written in November 2016 prior to the provincial general election in British Columbia in May 2017. Along with other energy projects including the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, the Pacific Northwest LNG project was a hotly contested election issue. The Liberal Party, which was in power when the Government of British Columbia originally approved the LNG project, continued to support the project through out the election, citing economic growth as a key project benefit (BC Liberals, 2017). On the other hand, the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Green Party both criticized the project for environmental reasons (Hutchins & McIntyre, 2017). However, the NDP argued they would support LNG projects if they offered training and jobs for local British Columbians, secured partnerships with affected First Nation communities, respected

the natural environment, and provided a fair return to British Columbians (BC NDP, 2017). While the Liberal Party won a total of 43 out of 87 seats, the NDP and Green Party, who together won 44 seats, agreed to work together on key issues (McElroy, 2017). As of June 2017, it is not clear what this agreement means for the future of the Pacific NorthWest LNG project (Hutchins & McIntyre, 2017).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B.C. Treaty Commission. (2016). *Negotiation updates: Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams*. Retrieved October 11, 2016, from B.C. Treaty Commission: Independent facilitator for treaty negotiations: http://bctreaty.net/allied-tribes-lax-kwalaams

BC Liberals. (2017). *Strong BC Bright Future: Platform 2017*. Vancouver, BC, Canada.

BC NDP. (2017). Working *For You, Our Commitments to Build a Better BC: 2017 BC NDP Platform*. Vancouver, BC, Canada.

BC Treaty Commission. (2015). *BC Treaty Commission: Annual Report: 2015*. From http://www.bctreaty.net/files/pdf_documents/BCTC-AR2015.pdf

Beaumont, H. (2016, September 28). "Everything you need to know about the $36-billion LNG project that has turned many First Nations against Trudeau". *VICE News*.

Berkes, F. (2008). *Sacred ecology: Traditional ecological knowledge and resource management* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge.

Berman, S. (2016a, June 27). "Did this First Nation band consent to a massive gas terminal or not?" *VICE News*.

Berman, S. (2016b, August 27). "First Nation vote on massive gas terminal called out by band members." *VICE News*.

Braun, B. (1997). "Buried epistemologies: The politics of nature in (post)colonial British Columbia". *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 87(1): 3–31.

CBC News. (2015a, May 7). "B.C. First Nation voters reject $1B for LNG project in 1st of 3 votes". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2015b, May 13). "Lax Kw'alaams Band reject $1B LNG deal near Prince Rupert". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2015c, November 12). "Lelu Island LNG project divides First Nations as protest continues". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2016a, May 12). "B.C. LNG: First Nations appeal to UN to help stop Petronas project". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2016b, May 30). "Pacific NorthWest LNG project 'deeply concerns' climate change experts". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2016c, September 27). "Federal government approves liquefied natural gas project on B.C. coast with 190 conditions Project would build a liquefied natural gas terminal on coast and pipeline spanning province". *CBC News*.

CBC News. (2016d, September 28). "Pacific NorthWest LNG approval will benefit Alberta: Notley". *CBC News*.

Cole, D., & Chaikin, I. (1990). *An iron hand upon the people: The law against the potlatch ban on the northwest coast*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press.

Council of Canadians. (2016a). *Enbridge Northern Gateway*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from The Council of Canadians: http://canadians.org/enbridge

Council of Canadians. (2016b). *Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Pipeline*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from The Council of Canadians: http://canadians.org/kinder-morgan

Council of Canadians. (2016c). *Pacific Trails Pipeline*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from The Council of Canadians: http://canadians.org/pacific-trails

Diewart, D. (2016, May 16). "'We shall not be moved': Indigenous land defense on Lelu Island". *The Volcano*. Retrieved from http://thevolcano.org/2016/05/16/we-shall-not-be-moved-indigenous-land-defense-on-lelu-island-by-dave-diewert/

Hare, J., & Barman, J. (2006). *Good intentions gone awry: Emma Crosby and the Methodist mission on the Northwest Coast*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Harris, C. (2002). *Making native space: Colonialism, resistance, and reserves in British Columbia*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Harrison, K., et al. (2016, May 26). Letter from international climate change scientists and climate policy experts to Catherine McKenna re: Unjustified adverse greenhouse gas impacts of the Pacific Northwest LNG proposal. From *Vancouver Sun* via SCRIBD: https://www.scribd.com/document/314292821/Climate-Scientists-Letter-to-Federal-Government

Hawkins, M. (1997). *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860–1945: Nature as model and nature as threat*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hunter, J. (2016, September 28). "First Nations split on Ottawa's Pacific NorthWest LNG decision". *The Globe and Mail*.

Hutchins, A., & McIntyre, C. (2017, May 29). "What the B.C. NDP-Green deal means for rest of Canada". *Maclean's Magazine*.

Jang, B. (2016, April 19). "Former mayor of Lax Kw'alaams upset by band's support for LNG terminal". *The Globe and Mail*.

Jang, B., & McCarthy, S. (2016, March 9). "Scientists urge Catherine McKenna to reject Pacific NorthWest LNG report". *The Globe and Mail*.

Kelly, A. (2016, June 23). "Divide and conquer: At the centre of the biggest resource deal in Canada, a small town is torn apart — and reconciliation has never seemed so far away". *Discourse Media*.

Langer, O. (2016, March 9). *Critique of the CEAA analysis and review of the proposal by PNW LNG to locate a liquefied natural gas plant and trestle across Flora Banks to a deep water LNG export terminal*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca/050/documents/p80032/108923E.pdf

May, E. (2016, September 28). *Approval of Petronas LNG project further sabotages Canada's climate action commitments*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Elizabeth May: http://elizabethmaymp.ca/approval-of-petronas-lng-project-further-sabotages-canadas-climate-action-commitments/

McElroy, J. (2017, May 29). "B.C. Green Party agrees to support NDP in the legislature." CBC News. Available online: http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/bc-ndp-green-agreement-1.4136539.

McKenna, C. (2016, September 27). *Pacific NorthWest LNG project: Decision statement*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency: http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/050/document-eng.cfm?document=115669

McSheffrey, E. (2015, August 31). "What you need to know about the Unist'ot'en-pipeline standoff". *Vancouver Observer.*

Moore et al. (2016, March 9). Letter from scientists to Catherine McKenna re: Scientific flaws in assessment of environmental risks from the proposed Pacific NorthWest liquified natural gas facility at Lelu Island, Skeena River estuary. Canada. From Watershed Watch: https://www.watershed-watch.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Letter-ScientificFlaws-PNWLNG.pdf

Northern Gateway. (n.d.). *Benefits: Jobs and training*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Gateway Facts: http://www.gatewayfacts.ca/Benefits/Jobs-And-Training.aspx

Pacific NorthWest LNG. (2016a, April). *About liquified natural gas (LNG)*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Pacific NorthWest LNG: http://www.pacificnorthwestlng.com/media/PNW_fs%20About%20LNG_V.18.pdf

Pacific NorthWest LNG. (2016b, April). *Improving global air quality with LNG.* Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Pacific NorthWest LNG: http://www.pacificnorthwestlng.com/media/PNW_fs%20Air%20Quality_LR_v14.pdf

Pacific NorthWest LNG. (2016c, April). *Individual Training Sponsorship Program*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Pacific NorthWest LNG: http://www.pacificnorthwestlng.com/media/PNW_ITP_Generic_v9.pdf

Pacific NorthWest LNG. (2016d, April). *Job Opportunities and Training*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Pacific NorthWest LNG: http://www.pacificnorthwestlng.com/media/PNW_Job%20Opportunities%20and%20Training_v13.pdf

Pacific NorthWest LNG. (2016e). *Photo Gallery: Facility Renderings*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Pacific NorthWest LNG: http://www.pacificnorthwestlng.com/media-center/photo-gallery/facility-renderings

Pringle, H. (2015, June 22). Could these be the oldest human footprints in North America? *Scientific American*.

Proctor, J. (2016, June 30). Northern Gateway pipeline approval overturned: Federal Court of Appeal finds Canada failed to consult with First Nations on pipeline project. *CBC News*.

Rossiter, D., & Wood, P. B. (2016). Neoliberalism as Shape-Shifter: The Case of Aboriginal Title and the Northern Gateway Pipeline. *Society & Natural Resources*, 29(8): 900–915.

Smith, M. (2016, September 28). *Federal decision on Pacific Northwest LNG inconsistent with climate commitments*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Clean Energy Canada: http://cleanenergycanada.org/federal-decision-pacific-northwest-lng-inconsistent-climate-commitments/

Stuckler, D., Basu, S., Suhrcke, M., Coutts, A., & McKee, M. (2009). The public health effect of economic crises and alternative policy responses in Europe: an empirical analysis. *The Lancet*, 374(9686): 315–323.

T.R.C. (2015). *Canada's residential schools: The history, part 1: Origins to 1939*. The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Volume 1, Part 1. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Tennant, P. (1990). *Aboriginal peoples and politics The Indian land question in British Columbia, 1849–1989*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

The Allied Tribes of Lax Kw'alaams. (2016, September 1). "Northwest B.C. aboriginal nations decry "deeply flawed" LNG assessment process". *Marketwired*.

The Globe and Mail. (2016, October 6). "Clark urged to reject Kinder Morgan pipeline for failing key condition". *The Globe and Mail*.

TransCanada Corporation. (2016a). *Building a pipeline to meet the world's energy needs*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project: http://www.princerupertgas.com/about-2/project/

TransCanada Corporation. (2016b). *Jobs and Opportunity*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project: http://www.princerupertgas.com/benefits/creating-jobs/

TransCanada Corporation. (2016c). *Proposed Route*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Prince Rupert Gas Transmission Project: http://www.princerupertgas.com/about-2/route-maps/

Trumpener, B. (2016, September 27). "Gas field workers push for LNG while Indigenous protesters vow to stop it". *CBC News*.

Turner, N. (2005). *The Earth's Blanket: Traditional Teachings for Sustainable Living*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd.

White, E. (2006). "Heiltsuk stone fish traps: Products of my ancestors' labour." Master's thesis, Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, Canada. Retrieved from http://summit.sfu.ca/item/4240

Wilderness Committee. (2016, September 28). *Ottawa approves Pacific NorthWest LNG despite major opposition*. Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Wilderness Committee: https://www.wildernesscommittee.org/press_release/ottawa_approves_pacific_northwest_lng_despite_major_opposition

Wilson, D., & Macdonald, D. (2010). *The income gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Aboriginal Workplace Integration in Northern Canada

Hayley Hesseln
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIORESOURCES
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Heather Hall
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT, ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT (SEED)
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

ABSTRACT

Economic development requires skilled labour yet Indigenous people face persistent educational and labour market challenges across northern Canada. Systemic problems are widely known and relate to political funding cycles, short-term programming, and the lack of collaboration among key stakeholders. Such barriers are not only consistent across northern territorial and provincial jurisdictions, but they are widely known and well-documented. Research and stakeholder interviews suggest that barriers to education and successful transition to the labour market are a result of disjointed and short-term educational and skills-training programs that do not recognize the importance of fully supporting the learner, their families, and their communities. This paper identifies and examines best practices aimed to close the gap between education and skills training to meet successful long-term employment goals. Specifically, we suggest that using a holistic approach to training could help to advance economic development goals that promote Aboriginal participation in the market economy.

We would like to thank the research staff and students at ICNGD who provided us with their time and assistance throughout this project: Emmy Stravostand-Neuls, Joelena Leader, Paola Chiste, Stan Yu, Dazawray Landrie Parker, Osemis Bear, and Riley Braun. Finally, thank you to all the regional stakeholders who shared their time and expertise with us.

INTRODUCTION

As economies evolve, the labour market requires increasingly more skilled workers, yet in many markets Indigenous people are not represented in terms of equal participation. According to Fang and Gunderson (2015) Indigenous peoples fall into what they describe as a "vulnerable" group, which is any group that is disproportionally and persistently excluded from the labour market for longer than others. This gap in employment then leads to social and economic exclusion making it difficult to maintain and increase overall wellbeing.

Governments, industry, and Indigenous communities have invested heavily in closing this gap through workforce training, upgrading, professional development, and employment-based skills preparation, with the shared goal of encouraging greater Aboriginal participation in the market economy. Northern institutions, often with southern partners, work with communities, companies and individuals to take advantage of workforce and training opportunities.

Many agencies have produced limited circulation reports on the efficacy of their programs. Experience in many northern communities shows weak transitions from work skills and transition programs into the paid workforce (Bruce et al., 2012). Furthermore, more than two decades of preferential hiring and on-the-job training initiatives have produced more jobs and more Aboriginal employees but without substantial shifts in the general patterns of low-skilled work and economic prosperity (Luffman & Sussman, 2007).

While employment rates have risen for Aboriginal people — closing the gap from 19.1% in 2001 to 15.8% in 2006 — employment gaps (the disparity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employment percentages) still remain and are more prevalent in the North and on reserves. Many Aboriginal people living in the North are, at present, under-qualified for the best-paid and highest-demand jobs in the resource economy (Gibb & Walker, 2011). Efforts to catch up have not been overly successful. Industry employers are increasingly seeking employees with strong essential skills including cognitive abilities, the ability to solve problems, and the capacity to think critically. Other key skill sets include teamwork and collaboration, and oral and written communication. To more fully integrate northern Aboriginal people in the labour market, fundamental changes to training and education are necessary (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). The juxtaposition of these influences means that employment preparation is increasingly important, as workforce participation rates in the North remain well below national averages. In this paper, we examine the barriers and best practices to skills training and labour market transition programs with a focus on Northern Canada. The North, for the purpose of this study, is defined as the Provincial North or the northern parts of the provinces, from Labrador to northern British Columbia, and the Territorial North — Nunavut, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

METHODOLOGY

This research took place in three phases: an initial scan of the academic and grey literature on Aboriginal skills training programs, education and workforce development programs; a jurisdictional scan of government, industry and Aboriginal-led programs in six case study regions (Northern Ontario, Northern Manitoba, Northern Saskatchewan, Nunavut, Northwest Territories, and Yukon); and stakeholder interviews to confirm findings in the literature.

TABLE 1
Stakeholder Interview Distribution

Region	Number of Representatives
Northern Ontario	6
Northern Manitoba	9
Northern Saskatchewan	18[1]
Yukon	10
Northwest Territories	5
Nunavut	7
National	4
Total	59

Note:
1. Members of the research team were invited to a workshop on Aboriginal skills training programs, which included representatives from major mining companies, postsecondary institutions, and government.

We travelled to each of the six case study regions throughout August and September 2015 to meet with representatives from government, industry, educational institutions, and Aboriginal organizations that were engaged with skills training, education and/or workforce development programs. We met with 59 stakeholders as listed in Table 1. Meetings were instrumental in identifying gaps, trends, and scholarly and professional analyses that have shaped current programming in the Canadian North.

BARRIERS TO ABORIGINAL SKILLS TRAINING, EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

There is an extensive body of academic literature on Aboriginal education and its challenges in northern contexts, much of which is focused on the quality of primary (K-12) and post-secondary (college/university) delivery (Preston et al., 2012; Mackay & Mcintosh, 2012), including culturally relevant programming (Wilson, 2004; Tuck et al., 2014), jurisdictional issues surrounding quality of on-reserve delivery (Turner & Thompson, 2015; Calver, 2015), and a wide range of socio-economic issues including absenteeism and graduation rates (McFarlane & Marker, 2012; Janosz et al., 2011; Riley & Ungerleider, 2012).

While much less academic literature exists on northern workforce development and employment, or skills training strategies, there is a growing body of government and non-government authored reports and studies on Aboriginal inclusion and workforce development. This literature, in conjunction with stakeholder interviews revealed a number of barriers and challenges to successful skills training and workforce development.

Socio-economic Issues and Supports

The literature and more so, our interviews, revealed several consistent barriers, many of which are related. The most prevalent are listed below and suggest that a wide range of

socio-economic barriers to Aboriginal skills training and post-secondary educational attainment are highly varied and complex. In many cases, personal and social issues preclude learners from successfully entering or completing programs. The top three issues revealed in the interview process were related to childcare, substance abuse, and remoteness.

One of the primary socio-economic barriers is childcare. Taking time to attend courses often means having to leave home and with it, family and community support, making such opportunities difficult to embrace, particularly over the long term (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2010; Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013; Abele & Delic, 2014). Family responsibilities also include care for family members other than children (Brunnen, 2004).

Because many educational and training programs focus on preparation for employment in the industrial sector, learners are required to maintain sobriety not only during training, but afterwards while on the job often undergoing random drug tests. This is particularly crucial when it comes to operating heavy equipment common in the resource sector. However, McColeman (2014) and interview respondents identify personal barriers including, alcoholism, addictions, poverty and low self-esteem as well as having a criminal record as serious impediments to employment. Often, training programs and industrial jobs require a criminal record check, which provides additional hurdles to acceptance into skills training programs and subsequent entry into the workforce (Brunnen, 2004; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013; Abele & Delic, 2014).

Another concern is that those most in need of skills training often live in remote communities, with limited connectivity (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a), higher transportation costs and fewer work opportunities, and lower rates of having a valid driver's license (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013; Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a). One of the most widespread findings in terms of barriers was the lack of support including: insufficient financial resources, poor academic support in the way of tutors, role models, and mentors (Abele & Delic, 2014; Canadian Labour Business Centre, 2005; Carter & Polevychok, 2004).

Essential Skills and Educational Attainment

An overarching theme in the literature, and in our discussions, was the importance of essential skills, and the lack thereof. Life Literacy Canada has identified nine essential skills including reading, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking, computer use and continuous learning. These skills are "needed for the workplace ... [and] are used in every job to varying degrees and at different levels of complexity. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change."[1] Accountability and responsibility were also articulated during the interview process as being essential to training, and job acquisition and retention.

Language has long been identified as a barrier to training (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014) and encompasses reading, writing and document use. Necessary skills within the industrial sector include numeracy and computer use, and an under-

[1] See ABC Life Literacy Canada regarding essential skills, p. 1 (http://abclifeliteracy.ca/nine-essential-skills).

standing of how to work collaboratively and think critically (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2004; Construction Sector Council and Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada, 2005). Basic skills are often taught at home and in primary and secondary school, but with lower educational attainment, and lower participation rates in post-secondary institutions these basic skills are often lacking (Abele & Delic, 2014; Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015b).

Skills assessment has proven to be problematic when skills are not certified or officially recognized (Association of Canadian Community Colleges, 2010). Although many Aboriginal adults have not completed high school, they have gained life skills through work and life experience, but require grade 12 as a minimum to be considered for some jobs. Furthermore, the skills taught in secondary school and beyond are often not connected or related to job-specific skills (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015b). According to Simon (2013), institutions often teach irrelevant skills, yet cannot predict the skills that will be needed in the future. Additionally, skills such as teamwork and collaboration gained through traditional Aboriginal activities or knowledge are often not recognized in spite of being valuable in the workplace (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015b). Stakeholders also reported a lack of workplace readiness skills including knowledge about punctuality, accountability, absenteeism, and requesting time off for example. In addition, many people spoke about the need for employer readiness in building Aboriginal cultural awareness and an understanding of unique HR needs.

Perhaps the most fundamental problem affecting skills training and workforce development in the North is educational attainment, especially high school. As the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (2013) points out, the focus on education and training is largely meaningless for people who do not matriculate. Hodgkins (2015) agrees that training is ineffective unless the K-12 system is improved. This issue is multi-faceted and includes quality of K-12 education, especially on reserve, underfunding, access to education, high turnover among teachers, the intergenerational trauma associated with residential schools, and little hope that a high school degree will lead to employment. McColeman (2014) echoed the concern about poor quality of on-reserve education, arguing that a high-school diploma from on-reserve schools often does not provide the essential skills needed to pursue post-secondary education, skills training or to enter the labour market.

Inadequate Programming, Assessments, Monitoring and Funding

An important barrier to successful skills training is the lack of programming available within small, remote communities. Key elements lacking included employment-specific training that would lead to gainful employment both in and beyond communities, culturally relevant programming and teaching methods, and instructors with knowledge of local needs and challenges (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013; Abele & Delic, 2014; Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a).

Program opportunities in smaller centres have been limited because of the high cost of delivery due to remoteness, low enrolment, the need for highly technical labs and equipment (e.g., machinery used in the mining industry), the lack of meaningful collaboration among stakeholders, poor infrastructure, and the lack of funding for community and individual sup-

port necessary for local delivery (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a). Additionally, individuals are often unaware of existing programs and lack the support to successfully navigate the search and enrolment processes. Perceived barriers regarding program availability and opportunities were also noted specifically for apprenticeship programming (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2004).

Another barrier cited by regional stakeholders was related to the constantly shifting federal policy environment. Essentially, just as organizations were getting familiar with a new funding program, it would be eliminated or shift focus. The literature and stakeholders recognize the fact that Aboriginal labour market development is a long-term initiative that requires long-term funding and programming to match. Hodgkins (2015) found in his study of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership (ASEP) program in the Northwest Territories that funding was periodic and resulted in a fragmented short-term delivery that led to programs between employers and agreement holders.

Systemic Issues

One of the most commonly identified barriers was the lack of understanding and coordination among different agencies and service providers. Often, federal programs are targeted at providing employment opportunities where the problem has been identified as high unemployment or low participation in the labour market. The prescribed solution is to match people with jobs, or train them for specific employment opportunities. However, unemployment in many northern locations is a symptom of larger problems (e.g., social and personal challenges; limited economic opportunities) that require unique and innovative solutions that are more holistic. So, while funding is provided for education, it is often inadequate in terms of the individual and programmatic supports required for success. Overall, as discussed in many of the categories above, removal of most barriers require long-term approaches, flexibility, and support (Simon, 2013).

Often related to a mismatch in programming is the lack of collaboration in terms of development and delivery, funding, and long-term support (Abele & Delic, 2014). Programs that do not include all stakeholders at the table often result in failed initiatives; primarily for those that do not have employers and communities engaged. Apprenticeship programs are frequently offered where there are not enough opportunities to fill hours, or journeypersons to mentor trainees (Canadian Labour Business Centre, 2005). Changing regulations can diminish the chance of success for skills certification providing more stringent rules and steps required in the process (Canadian Apprenticeship Forum, 2004). Finally, barriers to employment arising from union regulations are often cited as an impediment to employment in spite of workers having the necessary skills and credentials (Brunnen, 2003b). For example, unions often secure labour agreements leaving those who are not members of the union with no possibility of employment, and new local companies without the opportunity to compete for bids. Similarly, because the North is heavily reliant on natural resource extraction where the economy can follow a boom/bust cycle, temporary unemployment makes it difficult to remain engaged in the workforce.

Coordination of benefits and programs beyond skills training is also important. There is a "lack of coordination between funding sources, delivery agencies, training institutions, and local housing authorities" (Canadian Labour Business Centre, 2005: 5). Additionally, significant disincentives arise when people are forced to make trade-offs and must permanently or temporarily give up support related to housing or social assistance when they relocate or

register for training (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a). In such cases, the lack of understanding of program benefits and outcomes results in a lack of motivation and often dissuades people from engaging in training or pursuing opportunities that could be beneficial to improving wellbeing in the long term.

BEST PRACTICES

While the barriers identified above are not surprising there are many practices that have proven to be successful, particularly when combined and used over time. In most cases, best practices have arisen as a direct result of addressing challenges and barriers. Problem solving also requires unique approaches to the myriad situations occurring across different jurisdictions. Solutions and best practices largely run parallel to the barriers and challenges discussed above.

Social Supports to Complement Program Delivery

By far the most important element to successful programming is support: for the individual learner, to overcome socio-economic barriers, and support from and for the community. Programs that recognize the range of personal and social barriers and that provide direct, and often one-on-one support to individuals have proven more successful where individual learners have been better able to navigate skills training programs and to ultimately secure long-term employment (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a; Government of Saskatchewan, 2007). Additionally, focusing on the individual and the community collectively is more likely to promote sustainable outcomes (Brunnen, 2003a). Moral, financial and logistical support can alleviate burdens that impede individuals from finishing courses (Carter & Polevychok, 2004).

Support networks that focus not only on the individual learner, but on building community capacity and relationships based on trust have shown more success (Atlantic Canada Opportunities, 2003). Finally, new forms of support that are increasingly used include job coaches to help build confidence, workplace mentors, support from elders both in the community and on the job site, as well as progressive training that uses a step-wise flexible approach (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2015).

Focus on Essential Skills

Recognition of experiences, attitudes, and skills enables potential employees to enter skills-training programs or the workforce more readily without needing unnecessary and irrelevant credentials (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a). Essential skills training focuses on key skills necessary for success on the job. Furthermore, skills assessment is equally important and is evolving from focusing on credentials, to assessing only those skills necessary in the workforce. This not only increases the labour pool, but can vastly expedite the hiring processes. An example of this is the approach used in the Process Operator in Training (POinT) Program between Manitoba Jobs and the Economy, northern communities, industry and education stakeholders to prepare people for employment at Vale, Thompson. Workplace Education Manitoba assesses appli-

cants and places them into one of four categories, which correspond to different levels of skills training needed to secure employment.

Innovative Programming

Two general best practices emerged as a way to overcome inadequate programming: those focused on and delivered in the community, and programs that are culturally relevant. We briefly present both in turn.

Delivery of Community-based Programming

Equally important to holistic support and a focus on essential skills, is the delivery of culturally relevant programs within communities (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a). While this approach is more expensive up front, it is likely more cost effective and efficient over the long term given greater success. Factors that weigh heavily in the success of such programming almost always include community delivery, use of access programs, and are developed using partnerships with communities (R.A. Malatest & Associates, 2002).

It is critically important to note the importance of community-based programming with respect to addressing socio-economic challenges. Offering programming within communities can significantly reduce complexities associated with travel and off-reserve housing, family responsibilities, childcare, and emotional issues arising from being away from home. Providing additional support and flexibility in programs further promotes the success of community programs and can serve to establish long-term trusting relationships with stakeholders (Holmes, 2006; Hargreaves, 2013).

Some examples include the mobile training centres used by Cambrian College in Northern Ontario, which brings training to remote Aboriginal communities. Cameco, in Northern Saskatchewan, has full-time workplace educators at two of their mine-sites who work in partnership with Northlands College to provide GED and grade 12 upgrading and skills training to employees (McColeman, 2014). Community-based Adult Educators at Nunavut Arctic College undertake community needs assessments to determine what programs the community wants and the kinds of employment opportunities that exist or are on the horizon. Where training cannot be delivered in the community, engaging the community in the design, bringing elders to the training site, and including traditional country foods can provide additional support and success for learners.

Culturally Appropriate Curricula and Methods

Programs that have been developed using community engagement, that provide an Aboriginal voice and culturally relevant curriculum, Aboriginal teachers and/or intercultural training for faculty, serve to better promote retention in post-secondary educational programs (Abele & Delic, 2014) as well as skills-training and community-based programming. Furthermore, respect for how Aboriginal people learn is essential for success and should include hands-on and practical approaches.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (2005) provides an inclusive assessment of the importance of culturally relevant programming that calls for awareness of Aboriginal culture, providing safe learning environments and to focus on community needs for example. Culturally appropriate curricula are as important to learning as cultur-

ally appropriate methods. Individuals learn in many different ways — by reading, writing, listing and doing for example. Aboriginal people have a strong oral tradition and learn better through hands-on exercises (Taylor, 2015). Ball (2004) has written extensively on the "generative curriculum model" as a way to use indigenous knowledge and methods in teaching and learning with a focus on the use of community learners to foster community development.

The Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning in the Northwest Territories, for example, uses mixed methods to enhance students' success and has reported higher success rates. Training for essential skills has been combined with traditional knowledge and activities, and academic learning. Students are required to complete a land-based field school where they learn hands-on about their environment using traditional practices such as fishing, hunting, and energy production. While essential skills such as teamwork, oral communication and problems solving are directly related to these traditional practices.

Innovative Systems

Systemic problems require holistic and broad solutions. Our findings suggested that persistent failures of the system were a result of the lack of collaboration and the inability of stakeholders to integrate solutions over time with a view to bridging the gap between training and gainful employment. We focus on two general best practices that emerged from our interviews.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Long-term Partnerships

Both the literature and interviews with stakeholders pointed to collaboration as being essential for learner success. Establishing partnerships with business and across all governments in skills training helps to address geographic and demographic realities and build flexibility into programming (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). Furthermore, best practices in terms of partnerships include: good governance structures, building strong relationships, and collaboration (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013). Funding should also be structured to provide incentives to work collaboratively rather than to induce competition and duplication of services (Hodgkins, 2015).

Collaboration with employers was deemed highly important to ensure that learners who successfully completed skills training and other academic programs were able to find jobs (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2013). One of the key barriers to success was the lack of job opportunities after completion. Many programs worked directly with industry (e.g., mining) and trained for specific positions for which there were openings (e.g., Vale in Thompson, MB, and the Mine Training Society in Yellowknife, NT).

Successful collaboration brings all parties together to not only share funding, but to consult with communities on their needs and desires; to develop relevant programming from cultural, academic, and employment aspects; to deliver programming and to identify necessary support systems to assist learners, their families and communities. Almost all academic, government and regional sources and stakeholders discussed the need for continued and enhanced collaboration. Additionally, there is a need to balance economic outcomes with development opportunities (Brunnen, 2003b; Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2004b).

Systemic Changes and Integration

Broad themes on a global scale have been identified as fostering success for skills training including a commitment to community, integration of functions, sustained leadership, Elder participation, use of local language, attention to how people learn, traditional practices and participatory research (R.A. Malatest & Associates, 2004). While some changes are occurring on an ad hoc basis, there remains much to do to improve outcomes across the broader spectrum. Policies to increase Aboriginal employment levels should include increasing education and training opportunities for Aboriginal people, in conjunction with creating positive incentives to become more independent (Brunnen, 2003b). To accomplish this, all stakeholders must work together to harmonize funding, development and delivery, and support systems at all levels. In spite of successes, there remain economic realities related to the boom/bust cycle of resource-based economies. Cyclical changes to industry often leave newly-trained individuals during periods of cutbacks or layoffs. Similarly, labour mobility means that apprentices cannot meet program requirements when journeymen leave the North to seek employment elsewhere (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). Having employers at the table can alleviate these challenges in conjunction with demand-driven skills training programs. In smaller communities these challenges are particularly pervasive given the lack of an economic base.

Taking a longer-term view to funding and delivery will ensure that programs are not short-lived and provide sufficient time to evaluate outcomes (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2004b, 2009; Employment and Social Development Canada, 2014). Government funding cycles of two–three years are not conducive to creating meaningful outcomes that often require longer time horizons. Brunnen (2003b) further supports this view by calling for a more holistic approach that relies on transparent communication and dissemination of information, continued reinforcement of the values of education, consideration of social conditions, and a longer-term view that includes patience tolerance and understanding.

Research and practice is showing that success to post-secondary training, and entry into the workforce requires early intervention (beginning in childhood), and ongoing transitions/bridging mechanisms that include holistic support (Holmes, 2006). This was widely recognized within communities. There is a large literature (beyond the scope of this research) on child welfare and well-being and its importance to individuals in later life. Children that grow up in unhealthy environments are less likely to finish school, or to have the essential and life skills needed to further education thus limiting employment opportunities. Recognizing this link, and more importantly, developing programming that targets children and young adults can serve to improve wellbeing by reducing challenges or eliminating barriers before they are created.

The Skills4Success in the Northwest Territories program embodies this thinking and is an example of collaboration that transcends governments and departments. It is one of the most comprehensive approaches we reviewed. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment is leading this initiative, which so far has included: engagement sessions in five regions, an online survey, a series of reports based on the engagement sessions (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015a), a labour market forecast and needs assessment prepared by the Conference Board of Canada, and a recently released 10-year Strategic Framework (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2015c). The next steps include developing action plans in partnership with other levels government, industry and education and training organizations as well as

developing a system for monitoring and evaluation (Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment, 2013, 2015a, 2015b).

DISCUSSION

While little critical academic literature exists on Aboriginal skills training and workforce development, the growing body of government and non-government-authored reports and studies, in conjunction with stakeholder interviews revealed a number of persistent barriers and challenges to skills training and workforce development. More importantly, many practices have proven to be successful, particularly when combined and used over time. The barriers and best practices identified in this research are largely consistent across all jurisdictions and widely known. Our findings suggest that the same challenges and best practices have existed since the 1990s.

Change has been slow because of weak collaboration, systemic issues regarding policy and funding, and the failure to take a holistic approach to addressing challenges and solving problems especially with regard to Aboriginal education. Research has shown that barriers to education and labour market development begin to arise in early childhood and have cumulative effects throughout adolescence and into adulthood. To successfully prepare adults for the workforce, changes are required in early childhood education to stimulate learning and the desire to learn by crafting culturally relevant programming and delivery methods, and by providing quality education in communities.

As the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (2013: 16) argued: "training programs that come and go may be politically expedient but do not meet the Aboriginal peoples' and employers' needs." One of the most important findings from this research is that successful skills training and employment outcomes require a holistic approach that fully supports the learner, their families and their communities. This requires a long-term commitment rather than the current suite of short-term, project-based approaches.

We heard repeatedly that all systems required to deliver successful skills training are out of sync: programs are short-term, funding is temporary, policies are misaligned with outcomes, and not always do key stakeholders participate. Educational policy is directly related to health and wellness, health and wellness influences the ability and desire to learn, skills acquired through educational opportunities are meaningless without employment and economic development. All pieces of the puzzle must be addressed, collectively and in meaningful partnerships if change is to occur.

REFERENCES

Abele, Frances, & Delic, Senada. (2014, January). *Knowledge Synthesis Report: Aboriginal Youth Employment in Northern Canada.* Carleton Centre for Community Innovation, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.

Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2005). *Meeting the Needs of Aboriginal Learners: An overview of Current Programs and Services, Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons Learned*. Final Report. Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2010). *Colleges Serving Aboriginal Learners and Communities. 2010 Environmental Scan: Programs, Services, Partnerships, Challenges and Lessons Learned.* Ottawa, ON: Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. (2003). *Aboriginal Economic Development in Atlantic Canada, Lessons Learned and Best Practices: Understanding Conditions for Successful Eco-*

nomic Development in Aboriginal Communities. Moncton: Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Ball, J. (2004). "As if Indigenous knowledge and communities mattered: Transformative education in First Nations communities in Canada". *The American Indian Quarterly*, 28(3): 454–479.

Bruce, D., Marlin, A., & Raham. H. (2012). *Literature Review on Factors Affecting the Transition of Aboriginal Youth from School to Work*. Toronto, ON: Council of Ministers of Education, Canada.

Brunnen, B., (2003a). *Encouraging Success: Ensuring Aboriginal Youth Stay in School*. Building the New West Project Report #22, Calgary, AB: Canada West Foundation.

Brunnen, B. (2003b). *Achieving Potential Towards Improved Labour Market Outcomes for Aboriginal People*. Building the New West Project Report #19. Calgary, AB: Canada West Foundation.

Brunnen, B. (2004). *Working Towards Parity: Recommendations of the Aboriginal Human Capital Strategies Initiative*. Building the New West Project Report #24. Calgary, AB: Canada West Foundation.

Calver, M. (2015). "Closing the Aboriginal Education Gap in Canada: The Impact on Employment, GDP, and Labour Productivity". *International Productivity Monitor*, 28: 27–46.

Canadian Apprenticeship Forum. (2004). *Accessing and Completing Apprenticeship Training in Canada: Perceptions of Barriers Faced by Aboriginal People*. A consultation report for discussion. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Apprenticeship Forum.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce. (2013). *Opportunity Found: Improving the Participation of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada's Workforce*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Canadian Labour Business Centre. (2005). *A Study of Aboriginal Participation in the Construction Industry*. Prepared for Construction Sector Council and Aboriginal Human Resource Development Council of Canada. Available online: http://www.buildforce.ca/en/system/files/products/Aboriginal_Participation_report_0.pdf

Carter, Tom, & Polevychok, Chesya. (2004). *Literature Review on Issues and Needs of Aboriginal People, to Support work on "Scoping Research on Issues for Municipal Governments and Aboriginal People Living Within Their Boundaries* Report prepared for Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Comfort, Derrick, DeJong, Michael, & Kozij, John. (2005). *A Portrait of Labour Market Outcomes of Aboriginal Canadians*. Ottawa: HRSDC, Aboriginal Affairs Directorate.

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2013). *Summative Evaluation of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program*. Final Report. Prepared by the Evaluation Directorate Strategic Policy and Research Branch. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada.

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2014). *Audit of the Implementation of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy*. SP-1075-08-14. Prepared by Internal Audit Services Branch (IASB). Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/audits/2014-asets.html

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2015). *Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy*. Online. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/indigenous/asets.html (Accessed September 5, 2017).

Fang, T., & Gunderson, M. (2015). "Vulnerable groups in Canada and labour market exclusion". *International Journal of Manpower*, 36(6): 824–847. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJM-02-2014-0052.

Frenette, Marc. (2004). "Access to College and University: Does Distance to School Matter?" *Canadian Public Policy*, 30(4): 427–443.

Gibb, T., & Walker, Judith. (2011). "Educating for a High Skills Society? The Landscape of Federal Employment, Training and Lifelong Learning Policy in Canada". *Journal of Education Policy*, 26(3): 381–398. doi: 10.1080/02680939.2010.520744

Government of Saskatchewan. (2007). *Final Report and Recommendations of the Commission on Improving Work Opportunities for Saskatchewan Residents*. Regina: Saskatchewan Ministry of Labour.

Greenwood, M. (2003). "Integration of Program and services for First Nations Communities: Thoughts for Consideration?" *Native Social Work Journal*, 4(Dec.): 9–29.

Hodgkins, A.P. (2015). "The Problem with Numbers: An Examination of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Programme". *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 67(3), 257–273.

Holmes, D. (2006). *Redressing the Balance: Canadian University Programs in Support of Aboriginal Students*. Ottawa, ON: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (2000). "Youth in Transition Survey: Project Overview". Technical Paper prepared by the Applied Research Branch, HRSDC.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (2004a). *Audit of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements (AHRDAs)*. Prepared by Internal Audit Services.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. (2004b). *Review of Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements — Synthesis of Findings*. Final Report prepared by Program Evaluation, Strategic Policy and Planning, HRSDC.

Human Resources and Social Development Canada. (2009). *Formative Evaluation of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreements*. Final Report prepared by Evaluation Directorate, Strategic Policy and Research Branch, HRSDC.

Janosz, M., Bisset, S.L., Pagani, L.S., & Levin, B. (2011). "Educational Systems and School Dropout in Canada" in S. Lamb et al. (Eds.), *School Dropout and Completion: International Comparative Studies in Theory and Policy* (pp. 295–320). Netherlands: Springer.

Kapsalis, Costa. (2006). *Occupational and Skill Parity of Aboriginal Canadians*. Report prepared for HRSDC, Aboriginal Affairs Directorate. Available at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.606.4158&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Luffman, J., & Sussman, D. (2007). "The Aboriginal Labour Force in Western Canada". Statistics Canada *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, 8(1): 13–27.

Mackay, L.D., & Mcintosh, K. (2012). "Effects of Explicit and Non-explicit Versions of An Early Intervention Program Incorporating Indigenous Culture into Kindergarten Literacy Instruction". *Multicultural Learning and Teaching*, 7(2).

McColeman, Phil. (2014). *Opportunities for Aboriginal Persons in the Workforce*. Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. 41st Parliament, Second Session. Ottawa, ON: Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

McFarlane, C. (2012). *The Teacher's Role in Improving Urban Indigenous Student Graduation Rates*. Unpublished Masters of Educational Technology Program, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment. (2015a). Labour Market Information. Discussion Paper (1 of 4) — Skills 4 Success Initiative. Available at: https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/advanced-education/skills-4-success-initiative

Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment. (2015b). Recruitment and Retention. Discussion Paper (4 of 4) — Skills 4 Success Initiative. Available at: https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/advanced-education/skills-4-success-initiative

Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment. (2015c). Skills 4 Success 10-Year Strategic Framework. Available at: https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/advanced-education/skills-4-success-initiative

Preston, J.P., Cottrell, M., Pelletier, T.R., & Pearce, J.V. (2012). "Aboriginal Early Childhood Education in Canada: Issues of Context". *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(1): 3–18.

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (2002). *Best Practices in Increasing Aboriginal Postsecondary Enrolment Rates*. Report prepared for The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC).

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (2004). *Aboriginal Peoples and Post Secondary Education: What Educators have Learned*. Montreal, QC: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.

Riley, Tasha, & Ungerleider, Charles. (2012). "Self-fulfilling Prophecy: How Teachers' Attributions, Expectations, and Stereotypes Influence the Learning Opportunities Afforded Aboriginal Students". *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 35(2): 303–333.

Simon, B. (2013, December). *Skills Development in Canada: So Much Noise, So Little Action*. A report commissioned by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives for the Taking Action for Canada: Jobs and Skills for the 21st Century initiative. Available online: http://www.ceocouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Bernard-Simon-December-2013.pdf (Accessed September 5, 2017).

Statistics Canada. (2011). *NHS Profile 2011*. Catalogue no. 99-004-XWE

Taylor, A. (2015). "Aboriginal Student Voice on School Success". MA Thesis, University of Calgary. Available at: http://hdl.handle.net/11023/2213

Tuck, E., McKenzie, M., & McCoy, K. (2014). "Land Education: Indigenous, Post-colonial, and Decolonizing Perspectives on Place and Environmental Education Research". *Environmental Education Research*, 20(1): 1–23.

Turner, A., & Thompson. A. (2015). *School Mobility and Educational Outcomes of Off-reserve First Nations Students*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

In Defence of Indigenous Participation in Capitalism

How Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Demands Rights and Resources from the Liberal Democratic Settler-State while also Challenging the Imposition of Colonial Rule

L. Javed Sommers
MA, CPA, CMA

ABSTRACT

Much Indigenous studies scholarship asserts that Indigenous peoples must reject capitalism. On the other hand, many (scholars and non-scholars alike) assume that the success of Indigenous communities depends on their willingness to uncritically embrace capitalism. Utilizing Kevin Bruyneel's *The Third Space of Sovereignty,* this article argues that First Nations can both demand "rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state" *and* challenge "the imposition of colonial rule." In other words, First Nations can simultaneously participate in capitalism and further their sovereignty, and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation provides an example of how this might be done.

Some 'positionality' comments are in order: I am a settler, born and raised in Canada; I am a designated accountant working for Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada; besides accounting, my academic background includes two religious studies programs (Bachelor of Arts, Taylor University College; Master of Arts, McGill University) both of which focused heavily on the role of worldviews in Ancient Near Eastern society and extant texts, particularly Hebrew biblical literature. Now, I am a part-time Master of Arts student at the Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta. My exposure to First Nations in Alberta through my work, my understanding of worldview through my prior academic experience, and my economic awareness as an accountant, have made me interested in exploring how worldviews impact economic relationships between First Nations and settler entities (e.g., corporations, governments). I am convinced that consciously thinking about worldviews while negotiating/developing economic relationships can result in relationships that are of greater benefit to both parties. Ultimately, I see economic relationships negotiated and developed in this way as an opportunity to further Indigenous sovereignty.

INTRODUCTION

This article stems from a graduate term paper I wrote in late 2015 grappling with the following question: can First Nations both participate in capitalism and assert their sovereignty in a way that is not entirely inconsistent with their values and worldviews? I was posing this question while ensconced within the nearly ivied walls of Pembina Hall (one of the University of Alberta's original buildings) as a question of academic interest, but in fact the question also has enormous real world implications.

There is considerable Indigenous studies scholarship that is quite forceful in its assertion that capitalism and Indigenous worldviews and Indigenous sovereignty are incompatible. In the face of this, my contention in this article is not that capitalism is always consistent with all Indigenous worldviews, or that any Indigenous people should wholeheartedly embrace capitalism uncritically. Rather, I make the more-nuanced argument that given the realities facing Indigenous peoples within Canada, First Nations can participate in capitalism in a way that reflects their worldviews and furthers their sovereignty.

To make this argument, I apply Kevin Bruyneel's (2007) work on the "third space of sovereignty" to the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) in northern Alberta. Bruyneel's book discusses Indigenous peoples (mainly in the United States) as residing in an awkward, ill-defined "third space," neither completely foreign, nor exactly domestic. He refuses the binary of seeing Indigenous people as "either inside or outside" the temporal and spatial boundaries of U.S. politics, and instead focuses on how Indigenous peoples have worked and continue to work "on and across these boundaries, drawing on and exposing their contingency to gain the fullest possible expression of political identity, agency, and autonomy" (Bruyneel, 2007, p. 6). In other words, Indigenous people engaging in "postcolonial resistance" work "against the system as a whole" *and* work "within the system" (Bruyneel, 2007, pp. 20–21). This is what I contend ACFN does well.

ACFN is an ideal community to study through Bruyneel's lens, because ACFN's engagement with wider Canadian society stands out among First Nations in Alberta as exceptionally prominent and savvy, providing ample sources for consideration. Moreover, ACFN is relatively unique in Alberta as a First Nation that is both:

(a) highly integrated in the wider, capitalist economy, at least in part due to its proximity to resource extraction industry, which positions it to benefit significantly from employment and business opportunities; and
(b) assertively resistant to colonialism, motivated to some extent by the devastating environmental impacts resource extraction activity has had on its territory.

This combination of capitalist integration and colonial resistance has resulted in ACFN becoming, to borrow words from Bruyneel, an example of a "political actor" working "across ... spatial and temporal boundaries, demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule on their lives" (2007, p. xvii).

This article will provide the following: a discussion of the terms sovereignty, colonialism, and participation in capitalism; a review of some of the Indigenous scholarship that rejects capitalism as a viable system for Indigenous peoples in Canada to participate in; a brief overview of the ACFN community; an examination of how ACFN demands "rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state while also challenging the imposition of colonial rule;" and a concluding argument regarding how capitalism can be adapted to

Indigenous worldviews, and how Indigenous worldviews may need to adapt and compromise in the face of capitalism.

SOVEREIGNTY, COLONIALISM, CAPITALISM

In order to ground my contention that participation in capitalism can further First Nations sovereignty and serve an agenda of challenging colonialism, I want to briefly discuss the terms "sovereignty" and "colonialism" in the context of this paper, as well as provide some thoughts on what I mean by "participation in capitalism."

Bruyneel references Robert Yazzie's work when he discusses sovereignty, and, in terms of what First Nations are currently facing, I find Yazzie's simple definition of colonialism also helpful:

> Colonialism is a situation in which ... Ottawa ... make[s] decisions that affect the lives of Indigenous peoples without effectively involving them or reaching consensus with them. Postcolonialism will not arrive for Indigenous peoples until they are able to make their own decisions. (2000, p. 46)

Of course, "Ottawa" could also be Alberta's capital, Edmonton, or the city where the major energy companies active in Alberta are headquartered, Calgary, and so on. The only other alteration I would make to Yazzie's statement is that it is not only Indigenous people's "lives" that the colonial powers' decisions affect, but also their land, a crucial point for most Indigenous peoples, and especially the community of ACFN. Building from Yazzie, Bruyneel defines sovereignty as: "the ability of a group of people to make decisions and control their own lives in relation to the space where they reside and/or that they envision as their own" (2007, p. 23), or, in essence, the opposite of colonialism. These definitions are simple, but I consider them both adequate and useful in the context of this article.

Capitalism is defined by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* as follows:

> an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market

Nearly every national economy in the world is capitalist to one extent or another and capitalism is a key feature of liberal democracies, Canada, of course, included. In my mind, capitalism is an inescapable global reality, even as it faces considerable criticism from various and varied ideological corners. The important point I want to make about participation in capitalism is that I do not see it as an "either/or" proposition. In fact, capitalism's most ardent defenders would probably argue that "pure" capitalism is not practised anywhere, so in reality all capitalist systems are "more" or "less" capitalist, and a community's participation in capitalism can likewise be modified or tempered.

The fact that capitalism is globally prevalent and firmly established in Canada, and the point that the extent to which a community participates in capitalism can be seen along a continuum, rather than "either/or," are important for setting up my argument that outright rejecting participation in capitalism by First Nations may be a hasty, ill-thought through move.

REJECTIONS OF CAPITALISM

Rejection of capitalism among Indigenous academics appears to be widespread,[1] but a full literature review is clearly impossible in an article of this size; instead I will limit myself to three examples that I feel are adequately representative of Indigenous scholarship in Canada that calls on Indigenous people to reject capitalism: Howard Adams, D'Arcy Vermette, and Glen Coulthard.

Howard Adams was a Metis intellectual and political activist who taught education and Native American Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and University of California (Laliberte, n.d.). In *Prison of Grass* Adams argued that "oppression of the native people is so deeply rooted in the capitalist system that it cannot be completely eliminated without eliminating capitalism itself" (1989, pp. 176–177).

D'Arcy Vermette is a Metis lawyer and professor of Native Studies at the University of Alberta, and formerly the Director of the Native Studies Programme at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. In a short article Vermette states:

> Ideology is important because our actions depend both upon how we view our place in the world and how others view our place in the world. And, in a world where equality continues to be limited to sameness, Aboriginal peoples will be victims of colonialist ideologies ... Once one realizes that "economic equality" operates largely on the presumption that Aboriginal peoples are ... marauding capitalists (and the corresponding realization that Aboriginal cultures are not capitalist cultures) the idea of equality is quickly shattered. Any initiatives that reach out to Aboriginal peoples in this way do so at the expense of Aboriginal ways of life. To pretend that Aboriginal peoples "make the choice" to crossover to capitalism is perhaps one of the more common self-serving lines of rhetoric employed through capitalist ideology. When your own ways of life are actively suffocated, what "choice" is to be made? (2012, p. 18)

Finally, Glen Coulthard, professor in the First Nations Studies program at the University of British Columbia, offers "five theses on Indigenous resurgence and decolonization" (2014, p. 165) in his book *Red Skin, White Masks*. His second thesis is "Capitalism, No More!" (2014, p. 170) and his anti-capitalist words are perhaps the most blunt of all: "For Indigenous peoples to live, capitalism must die" (2014, p. 173).

The claims of these three scholars are bold, and clear. They rightfully recognize the connection between settler colonialism (at least how it has played out in Canada) and capitalism. Moreover, they effectively argue that capitalism's values have not traditionally been those of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and that there are considerable inconsistencies between capitalism and Indigenous peoples' traditional economies and way of life. These points are difficult to argue with. Of course, other arguments could be added to these Indigenous ones: income inequality, climate change, and corporate fraud are just three serious issues that have been blamed on capitalism the world over. These criticisms seem to have grown in intensity in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, but there have always been and likely always will be critics of capitalism, including those that call for its rejection and replacement. The fact is that most people can find something to criticize about the way capitalism operates in our world, whether they are Indigenous or otherwise.

---

[1] Interestingly, my sense is that Indigenous studies scholarship seems to either take it for granted that Indigenous peoples should either participate in capitalism or else reject it forcefully, ignoring the possibility of middle ground.

Despite the thrust of my article, I am in fact very sympathetic with critiques of capitalism, particularly those that are sensitive to the environmental and social consequences it has had on our world and societies. When I consider the capitalism/colonialism alliance, I am all the more wary of taking a position "defending" participation in a system that frankly has so much "evil" associated with it.

Ultimately, though, I do not believe rejecting capitalism is a realistic choice for all, or even most, or perhaps any, Indigenous peoples in Canada. It is so deeply entrenched globally and in Canada that I think First Nations have to be open to participating in capitalism, but in a way that furthers their sovereignty. Clearly, participation in capitalism too often results in *reduced* Indigenous sovereignty, and is frequently yet another form of colonization/assimilation (Castro-Rea and Altamirano-Jiménez, 2008). Too often it is true that "Indigenous peoples ... face an excruciating dilemma: choose between self-determination and market-oriented development and always risk ending up with neither" (Castro-Rea and Altamirano-Jiménez, 2008, p. 246). I do not think, however, that this always has to be the case, as I believe the example of ACFN demonstrates.

ATHABASCA CHIPEWYAN FIRST NATION

Prior to examining how ACFN participates in capitalism, a bit of an introduction to the community is in order.[2] ACFN, a Chipewyan/Dene community of approximately 1,200 people, is a signatory of Treaty 8 and has taken reserves around Lake Athabasca and the northern portion of the Athabasca River and Delta. In addition to the ACFN reserves, the region is also home to Mikisew Cree First Nation, the hamlet of Fort Chipewyan, and Wood Buffalo National Park. Almost all of the region's permanent residents are Indigenous.

Only about one third of ACFN's membership lives on the ACFN reserves or in Fort Chipewyan, with many others living in or around Fort McMurray and Fort Mackay, the epicentre of Canada's oil sands activity. These communities are roughly 200–300 kilometres south, or upstream, along the Athabasca River from Lake Athabasca, which means ACFN is downstream from oil sands activity. Despite its geographic proximity to the oil sands and Fort McMurray and Fort Mackay, ACFN is a fly- or boat-in community during the summer, and only accessible by road in the winter once the river freezes and an ice road can be established. Although geographically isolated, ACFN stands out among First Nations in Alberta as especially engaged and influential, including economically. ACFN members enjoy a high employment rate compared to other First Nations. Much of this employment is in the oil sands industry, either directly or indirectly, including community members who live in Fort Chipewyan and commute to work by air.

[2] Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section is derived from the author's personal knowledge and the ACFN website, www.acfn.com. For a similar but more thorough review of Fort Chipewayn and its First Nations communities, particularly Mikisew Cree First Nation, see Gabrielle Slowey, 2008, pp. 1–5.

ACFN DEMANDS "RESOURCES FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC SETTLER-STATE"

Most significantly for the purposes of this article, ACFN is the owner of Acden, a Fort McMurray-based oil sands industry support services corporation. Acden employs over 3,000 people, and holds 18 subsidiary companies, which are involved in various support services, including: aviation, facilities management, manufacturing, and waste management and recycling. Two of Acden's major customers are the oil sands giants Suncor and Syncrude. As a private company, Acden's financial information is not publicly available, but based on its rapid growth and other indicators, it is evident that Acden is highly successful, obviously providing significant employment opportunities to ACFN members and others, and generating significant income for ACFN.

Looking through the lens of Bruyneel's work, I see Acden as ACFN's way of "demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state." By participating in capitalism, ACFN and its members are benefiting from the Canadian economic system in ways many Canadians do. This does not mean, however, that ACFN's participation in capitalism is not tempered by its values and worldview. Two examples of how Acden has incorporated ACFN's values, include the fact that its headquarters is a building "33.5% more energy efficient" than a standard building, and its "Better Earth Program," which is motivated by "the environmental stewardship efforts of our ownership, the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation" (Acden, n.d.). Ultimately, though, Acden probably has more in common with other capitalist entities than it does with traditional Chipewyan/Dene ways of life.

ACFN "CHALLENGES THE IMPOSITION OF COLONIAL RULE"

To complete Bruyneel's observation, ACFN manages to "challenge the imposition of colonial rule" in significant ways, only two of which will be discussed here. First, ACFN is one of only a small percentage of First Nations in Canada which refuses to sign a funding agreement with the federal government. Funding agreements are the mechanism through which First Nations receive federal government dollars for services such as education, capital projects, infrastructure maintenance, social programs, and so on. In some cases, the funding that flows from these agreements represents 100% of a First Nation's revenue. The funding agreements do not, however, just contain the amount of money a First Nation will receive; they also include obligations on the First Nation to remain "compliant." Compliance involves heavy reporting burdens; meeting what are frequently very stringent conditions on how funding can be spent; and the requirement of submitting annual audited financial statements and schedules of remuneration of elected and unelected senior officials to the federal government, which are publicized in condensed form. ACFN Chief Allan Adam explained to CBC news in 2014: "We refuse to take funding from the federal government because of the laws and everything that comes with it" (Sterritt, 2014). By refusing to sign a funding agreement, ACFN is protecting its sovereignty and challenging the imposition of colonial rule, even as it gives up financial resources.

Second, in the face of significant environmental degradation of their territory (McLachlan, 2014), ACFN has been relentless in its fight against the oil sands industry. This fight is often conducted in partnership with other First Nations and other environmentally

conscious groups, but ACFN stands out as a leader. ACFN's fight is conducted on multiple fronts, which I will divide into two categories: "attention-grabbing" and "political/legal action."

In terms of fighting that falls into the attention-grabbing category, it only makes sense to start with ACFN's exceptionally savvy media engagement. Although their population is smaller than most First Nations in Alberta, their prominence in media coverage, often including quotes from Chief Adam or ACFN's communications representative, Eriel Deranger, is extraordinary. For example, a search for "Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation" on the website "Newspapers Canada" brought up 6,640 results, compared to 5,520 for ACFN's much larger neighbour, Mikisew Cree First Nation, and only 693, 773, and 860 for similarly sized Treaty 8 nations (Tallcree First Nation, Woodland Cree First Nation, and Beaver First Nation, respectively). "Eriel Deranger" alone brings up 2,870 hits, and "Allan Adam," 5,310. The vast majority (if not all of these articles) relate to ACFN's fight in defence of its land.

Far flashier than mere newspaper article mentions, however, is ACFN's partnership with celebrities. These include actor Leonardo DiCaprio, movie director Darren Aronofsky, actress Darryl Hannah (Dinshaw, 2015), and, most prominently, musician Neil Young, whose "Honour the Treaties" tour helped ACFN raise funds for its fight (Walker, 2014).

Perhaps even more indicative of ACFN's success raising awareness of its fight is an anecdote from the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network's (APTN) National News. On December 8, 2015, several young (seemingly ill-prepared and poorly informed) activists in Quebec, some 4,000 kilometres away from ACFN, chained themselves to existing Enbridge pipeline infrastructure in protest of Enbridge's Line 9 pipeline project, which was then going through the application process. An APTN reporter interviewed one of the activists, who spoke about being "in solidarity with Indigenous peoples;" he named only one community by name: ACFN.

In terms of fights that fall into the category of political/legal action, ACFN has kept its lawyers busy with challenges to, for example: Alberta's Aboriginal consultation system (*Vancouver Observer*, 2015); consultation by Shell regarding its Jackpine oil sands project (APTN National News, 2013); and the *First Nations Financial Transparency Act* (Morin, 2015). Examples of political action ACFN has taken includes: involvement with "Idle No More" (Pedwell, 2013); organized rallies and protests (Theobald, 2015); and participation in Alberta's Joint Oil Sands Monitoring (which ACFN pulled out of when the program lacked "meaningful input from [A]boriginals") (Canadian Press, 2014).

ACFN's success in its fight against environmental degradation of its territory has been mixed. Obviously, significant oil sands extraction activity continues, and the pace of environmental damage does not seem to have lessened. On the other hand, further development and expansion of the oil sands industry has slowed considerably. Certainly this is somewhat due to economic conditions which ACFN has had no control over, but it cannot be denied that ACFN's fight has had influence over things such as the pace of pipeline application approval, and even the (perhaps temporary) denial of at least one major pipeline project, the Keystone XL in 2015. Moreover, the uncertain economic environment ACFN has helped create in Alberta causes industry to move slower and more cautiously. In any case, regardless of the efficacy of their efforts, ACFN's fight in defence of the environment and their traditional lands is another way ACFN challenges the imposition of colonial rule and furthers its sovereignty.

IN DEFENCE OF INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION IN CAPITALISM

The preceding has demonstrated that ACFN manages to both participate in capitalism ("demanding rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state") and further its sovereignty ("challenging the imposition of colonial rule"). But I want to make an additional point: ACFN could not challenge the imposition of colonial rule in the two ways I have outlined if it was not also demanding rights and resources from liberal democratic settler-state. Or stated in obverse, ACFN's participation in capitalism is what enables it to further its sovereignty. I make this argument because refusing to sign a funding agreement with the federal government and fighting a media-savvy, resource-intensive campaign against environmental destruction require significant economic resources — resources the vast majority of First Nations in Canada lack. It is through Acden and generally high employment level of its members that affords ACFN the opportunity to reject federal money and fund environmental fights.

A final point I want to make is regarding the relationship between participation in capitalism and Indigenous worldviews. Despite the case of ACFN I have outlined above, I am not willing to suggest that First Nations can participate in capitalism in ways that are entirely consistent with their worldviews, as much as I wish this was the case. On the other hand, as I have noted previously, I do think the degree to which participation in capitalism involves embracing capitalist ideals can vary, and I have noted above just a couple of simple ways ACFN's participation in capitalism through Acden has been tempered by their values. I know many more examples of this type of tempered participation in capitalism by Indigenous (and other) peoples could be found worldwide.[3] In other words, I do not think that First Nations should capitulate to capitalism's worst characteristics or entirely abandon their values to embrace capitalistic ones. I strongly believe there is room to adapt participation in capitalism so that it can be done in ways closer to Indigenous worldviews.

But, ultimately, no matter how much capitalism can be tempered by Indigenous values, I recognize that Indigenous participation in capitalism will likely require a compromise of Indigenous worldviews. Which leads me to this question: how can I, someone sensitive to the significance of worldview, recommend that Indigenous peoples adapt their worldviews to those of the colonizer?

My answer has two components. First, because I strongly believe capitalism in Canada is inevitable, and that rejecting it is futile. Second, because I think it is reasonable to expect that worldviews adapt and compromise and evolve in the face of changing realities, whether they be colonial realities or otherwise. Very few people (if any) manage to go through life making choices entirely consistent with their worldviews, just as societies' worldviews change and adapt with time. This tragically has to be all the more true in the fight against colonialism; to quote Franz Fanon:

> The struggle [for] ... sovereignty ... itself in its development and in its internal progression sends culture along *different* paths and traces out *entirely new ones* for it. The struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former value and

[3] Coulthard himself talks about one interesting proposal by the Dene Nation and Metis Association of the NWT called *Public Government for the People of the North* which included an economic vision that was a bold attempt to balance capitalist and Indigenous principles (2014, pp. 73–75). The proposal was rejected by the federal government.

> shapes; this struggle ... cannot leave intact either the form or content of the people's culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of the colonizer but also the disappearance of the colonized man. (1963, pp. 245–246)

For me, then, Indigenous participation in capitalism should involve both an attempt to temper capitalism's most egregious conflicts with Indigenous values, even as it requires a compromising or adaptation of Indigenous worldviews.

CONCLUSION

This article has defended an assumption regarding First Nations participation in capitalism, by using Bruyneel's idea of Indigenous peoples working within a third space to both demand "rights and resources from the liberal democratic settler-state," and challenge "the imposition of colonial rule." While there are no doubt cases of First Nations refusing to participate in capitalism, and other cases of First Nations embracing capitalism wholeheartedly to the detriment of their values and worldviews, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation provides an example of how Indigenous participation in capitalism need not be inconsistent with furthered sovereignty, nor require complete abandonment of Indigenous values.

My contention is that participation in capitalism should be seen as a valid option for First Nations. Realistic alternatives to participation in capitalism are at best limited, and may be nonexistent. Rather, investment should be made in adapting capitalism to fit Indigenous values, even as Indigenous worldviews may need to adapt in the face of capitalist realities. In order to facilitate this process, settler entities looking to form economic relationships with First Nation should be sensitive to conflicts in worldview between settlers and Indigenous peoples, including settler corporations and Indigenous shareholders, partners, employees, etc. Settler entities should be willing to adapt and negotiate with these tensions in mind. An economic relationship negotiated and developed with worldview differences in mind should result in a relationship that is better for all parties. Ultimately, First Nations participation in capitalism can result in sovereignty being furthered and colonialism being resisted in ways ACFN has only begun to demonstrate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Acden. (n.d.). Acden. Retrieved from http://www.acden.com

Adams, Howard. (1989). *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View*. Calgary: Fifth House Publishers.

APTN National News. (2013, April 11). Supreme Court loss pushes Athabasca Chipewyan FN towards Sovereignty Summer campaign. Retrieved from http://aptn.ca/news/2013/04/11/supreme-court-loss-pushes-athabasca-chipewyan-fn-toward-sovereignty-summer-campaign

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Launches Court Challenge to Alberta's Aboriginal Consultation Office. (2015, January 15). *Vancouver Observer*. Retrieved from http://www.vancouverobserver.com/news/athabasca-chipewyan-first-nation-launches-court-challenge-alberta-s-aboriginal-consultation

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. (n.d.). Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Retrieved from http://www.acfn.com

Bruyneel, Kevin. (2007). *The Third Space of Sovereignty: The Postcolonial Politics of US–Indigenous Relations*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Canadian Press. (2014, January 24). Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Pulls Out Of Joint Oilsands Monitoring Program. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/01/24/joint-oil-sands-monitoring-program-first-nation_n_4662405.html

Capitalism. (n.d.) In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary*. Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/capitalism

Castro-Rea, Juliàn, and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez. (2008). North American First Peoples: Self-Determination or Economic Development? In Yasmeen Abu Laban, Radha Jhappan, and François Rocher (Eds.), *Politics in North America: Redefining Continental Relations* (pp. 225–249). Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press.

Coulthard, Glen Sean. (2014). *Red Skins, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dinshaw, Fram. (2015, November 4). Allan Adam wins re-election as chief of Athabasca-Chipewyan First Nation. *National Observer*. Retrieved from http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/11/04/news/allan-adam-wins-re-election-chief-athabasca-chipewyan-first-nation

Fanon, Franz. (1963). *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press.

Laliberte, Ron. (n.d.). Adams, Howard (1921–2001). *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Retrieved from http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/adams_howard_1921-2001.html

McLachlan, Stephane M. (2014, July 7). *"Water is a Living Thing": Environmental and Health Implications of the Athabasca Oil Sands for the Mikisew Cree First Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation in Northern Alberta*. Phase Two Report. Retrieved from https://landuse.alberta.ca/Forms%20and%20Applications/RFR_ACFN%20Reply%20to%20Crown%20Submission%206%20-%20TabD11%20Report_2014-08_PUBLIC.pdf

Morin, Brandi. (2015, October 26). First Nations win Federal Court battle over transparency law. APTN. Retrieved from http://aptn.ca/news/2015/10/26/first-nations-win-federal-court-battle-over-transparency-law

"National News." (2015, December 8). Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

Newspapers Canada. (n.d.). Search articles from Canadian newspapers. Retrieved from http://www.newspaperscanada.ca/search-articles-canadian-newspapers

Pedwell, Terry. (2013, January 11). Protesting chief Theresa Spence to attend meeting with Governor General. CTV News. Retrieved from http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/protesting-chief-theresa-spence-to-attend-meeting-with-governor-general-1.1110144

Slowey, Gabrielle. (2008). *Navigating Neoliberalism: Self-Determination and the Mikisew Cree First Nation*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Sterritt, Angela. (2014, April 2). Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation makes the best of oil money. CBC News. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/athabasca-chipewyan-first-nation-makes-the-best-of-oil-money-1.2579126

Theobald, Claire. (2015, August 9). Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation chief cites poor environmental policies in the deaths of 30 great blue herons. *Edmonton Sun*. Retrieved from http://www.edmontonsun.com/2015/08/09/athabasca-chipewyan-first-nation-chief-allen-adam-cites-poor-environmental-policies-in-the-deaths-of-30-great-blue-herons

Vermette, D'Arcy. (2012). Inclusion is Killing Us. *Teaching Perspectives* (St. Thomas University), *17* (Fall): 18–19.

Walker, Connie. (2014, January 16). Neil Young tour: 5 facts about the First Nation he's singing for. CBC News. Retrieved from http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/neil-young-tour-5-facts-about-the-first-nation-he-s-singing-for-1.2497824

Yazzie, Robert. (2000). Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Colonialism. In Marie Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 39–50). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Indigenous Conceptions of Well-Being: Rejecting Poverty, Pursuing Mino-Bimaadiziwin

Jeffrey S. Denis
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

Gérard Duhaime
DÉPARTEMENT DE SOCIOLOGIE, UNIVERSITÉ LAVAL

David Newhouse
CHANIE WENJACK SCHOOL FOR INDIGENOUS STUDIES, TRENT UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

According to conventional metrics, such as the low-income cut-off and social assistance rates, Indigenous peoples in Canada have disproportionately high levels of poverty. But what does poverty mean from an Indigenous perspective? Drawing on data from the Poverty Action Research Project (PARP) — a five-year partnership between academic researchers, the Assembly of First Nations, and five First Nations communities in different regions of Canada seeking to reduce poverty and improve community health — this paper examines the relational and subjective aspects of poverty and well-being. Our analysis of PARP communities' discussions of poverty and actions to address it suggests that poverty is seen through the lens of what the Anishinaabek call *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*, which describes "living well" in a holistic, multidimensional, and community-centered sense. Interventions to address poverty therefore would be better framed as initiatives to enable the pursuit of a good life, as Indigenous people understand it, and must consider not only the economic impacts, but also the interrelated environmental, political, intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural dimensions.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research for the Poverty Action Research Project and the active partnership of the Assembly of First Nations and the five communities who partnered in the research.

> "Our community is very rich in different ways. Yes, we have challenges and I think we're not trying to hide the challenges. That's why I think it's important for people to come to our territory. Come and see the poor housing, come and see the poverty, come and see the challenges we face with violence. But [World Indigenous Nations Games] is a counter to that...."
>
> "This lifts up. We may be poor in some ways, but we're rich in other ways, and one of the ways we're rich is through our culture and ceremony."
>
> Treaty 6 Grand Chief Wilton Littlechild, 2017 (Quoted in Morin, 2017)

> "Yet no one whose opinion deserves a moment's consideration can doubt that most of the great positive evils of the world are in themselves removable, and will, if human affairs continue to improve, be in the end reduced within narrow limits. Poverty, in any sense implying suffering, may be completely extinguished by the wisdom of society, combined with the good sense and providence of individuals."
>
> John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism*, 1863

RICH IN OUR WAYS

Eabametoong (Ontario) and Opitciwan (Quebec) are two of the five First Nations communities in Canada that participated in the Poverty Action Research Project, or PARP. On one of our early trips to Eabametoong First Nation, a young man told us that although the community has struggled with low incomes, limited job opportunities, substance abuse, and mental health issues rooted in colonial trauma, "we are rich in our ways." As evidence, he pointed to the "beautiful land around us" that provides the resources necessary for survival and to the language and traditions that Elders worked hard to maintain throughout the residential school era. On our first trip to Opitciwan, an older man, standing at the door of the Band Council offices, asked us why we were in the community. After we told him, he said ironically: "You won't find anything of interest for you here; we are all rich!" We laughed, and so began a long conversation.

This paper focuses on Indigenous conceptions of poverty. It proposes a preliminary exploration of the question, laying out the groundwork in a way that hopefully can guide a more comprehensive investigation. The paper is organized as follows. First, we introduce the context in which the question emerged. Next, we present an analysis of the definitions of poverty and the approaches to studying it contained in the recent social science literature. The methods, sources, and limitations of the original research on which this paper is based are then laid out. We conclude with the results we have arrived at and the lessons that can be drawn from those results.

The Emergence of the Question

The Poverty Action Research Project, or PARP, was initially conceived at the request of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) by an expert advisory committee on the eradication of poverty. PARP is a pilot project whose results are intended to be used to guide future actions of the AFN on this issue. As part of its activities, the committee received a five-year research grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health (IAPH) in 2011. Five First Nations communities from different regions of Canada who were interested in working with the project team were selected from among all those that submitted applications. The five communities were: Sipekne'katik

(Indian Brook, Nova Scotia), Opitciwan (Quebec), Eabametoong First Nation (Fort Hope, Ontario), Misipawistik Cree (Grand Rapids, Manitoba) and T'it'q'et (Lillooet Indian Band, British Columbia). Each community was paired with a team of academic researchers with whom a collaborative research agreement was signed. At the national level, the project was directed by an executive committee comprised of university researchers and representatives of the Assembly of First Nations. The national executive committee met every month via telephone conference calls. The whole team, including delegations from the participating First Nations communities, came together once a year at a plenary meeting. At the local level, the project was directed by a community committee (or sometimes, at the community's request, the Chief and Council working with academic PARP team members) which was responsible for the work to be done, including the development and implementation of a strategic plan that aimed to create a solid economic base, alleviate poverty, and improve the health and well-being of community members. At the end of the PARP pilot project, an evaluation was to be carried out to advise the AFN on possible follow-up actions that would support the fight against poverty among all First Nations in Canada.

The work of the various community committees all began in more or less the same way: before agreeing on the detailed content of a plan to combat poverty, each committee sought to arrive at a shared understanding of the elements of its mandate. This raised several important and interrelated questions around the central question of What is poverty? The answers to this question would determine the orientation of all further action. It is these answers that we report on here, and that we want to analyze in relation to the knowledge available in the academic literature.

Knowledge and Poverty

Poverty is a complex social phenomenon that has proven difficult to define, measure, and address. A common-sense definition focuses on material deprivation seeing it primarily through the lens of economics and alleviated through interventions focused on improving access to incomes. While material deprivation is an important indicator of poverty, the condition is multi-dimensional and multi-causal as the academic literature demonstrates.

The Metrics Approach

Social science does not currently offer a universally accepted definition of poverty. Instead, there are several fragmentary, approximate definitions that are criticized more or less severely, necessarily provisional, and yet quite tenacious. Thus, most descriptive and evaluative studies have been based on such operational concepts as "low income" or the basic "market basket measure"[1] — indicators that allow one to normatively quantify one or another of the characteristics that are commonly associated with the condition of poverty. In truth, however, all such indicators are predicated on an implicit definition which considers poverty solely from an economic point of view.

This kind of quantitative definition fails to grasp the phenomenon in its entirety, much less in its essence. Numerous studies carried out in recent years have attempted to

[1] The market basket measure is a "measure of low income based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services" in a given region, including "food, clothing, transportation, shelter, and other expenses" (http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2013002/mbm-mpc-eng.htm).

examine other factors associated with the condition of poverty: multidimensional poverty, characterized by an accumulation of disadvantages; indices of deprivation or exclusion; etc. For example, many European models emphasize both material deprivation and social exclusion, a process whereby certain individuals or groups are prevented from participating fully in their society due to inadequate access to learning opportunities, discrimination, and other factors (Gelot, 2011; Lollivier, 2008; Iceland & Bauman, 2007; Myles & Picot, 2000).

The majority of these studies views these phenomena as complementing the usual indicators, resulting in the development of composite indices and correlation analyses, and leading to conclusions where significant statistical associations tend to advanced as explanations (Iceland, 2003; Fréchet, Gauvreau, et Poirier, 2011). These studies attempt to achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon by widening the spectrum of the variables examined in order to verify whether these can characterize the situations of economic poverty more or less robustly.

These complex statistical studies, together with the economic approach that they complement, make up the vast universe of the metrics of poverty. By continuing to study poverty using approximate indicators which, in spite of their acknowledged limitations, end up (by analogy) assuming the apparent reality of poverty itself, the metrics approach fails to capture the essence of the phenomenon that one is attempting to understand.

The Relational Approach

These statistical measures are nevertheless revealing. For one thing, they do describe features associated with a phenomenon that we are as yet unable to grasp in its entirety; and as long as that phenomenon is not reduced to these approximations, the measures are useful, for example, in identifying changes and orienting interventions. Moreover, they have utility in helping understand how poverty is constructed particularly when poverty is defined as a relational phenomenon (Messu, 2017).

The relational approach to poverty views it as a form of social bond. In particular, the assistance/dependence relationship is seen as a phenomenon forged by the interactions between institutions and actors, governed by ideologies, and grounded in a given time and place; poverty is a social construction that has a particular configuration and dynamic (Paugam, 2005; Simmel, 1908). This requires setting aside the prevailing view of poverty, including the definitions developed by aid agencies and the indicators used to describe poverty. A search for a definitive definition of poverty would be futile. First, because metric definitions reflect the social consensus of the time, i.e., judgments about the condition of the poor used to construct the assistance relationship; and second, because these consensuses change, following the evolution of the paradigms that determine how societies are governed (Messu, 2017).

The relational approach has shown itself to be very productive in its ability to shed light on facets of the phenomenon that remain neglected in most social scientific writings on the subject. Qualitative and longitudinal studies on food aid (Sabourin, 2017), health inequalities (McCall, 2017), and social dynamics (Anderson, 2017) all suggest that the relational approach has significant potential for achieving a better understanding of poverty. For example, qualitative and longitudinal studies on food aid (Sabourin, 2017) clearly demonstrate that people experiencing poverty construct full and meaningful social relationships based on sharing, and that these relationships are central elements of their material and symbolic life. Such studies, among others, show that a definition of poverty based on the

lack (of income, of consumption) does not tell everything about the phenomenon of poverty (Brunetaux et Terrolle, 2010; Narayan, 2009; Narayan, Pritchett, & Kapoor, 2009; Paugam, 2008, 2005; Valladares, 2006; Gonrad-Delcroix, 2003; Gaboriau et Terrolle, 2003).

The Emic Approach

When poverty is considered as (at least in part) a subjective phenomenon, or one based on the perceptions of the subject, it is no longer defined by a statistical measure compared to a norm, both of which are external to the subject. Rather, it is defined by the meaning that the subject attributes to their own condition, which they may or may not call poverty, regardless of the objective measures of their income or consumption, or the social category to which they belong by virtue of the rules governing the assistance relationship. In this emic perspective, material deprivation no longer defines an absolute condition, but a relative one whose meaning is constructed by the subject, rather than being (entirely) externally imposed. From this perspective, relative deprivation, i.e., the perception of a dissonance between what is valued and what can be achieved given the material means available, is sometimes more painful than the objective material conditions (Booth, Leach, & Tierney, 1999).

If the emic approach goes on to identify such perceptions, it can also lead to objective measures. Perhaps the most comprehensive framework for understanding poverty in this way comes from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, which seeks to highlight "dimensions of poverty that are of value to poor people" and takes as its starting point Amartya Sen's concept of development as a "process of expanding the freedoms that people value and have reason to value" (Alkire, 2007, p. 1):

> Although the most widely known measure of human development [the United Nations Human Development Index[2]] includes income, longevity, and education, many have argued that people's values, and consequently multidimensional poverty, extends beyond these domains. (p. 1)

According to Alkire (2007), the dimensions of poverty include not only income, education, and employment, but also social and psychological factors such as agency/empowerment, physical safety/security, dignity/respect, and subjective well-being. Studies of "well-being" often include a similarly extensive range of measures. The Social Progress Index, for instance, ranks countries according to 54 social and environmental indicators, including GDP per capita, ecosystem sustainability, access to health care, infrastructure, suicide rates, gender equality, attitudes toward immigrants and minorities, and more.[3]

If the measured variables within the emic approach seem to depart from the usual conceptions of economic poverty, could it be because they are closer to a global view of the phenomenon?

These three major approaches to poverty — one employing measures that are deemed objective, another that examines social relations, and a third grounded in the subjectivity of the subjects — are not all represented equally in the social science literature. And generally speaking, they are even less developed in their application to Indigenous conditions.

---

[2] Using 2014 data, Canada ranks 6th on the UN HDI, but Indigenous peoples in Canada would rank 63rd (Quesnel, 2015).

[3] For more details, see http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/

Indigenous Peoples and Poverty

Although there is no official economic poverty level in Canada, Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO) describes an income below which families are likely to spend at least 20 percentage points more than average on the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter.[4] By this measure, First Nations families are nearly three times more likely to be poor than non-Indigenous Canadian families, with the prevalence of "low income" after tax among persons aged 15 and over being 24.6% for First Nations, compared to 8.4% for non-Indigenous Canadians (AFN, 2009). The gap is even higher among children. Taking household composition and consumer prices into account, it has been estimated that the low-income rate for the Inuit living in the Inuit territories of Canada is 44%, which is about five times higher than for the country as a whole (Duhaime & Édouard, 2015).

The community well-being (CWB) index provides a somewhat broader community-level measure, combining indicators of income per capita, high school and university completion rates, housing quantity and quality, and unemployment and labour force participation rates. Although average CWB scores have increased over time, the average First Nations community still scored 20 points below the average non-Indigenous community in 2006 — the same gap that existed 25 years earlier (O'Sullivan, 2011). As of writing, more than 100 First Nations communities across Canada remain on boil water advisories.

Yet, these measures cannot fully capture the meaning and experiences of poverty for Indigenous peoples. What do we know about the relational and the subjective dimensions of poverty among Indigenous people?[5] How do Indigenous people understand and experience poverty? What dimensions do they prioritize when talking about poverty? How are these dimensions related?

To the best of our knowledge, Indigenous languages do not contain terms that directly translate to "poverty." Poverty is a foreign concept as well as a condition imposed on Indigenous peoples, precisely through the social relations created by colonization — a process that has included the dispossession of lands and resources, the destruction of economic practices by the imposition of a market economy, the usurpation of political authority by the Crown, and the perpetration of a cultural genocide by means of residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and other colonial practices.

Research that employs subjective approaches to understand the contemporary economic experience of Indigenous peoples still appears to be embryonic. The Indigenous terms used to define what is considered to be a good life could provide an approximation, a kind of inverse image that might serve as a starting point. For instance, the Anishinaabek concept of *mino-bimaadiziwin*, or "pursuit of the good life," means far more than material wealth. According to Melanie Benjamin, Chief of the Mille Lacs Band in Minnesota:

> ... the good life does not mean making money, buying things, or winning awards. Rather, it has to do with taking care of yourself, your family and your community ... showing love by performing acts of kindness ... having courage to be honest ... getting wisdom through years of listening to others and learning from mistakes ... being generous ... without expecting anything in return. It is living life as a kind, humble member of the community. (Benjamin, 2014, n.p.)

---

[4] In 2014, the LICO was said to be $30,792 (after tax) for a two-person household and $43,546 for a four-person household (http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/a05?lang=eng&id=2060091).

[5] Brazil's Multidimensional Poverty Index, for example, says the dimensions must come from the community.

In short, the good life is well-being in a holistic sense. And the flipside of this could serve, at least tentatively, as a way to conceptualize poverty based upon an Indigenous concept.

In the U.S. context, the American Indian Dream is not an individual dream of becoming a millionaire (Cornell, 1987). For Indigenous peoples, a crucial aspect of "success" is protecting Indigenous sovereignty, honouring treaties, and retaining decision-making control and environmental stewardship in one's homelands. In sociologist Stephen Cornell's words, Indigenous nations are "committed to improving the material standard of living of their peoples," but not at the expense of "group identity, political autonomy, and freedom of cultural choice" (Cornell, 1987, p. 63). From an Indigenous perspective, if attaining a (high-paying) job in the capitalist economy means losing other aspects of a meaningful life — one's sense of Indigenous identity, family and community ties, ties to the land, political autonomy, language, cultural practices, spirituality — that would simply be another (perhaps deeper) form of poverty. This example shows that, from an Indigenous perspective, poverty is conceived as a total phenomenon, within which social relations are decisive. This other form of poverty, the loss of the fundamental aspects of a meaningful life, is indeed a product of social relations.

Other Indigenous knowledge systems and languages around the world also contain rich, nuanced concepts of well-being or the "good life" that are holistic, multidimensional, and community-centered.

According to Xavier Albo, an Indigenous concept known as Sumak Kawsay (Quechua), or Suma Qamaña (Aymara) or *Living well* (Duhaime, 2017) was brought to the forefront of government policy in Bolivia and Ecuador at the turn of the 21st century.[6] According to this approach, social life should be based on the harmony between nature and people in their access to and enjoyment of material goods. It assigns pre-eminent value to community life, complementarity, and sharing. Living well is opposed to *Living better*, which values accumulation and competition to the detriment of respect for nature and human solidarity, and which privileges notions of progress and economic development over sustainability:

> Absolutely all the development programs implemented by governments, NGOs and the Church encourage us to seek a better life, insinuating that by transcending indigenous "poverty "we will gain access to the myriad "benefits of modern life" and development through "market integration." Living well is the opposite of capitalist development [for which] the most important thing is money and gain.... (David Choquehuanca quoted by Albo, 2011; 2012)

Living well is based on Aymara and Quechua cosmology, whose principal characteristics are widely shared by other Indigenous peoples. Its central idea consists in needing much less in order to be much more, the antithesis of capitalist development (Sarmiento Barletti, 2012; Bellier, 2009). Living well means well-being for everyone including the earth and its biodiversity and combining science and Indigenous knowledge to create sustainable communities that measure progress through a wider set of indicators, including respect for nature and equitable resources for all.

These representations can help us uncover aspects of an Indigenous conception of poverty; that at least is our working hypothesis. In this context, the importance of economic

[6] The subtle but important distinctions between the Quechua and Aymara terms (and other similar Indigenous concepts) are beyond the scope of this paper.

poverty, as indicated by the usual statistical measures, would therefore be relative. Poverty itself might be expressed in conditions that make "Living well" unattainable.

One challenge of using Indigenous conceptions to discuss and design interventions to relieve poverty is that of de-emphasizing the material aspects of poverty and romanticizing poverty. The Anishinaabek concept of Mino-Bimaadiziwin, like that of the Quechua concept of Sumak Kawsay, does not dismiss the economic or material aspects of life. A good life includes an adequate income necessary to meet one's needs, but the pursuit of wealth is not the central goal of life and is placed in context of other life and community goals. Albert Marshall, a Mi'kmaq Elder, has developed the idea of 'two-eyed seeing' as an ethical approach to knowledge that allows and indeed encourages the use of both western and Indigenous knowledges to understand such social phenomena.

SOURCES AND METHODS

In the discussions that took place in each of the PARP communities when local committees were being formed and when the strategic plans were being elaborated, it became clear that the term "poverty" did not have a single, unique meaning. On the contrary, its meaning was imprecise, was often misunderstood, and corresponded to several different realities. The First Nations community representatives testified to this at the annual national meetings, as we will see. In most communities, decisions about the orientation to be given to the PARP project were not based on an explicit definition of poverty, but on first-hand information about the challenges facing the community, the resources available to it (including the PARP project itself), and the opportunities that might arise. In certain communities, deliberate consideration was given to the nature of poverty as the strategic plan was being developed. We can also deduce certain dimensions of poverty from the content of the strategic plans and from the concrete actions that were carried out, since these implicitly contain a vision of the changes that are needed to improve community conditions. In other words, by identifying the problems to be tackled as well as what needs to be built, they provide a tacit definition of poverty.

The results presented here are based on data created over the course of the entire PARP project (2011–2017).[7] After pooling reviews of the literature that each of us initially carried out independently, we combined the pertinent excerpts from the notes we had gathered during our work with the community committees.

We also solicited the project participants, principally the members of community committees, in order to learn their views. Indeed, after many working meetings (annual national meetings, monthly meetings of the national executive, and meetings of the community committees), it became clear that the vagueness surrounding the concept of poverty constituted a recurrent and fundamental issue that had to be openly addressed. At the annual meetings, several discussions of this subject took place, and the 2015 meeting included a complete two-hour session devoted to it. Prior to that meeting, we had prepared a short set of questions that we submitted to the participants. They were invited to examine the questions in advance, so that they would be prepared to take part in the planned discussion. In addition,

[7] For a more detailed overview of the PARP research process and lessons learned regarding community-based research and community development with First Nations, see Dockstator et al. (2017).

the participants had agreed to distribute the questions to the members of their community committees and to send us any written responses they received.

The views reported here are drawn from this set of materials. We have compiled and analyzed them based on the minutes of the annual national meetings drafted by the National Project Coordinator, the answers sent to us *a posteriori* by the community committees, and the notes mentioned above. We also consulted documents that came from the community committees where the subject had been discussed, as well as the minutes of selected meetings and other thematic reports (PARP 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015).

We have attempted to account for this information by placing it into analytical categories. In particular, it appears that all the information can be grouped into four major overlapping and interdependent categories: the physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional dimensions of well-being, as identified in the *Medicine Circle*. Medicine Circle teachings use the medicine circle to present an Indigenous social theory and an Indigenous conception of wellness or wholeness (e.g., Brant Castellano, 2011). Social phenomena are analyzed using these four dimensions or categories. We have therefore chosen to present the information in this way. This choice and its possible implications will be discussed below.

Before turning to the results, it is important to note a few limitations. First, this analysis is not the result of research that was initially intended to answer the question that we have raised here. It emerged out of necessity as a kind of unforeseen but indispensable by-product of a process that had other goals. Nor is it based on a carefully developed research protocol. It grew out of observations made by different researchers in accordance with their own disciplinary and normative categories, and their accumulated baggage of knowledge and experience. All these pieces constitute something of a hodgepodge, in which we have sought to discern meaning and coherence. Our text does not pretend to do anything more than raise a question and propose a tentative answer, in the form of a challenge to the researchers who will follow us, and who will hopefully have the foresight that we were lacking at the outset of the PARP adventure.

RESULTS

Flip the Word

At the first meeting of community representatives participating in the project, which took place in Winnipeg in 2012, each delegation was asked to describe its community and present the actions it had undertaken in the project. All the delegations had prepared different presentations in which they outlined the essential characteristics of their community's history, its population, and its political, economic and social organization. Despite the variations, a common feature of all the presentations was the multidimensional approach, which was employed to identify the communities' challenges and the related causes. Thus, in many cases, the delegates evoked, one after another, the high rate of underemployment, high prices, low levels of education and income, and so forth, before listing proposals that were still under discussion, most of which focused on possible projects for economic development and social support. Judging from the meeting minutes, the concept of poverty per se was rarely mentioned, except perhaps during the closing discussion. Some people suggested that the meaning which each community attributes to the terms "poverty" and "economic development" be put on the agenda of a subsequent meeting. For as these terms were employed

and the orientations described, they seemed to convey multiple and at times different concepts, rather than uniform definitions.

The 2013 national meeting in Montreal was not fundamentally different in this regard. Each delegation again presented its community's principal characteristics, this time using data from available statistics or from the preliminary results of a survey designed in accordance with the parameters of the PARP project to serve as the basis for the anticipated action plan. These descriptions continued to focus on a myriad of negative and positive dimensions that would need to be considered in planning future actions. Compared to the inaugural meeting in Winnipeg, however, there were three differences in the content of the presentations and the subsequent discussions, as reflected in the minutes. The first difference was the extent and depth of the colonial-rooted difficulties the communities were experiencing, as reported by the delegations: economic difficulties (low income, lack of jobs, high cost of living, food insecurity); limits to people's autonomy (low level of education, high number of school dropouts, loss of traditional knowledge, restrictive legislation imposed by federal and provincial governments, unpreparedness to cope with economic development); insecurity (political instability, overly close relations between political and economic power, absence of community solidarity, loss of a sense of belonging, lack of freedom, powerlessness in the face of outside actors, i.e., governments, crown corporations or large companies); and finally, fractured cultures (loss of parenting skills, and of links to one's roots, language, beliefs and customs). The second difference at the Montreal meeting was the emphasis placed on the strengths that would be needed to serve as a foundation for strategic planning, e.g., the determination to influence or take advantage of the exploitation of nearby resources, or the importance of preparing young people's future.

Another key element was the clearly expressed desire that the communities themselves define their own strategic plan, contrary to the colonial attitude that decisions be made by others and that communities be deprived of all power. And the third difference was the use of the term "poverty", which was rarely heard at the first meeting in Winnipeg. In Montreal, it was employed in two different ways. First, as a concept that crystallizes a daily reality and impedes any possibility of development. One of the Eabametoong delegates mentioned that poverty is a reality he sees and hears about everyday. Second, the concept was used to emphasize the fact that the reality so named is more complex than it appears at first sight. An Opitciwan representative announced that the community committee intended to formulate its own definition of the concept, so that its actions would be directed towards the appropriate targets. A Misipawistik representative announced that her community committee wanted to replace the concept: because of the stigma attached to it, it poses a major impediment to action, and so it should be replaced by its opposite, something like improving people's well-being.[8] The following is from the minutes of the Montreal meeting:

> One of the main challenges of the PARP in her community is stigma involved in the word "poverty". Her people are proud, and they do not want other people to define them as poor. [She] spent many hours speaking with people to help them to flip the word poverty — to try to lift up people and improve the quality of life for every member in the community.

[8] Indeed, the Misipawistik committee later renamed itself E'Opinitowak, or "giving a hand up."

In short, the discussions in Montreal broadened the inventory and understanding of the problems that community committees were beginning to tackle, assessed the strengths that would enable them to wage those battles (above all, the need for in-depth discussions and decision-making autonomy), and called into question the very concept of poverty, even though that same concept was at the origin of the project. The level of detail of the discussions held at this second national meeting certainly attested to the dynamism created by the initial work of the community committees, in our view.

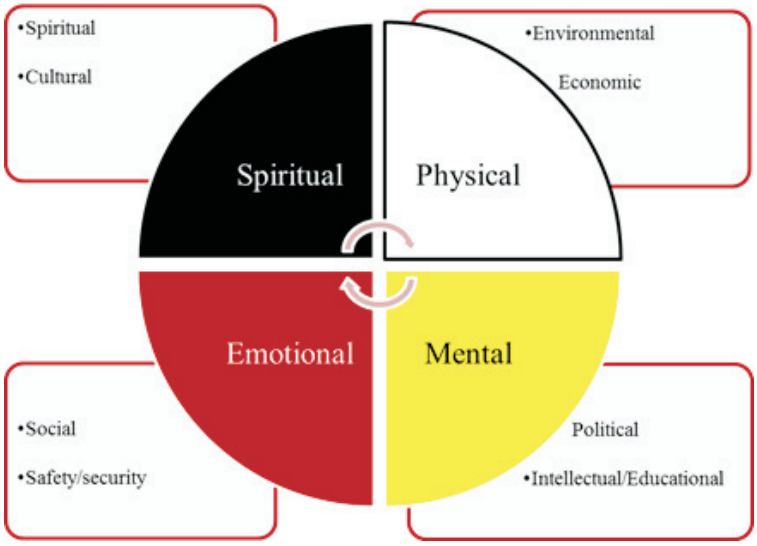
At subsequent annual meetings held in Ottawa in 2014 and in Wendake in 2015, these three discussion points were pursued in depth, most notably the questioning of the notion of poverty, which was the subject of numerous comments. The following were among the new elements brought to the fore. Firstly, the word "poverty" itself is not well received, because it fails to adequately describe the situations that need to be addressed by the communities. Secondly, the communities' actions should not be constrained by the objectives defined in the research project prior to the inclusion of the communities. This specifically concerns the use of the term "poverty", which is based on an approach that focuses on deficits and which should be replaced by another concept based on an approach that focuses on strengths, needs, and aspirations, for example. Nor should the communities' actions be constrained by the administrative standards imposed on the project by the funder, the CIHR. This concerns the limits on allowable expenditures, which favour research rather than community actions, and the needs of researchers rather than those of the communities. There was also a problem with the limits on the duration of the project [initially five years], which failed to consider the time required for community discussions, conducted in the manner in which the communities normally operate. Finally, it was generally accepted that the communities have, in practice, adopted a much broader vision of poverty than simple material deprivation.

What this reveals is the coexistence, within the PARP project team, of different types of knowledge that emanate from different worldviews. We are very familiar with the social scientific view of poverty, which was discussed in the first part of this text. However, we are far less familiar with the way that Indigenous knowledge views that which science calls "poverty". We will now attempt to shed some light on this.

Well-being and the Medicine Circle

The original significance of the Medicine Circle is the subject of debate (Merriot, 2014; Vogt, 2014; Liebmann, 2002). Many Indigenous peoples in the Americas — including several of the PARP communities — have made use of it, and continue to do so, as a representation of the totality of the world and the interdependency of its components. It has been adapted and interpreted for multiple purposes, on the basis of a common fundamental content comprising four directions, elements, remedies, seasons, dimensions of well-being, colours, and stages of life. In an effort to systematize the elements of Indigenous perceptions of poverty — elements gathered in communities in accordance with the desire expressed at the first annual national meeting in Winnipeg in 2012 — these have been distributed among the four dimensions of well-being represented in the Medicine Circle. This exercise has made it possible to categorize all the elements collected: the positive elements help to define the state of well-being, while the negative elements, which most often represent the inverse, help to define the opposite state, which we might tentatively call overall poverty or ill-being. Let us now examine these results.

FIGURE 1
Dimensions of Well-Being within a Medicine Wheel Model



Source: Adapted from traditional Anishinaabe Medicine Circle teachings.

Physical or Material Well-being and Poverty Perceptions

According to the perceptions expressed during the project, access to adequate economic resources is a major dimension of well-being, and material deprivation does represent a major dimension of poverty. Many PARP community members described financial struggles, including the high prices (especially in more remote northern communities) of housing, transportation, food and utilities, lack of job opportunities, low incomes, and high rates of social assistance on reserve. If not for the (often forcible) incorporation of Indigenous communities into a capitalist economy, however, money would have no value at all. As a Misipawistik member put it, "money does not buy happiness." Nevertheless, access to certain material resources (food, water, shelter, etc.) is necessary for survival.

A mother of three at Opitciwan described saving coupons, rationing ketchup, and purchasing no-name brands in order to feed her family; even then, she said she struggled to do so adequately. An Eabametoong member used the Anishinaabemowin term *koo-tah-key-say-win* to refer to "not having enough to go around or share" — as in a bad hunting season when there is a shortage of game. A Misipawistik member offered a similar term in Cree: *kitimaksewin*. Importantly, the root causes of such conditions are not individual failings but rather historical and structural factors, such as the political decisions and environmental devastation associated with settler colonialism.

A second major dimension of physical well-being and poverty that emerged from the qualitative data is the natural environment. Being well requires clean air, water and soil, and balanced relations with animals, plants, trees, and other forms of non-human life. Without a

healthy ecosystem, there can be no economy.[9] A T'it'q'et member described how the community "lost a great deal of our culture and ways [of providing for ourselves] when Hydro built dams in our territory; it affected our fishing and gathering, the ability to supply our own food." Other PARP communities similarly described how state-imposed flooding, forestry, mining, and relocations hindered their ability to live off the land in the ways their ancestors had for millennia. Given how closely Indigenous identities, cultures, and ways of life are tied to specific lands and waters, the PARP communities' strategic plans often specify that economic development should only proceed on the condition of environmental sustainability.

Mental and Intellectual Well-being and Poverty Perceptions

From an Indigenous perspective, well-being, and conversely poverty, also have intellectual and political dimensions. These include the knowledge and skills needed to survive (and to thrive) in their environment, the mechanisms to pass on such knowledge and skills to the next generation, and the capacity for self-determination and decision-making control in one's homelands.

Consistent with Simmel's (1965) notion of poverty as a relationship of dependence, some PARP community members described poverty in terms of their community's current dependence on the federal government for transfer payments. Many criticized the Indian Act (along with various INAC rules and funding caps) as a constraint. Opitciwan members felt further stifled under "third party management." In some communities, political apathy and a "perceived lack of control" over local decisions have also developed. To address such problems, T'it'q'et reinstated a traditional family head governing council and other measures to empower youth and elders (P'egp'iglha Council, 2007).

For the PARP communities, education is also necessary for securing well-being and eliminating poverty. Nowadays, many say this means both formal Western education as well as traditional knowledge and land-based skills. Although PARP members are concerned about high dropout rates, lack of control over school curricula, under-funding of reserve schools, and the disruption of traditional learning practices as a result of the Indian Residential School system and its legacy, many also describe the recent growth in adult education and specialized skills training, and programs to connect youth with traditional land-based skills — such as the Lake Keepers program at Misipawistik or Ocki Matcatan ("A New Start") at Opitciwan — as promising initiatives to combat poverty.

Emotional Well-being and Poverty Perceptions

For Indigenous people, education is not simply an intellectual pursuit, or a means of attaining jobs and money. Living well also includes social and emotional dimensions: warm, supportive relationships with family, community, and clan; a sense of belonging; peaceful relations with other communities and nations; and both physical and psychological security, including freedom from violence, but also the feeling of being respected and free.

---

[9] As the saying goes, when the last tree is cut, the last fish caught, and the last river poisoned, then it will be obvious that we can't eat money.

In recent years, some PARP communities have experienced challenges with substance abuse, suicide, and violence, all of which hinder the ability to do well in school, hold meaningful employment, and otherwise provide for oneself and one's family. As has been well documented, these social problems are rooted in colonial trauma, land dispossession/destruction, and ongoing political and economic barriers. Even those who are employed and earning a steady income may be experiencing profound grief. As an Eabametoong member put it:

> In the last two years, we faced a homicide, a suicide, sudden deaths due to drug use ... We lost elders to natural deaths [and another community member] in a tragic [snowmobile] accident. We still have lots of grief to deal with ... It's been a challenge.

While she is grateful for the "great leaders, elders and advisors who keep me going," many PARP communities say they would benefit from more mental health and counselling resources. "Most of all," the Eabametoong member says, "we have to find ways of building trust for each other ... We'd be a strong nation if that trust is built, if we build those bridges back, build back the ways that were lost."

This emphasis on restoring trust and respect was echoed by members of other PARP communities. According to one Misipawistik member, the "shift to individualistic thinking" associated with Western capitalism has impoverished the community as a whole. One way to restore social cohesion and community health, he and others believe, is through cultural revitalization.

Spiritual Well-being and Poverty Perceptions

Indigenous conceptions of poverty and well-being also include spiritual and cultural dimensions: the ability to speak one's language and practise one's customs and traditions; having a wealth of stories, songs, art, collective memories; being true to one's values and principles; and feeling connected to a spirit/creator/life force, something beyond the material realm. Presently, an Opitciwan member believes:

> We are poor because we Atikamekw do not know who we are or where we come from. Prior to the residential schools, we had our own values, our own way of child-rearing, but we've become disconnected from ourselves ... we're going through poverty in our thoughts, our minds.

To combat this *mal de vivre* (deep unhappiness), she says, Atikamekw youth must reconnect with their cultural identity and values, learn about their history, and find ways to live in harmony with one another and their environment. Similar to the Anishinaabek concept of *Biskabayaang* (Simpson, 2011), she says: "For us, development is to bring Atikamekw back to ourselves and to develop balance within that."

For many PARP communities, maintaining and revitalizing Indigenous languages is essential to this process. According to a T'it'q'et member, "our stories are written on the land, our language and culture are tied to the land, our clan names and responsibilities stem from it ... and if we keep our responsibilities, we will have a good life." Therefore, he says, many community members are trying to become fluent in their language.[10] A Misipawistik

[10] Similarly, an Opitciwan member said: "We're wealthy in terms of language, but some words are disappearing" and "young people have a harder time of it".

member further suggested that poverty can be reduced "by doing the ceremonies," such as naming ceremonies and sweat lodges, which teach basic values, roles, and skills. For a Sipekne'katik member, development is not only economic, but also spiritual, and building new powwow grounds is vital to her community's well-being.

Holistic Worldview and Poverty Perceptions

In summary, Indigenous peoples often conceive of well-being and wealth and, conversely, of poverty, in holistic, multidimensional, and community-centered terms. Although the relevant dimensions are described separately above, they are all interconnected in practice, according to the views that were shared with us. Cultural riches, for example, may buffer material poverty, but a certain level of material resources is also necessary to practice one's culture. Although colonial-capitalism has done much damage, an Eabametoong member emphasized that to be happy and healthy, one must honour the Creator, give thanks for the land, air and water, and appreciate the *richness* of the people and places around us:

> What makes me feel rich is being in the woods with my grandson and seeing the big smile he has running around on the land, looking at the trees, the berries, the road we walk, the air we feel, the whistling of the wind on my face, the chirping of the birds, whatever we see on the land; that's richness for me; that's happiness ...

Such stories challenge conventional Western thinking about poverty. If money and material goods are not so important to an individual or a community, if one is able to hunt, fish and put food on the table, speak one's language, and have a loving supportive family and a clean natural environment to do the things one needs to do to survive and be happy, is one then living in poverty? From what we have been able to document, the answer would seem to be no. Material deprivation may be a necessary but insufficient component of poverty. Combining several elements belonging to one or more (if not all) of the four dimensions of well-being does not necessarily result in a definition of poverty either. After all, there may be no such thing as poverty in the Indigenous view of the human condition, since the entire worldview upon which it is based does not allow single objects to be considered in isolation.

Poverty Perceptions as Revealed Through Action

The final section of our results examines the strategic plans and the actions that have been undertaken within the PARP project. Our hypothesis is that these plans and actions can be seen as the concretization of the vision, agreed upon in the local committees, of the changes that need to be implemented to improve community conditions. In other words, they are implicit indicators offering an underlying definition of what must be overcome in order to achieve a state of well-being.

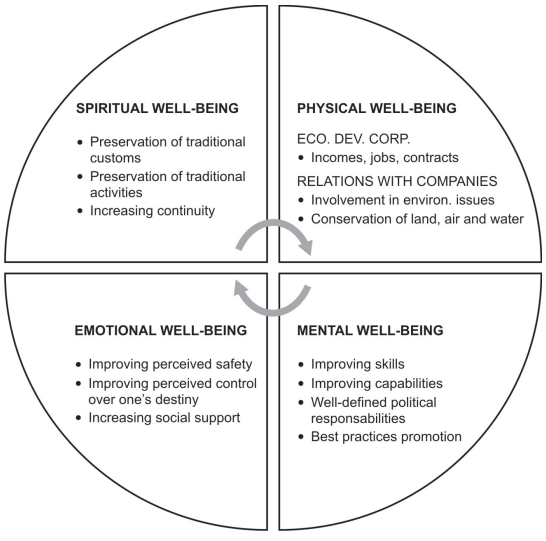
It turns out that the global vision elaborated in the previous sections is highly consistent with the nature of the actions that have been carried out. While each PARP community had its own unique vision and emphases, none of the actions undertaken was ever isolated, affecting only one of the four dimensions of well-being. On the contrary, the actions were always linked together in a way that affected multiple dimensions of well-being. We provide two examples here, but could just as easily have presented initiatives from all five communities: they would all illustrate the same global scope and the same underlying global vision.

In Eabametoong, an Economic Development Corporation was created aimed at influencing the enormous development of the Ring of Fire mining project (Wright, 2014) in a way that will protect the land, air and water and maintain a healthy environment, so that the benefits of that development (jobs, contracts, royalties) can be used to improve the living conditions of community members. The discussions and arrangements concerning the corporation itself, and its relationship with the band council on the one hand, and the mining companies on the other, were meant to reduce the insecurity caused by outside development, and prevent the frictions that can arise from the proximity between economic development and political power. In addition, the actions included the creation of programs to increase community members' skills, e.g., workforce training programs.

In Opitciwan, the committee decided to develop community projects that focused on three priorities: contributing to the overall development of children and families; encouraging the social integration of young people by strengthening their sense of identity and self-esteem; and emphasizing school success on the part of the community's children and youth. To this end, it has introduced a breakfast program in the community's two schools; created a Family House that offers a wide range of activities including a community kitchen, discussion groups, a day-care centre, individual and group training (e.g., in parenting skills), consultations (e.g., in maternal and child health); and set up activities to promote school retention and job training, all of which focus on the acquisition of traditional knowledge and skills and are integrated with the school curriculum.

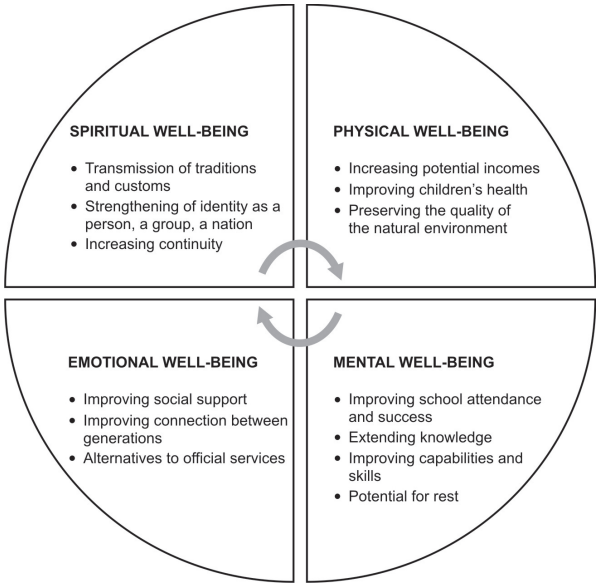
In these two examples, the actions that have been carried out directly affect each of the dimensions of well-being. Eabametoong's intervention in the large-scale exploitation of the

FIGURE 2
Dimensions of Well-Being within a Medicine Wheel Model Based on Actions Taken at Eabametoong during the PARP Project



Source: Created from traditional Anishinaabe Medicine Circle teachings.

FIGURE 3
Dimensions of Well-Being within a Medicine Wheel Model Based on Actions Taken at Opitciwan during the PARP Project



Source: Created from traditional Anishinaabe Medicine Circle teachings.

Ring of Fire primarily targets the physical or material dimension of well-being by ensuring economic spin-offs and environmental safeguards. But it also affects the mental and intellectual dimension by offering the possibility of increasing the employability of community members and by clearly establishing the boundaries between politics and economics. Furthermore, it bears on the emotional dimension by increasing the sense of control over one's destiny, as well as on the spiritual dimension by reinforcing traditional practices and using traditional Indigenous knowledge to inform strategic planning (despite the upheavals affecting the territory). Similarly, Opitciwan's interventions with children, young people, and the family primarily target the mental dimension of well-being by emphasizing class attendance, school retention and academic success, by improving young people's job readiness, and by improving the parenting knowledge and skills of their parents. They also have an impact on the emotional dimension by offering families social support outside of government networks and by favouring closer relations between generations. On the spiritual dimension, they help to re-establish a sense of identity and life meaning based upon traditional principles and connections with the land; and on the physical or material dimension, they help to prevent health problems among young children while increasing the earning potential of young adults.

These examples illustrate how Indigenous views of poverty lead to interventions that effectively impact multiple dimensions of well-being. One dimension may serve as the gate-

way for an action, but the interdependencies among the dimensions produce repercussions that extend beyond those directly targeted, repercussions which are nonetheless deliberate and desirable.

CONCLUSION

Two Perspectives

We now have a better understanding of the difficulties involved in precisely defining and measuring the realities covered by the concept of poverty, as well as the uneasiness arising from its use within local committees and in the relations between the committees and other members of their communities. The concept itself does not exist as a distinct notion in Indigenous worldview(s), which explains why it does not have a direct translation in Indigenous languages. But that's not all. These difficulties and this uneasiness resulted from the initial formulation of the PARP project, which imposed the use of the concept using social science terms. In the original project statement, poverty was identified as the principal area for intervention that would help improve the well-being and health of First Nations. From its very inception, the project incorporated a two-eyed seeing approach. On the one hand, the scientific Cartesian perspective, with its compartmentalized approach which proceeds by dividing reality into elementary particles that are examined one by one; an approach that is also cumulative though rarely synthesized. On the other hand, the traditional Indigenous perspective and its holistic approach, which considers reality as an indissociable totality within which each elementary particle only has meaning in relation to all other particles (Little Bear, 2000).

Leroy Little Bear in "Jagged Worldviews Colliding (2000) argues that colonialism has created a fragmented worldview among Indigenous peoples. This helps explain the seemingly fragmented or disjointed character of the discussions bearing on the communities' socio-economic profiles, on the concept of poverty, and on the strategic plans and action plans, as opposed to an approach that might have been more Cartesian and would have produced reports filled with statistical indicators measuring the situation at the outset, calculating the critical thresholds to be reached, the progress achieved at each stage, the situation at the project's end ... In reality, the approach was neither fragmented nor disjointed, but based on an essentially integrated vision that is related to the notion of Living Well, the term used in Latin American, or Mino-Bimaadiziwin, the term used by the Anishinaabek in Canada.

Yet these traditional Indigenous perspectives also encompass scientific knowledge, even if the two perspectives are based on fundamentally different premises. As we observed in the data analysis section above, the conventional perspective recognizes the existence of the material and economic forms of poverty and uses social science approaches to measure things such as insufficient income required to satisfy basic needs. A traditional Indigenous perspective recognizes the emic or subjective forms of poverty, such as the feeling of deprivation, as well as relational forms of poverty, such as being subject to the Indian Act. However, the traditional perspective treats all these elements as being inextricably tied to well-being, or Living Well; and on this basis, it can help to guide action. It is not our intention here to evaluate the merits and limitations of these two types of knowledge, which would require much more extensive reflection. But based on the experience of the PARP project,

both types of knowledge are important and are used to develop and guide interventions within communities. This principle is increasingly recognized within Indigenous communities and increasingly by researchers who seek to work with Indigenous peoples. Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, for example, argues for the bringing of both sets of knowledge to address complex issues through the ethical frame of 'two-eyed seeing' (Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall, 2012).

Lessons Learned

Implementing Indigenous traditional perspectives on poverty reduction in First Nations communities has highlighted the primacy attributed to the holistic impact of each intervention. This implies that each intervention, which aims to enhance a single dimension of well-being, must also consider the impact on other dimensions, because they are all interdependent. If an increase in material wealth comes at the expense of culture or safety or the environment, then well-being becomes even harder to achieve. One may have more cash in one's wallet, but still be poorer, on balance. Enhancing one dimension should enhance the others, or at least not harm them, and it should put things back in balance. This is an important lesson for the fight against poverty, and could be applied well beyond the situation of First Nations in Canada.

This study also raises questions about Maslow's (1954) well-known hierarchy of needs.

Maslow based his model upon interviews with Blackfoot Elders who conveyed to him their idea that self-actualization, both as individuals and as communities, was at the base of the hierarchy, not at the top. The Blackfoot would discuss poverty in terms that relate to individual, community, and cultural actualization rather than in terms relating to material deprivation.

From a Western social scientific perspective, poverty is primarily discussed in material terms, the term that are at the base of the Maslow hierarchy. It is often assumed that satisfying basic material needs is prerequisite to pursuing "higher" needs such as spirituality or self-actualization. The post-materialist thesis (Inglehart, 1977) posits that economic development is associated with a transition from materialist to post-materialist values and that concerns for personal freedom, belonging, participation in decision-making, and sustainability only develop after economic scarcity (low incomes, high prices) has been addressed. So how could it be that some Indigenous people living below the low-income cut-off, without clean running water, and in housing that Statistics Canada considers to be overcrowded nevertheless feel rich? How is it that a project focused on reducing poverty so often found itself focusing on issues of identity, language, culture, and environmental protection? From an Indigenous perspective, these issues are just as important as, and interdependent with, the struggle for food, shelter, and security. It is very much possible to live well without many of the consumer goods that Western social scientists and settlers consider to be "basic." Moreover, Indigenous identities and spiritual practices are very much tied to the land; there is a materiality to them, just as food, shelter, and other material resources not only serve physiological needs but also have deep cultural meanings.

This study allows us to draw another lesson from the experience of the PARP project. The two men we encountered on our first trips to the communities were both right, each in his own way. By resorting to irony, presenting as true something that is false, the older Opitciwan man recognized the reality of monetary poverty in the community. After listing his community's problems, the young Eabametoong man did not conclude that there was

generalized unhappiness, or an imbalance in the way well-being is evaluated in the traditional Indigenous perspective. On the contrary, by evoking the highly valued dimensions of identity, self-sufficiency, and historical continuity, he was affirming the possibility of Living Well. Better yet, he was asserting that, despite the limitations imposed on his freedom, the reality he experienced can be designated otherwise, can be seen as full, or (one might even say) "rich", because it is socially and symbolically satisfying.

These voices were the first we heard coming from the communities, after the launch of the project. The communities had not been involved in the conception of the project which, as we said, originated with the group of (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) experts convened by the AFN. The activities began without documenting the Indigenous communities' perceptions of poverty, without understanding the emic version of the concept. The latter would soon manifest itself, however, making it obvious that the project could not be conducted without recourse to the Indigenous worldview(s). Nevertheless, it took us some time to be able to step back and recognize the process that was unfolding in the course of our exchanges, as we attempted to express what each of these two different views of reality allowed us to see. In an ideal world, the starting point of the PARP project should have been a certain comprehension of the Indigenous worldview and its perspective on poverty. In 2017, Indigenous conceptions of poverty led the Eabametoong First Nation, a community considered to be in poverty, to raise $10,000 to support a not-for-profit shelter in Thunder Bay (CBC News, May 22, 2017). The next project on this subject should certainly take this into account. But then again, in an ideal world, poverty would no longer exist, as John Stuart Mill wanted to believe. Perhaps the use of Indigenous conceptions of poverty would help to create this world. After all, one of the fundamental teachings of a core western text is that people do not live by bread alone.

Indigenous leaders have argued since the publication of *Wahbung* in 1971 by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood that "we, both Indian and Government, recognize that economic, social and educational development are synonymous and thus must be dealt with as a 'total' approach rather than in parts. The practice of program development in segments, in isolation between its parts, inhibits if not precludes, effective utilization of all resources in the concentrated effort required to support economic, social and educational advancement." Development must not occur in bits and pieces but on the basis of a comprehensive plan. Reducing poverty takes effort on many fronts: health improvement, community infrastructure, protection of lands and resources, human resource development, cultural development, and more. The Brotherhood advocated for use of both Canadian and Indigenous knowledges in this long-term effort, and its vision remains as relevant as ever.

REFERENCES

Albo, Xavier. (2011). « 'Vivre bien' en tant que catalyseur de nombreuses inquiétudes ». Guide pour la présentation au Conseil indigéniste missionnaire (CIMI), Brasilia.

Albo Xavier. (2012). « Le nouveau paradigme indigène de 'vivre bien' ». Présentation orale au colloque Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire, Forêt Montmorency, Québec, 19 avril.

Alkire, Sabine. (2007). "The Missing Dimensions of Poverty: An Introduction". *Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative*. [http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPHI-wp00.pdf?0a8fd7]

Alkire, Sabina, & Santos, Maria Emma. (2010). "Brazil: Country Briefing". *Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative Multidimensional Poverty Index Country Briefing Series*. [http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Brazil.pdf]

Anderson, Charmel. (2017, May 22). "Eabametoong First Nations donates $10,000 to Shelter in Thunder Bay". *CBC News*. [http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/eabametoong-donation-shelter-house-thunder-bay-1.4124758]

Anderson, Jeanine. (2017). « Racines et persistance de la pauvreté urbaine au Pérou ». In Gérard Duhaime et Roberson Édouard (eds.), *Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire* (pp. 259–289). Montreal: Nota Bene.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Make Poverty History Expert Advisory Committee. (2009). "The State of the First Nation Economy and the Struggle to Make Poverty History". Paper prepared for the Inter-Nation Trade and Economic Summit, Toronto, Ontario. [http://abdc.bc.ca/uploads/file/09%20Harvest/State%20of%20the%20First%20Nations%20Economy.pdf]

Bartlett, Cheryl, Murdena Marshall, and Albert Marshall. (2012). "Two-Eyed Seeing and Other Lessons Learned within a Co-learning Journey of Bringing Together Indigenous and Mainstream Knowledges and Ways of Knowing". *Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences*, 2(4): 331–340.

Bellier, Irène. (2009). « Usages et déclinaisons internationales de l' 'autochtonie' dans le contexte des Nations unies ». In Natacha Gagné, Thibault Martin et Marie Salaun (Eds.), *Autochtonies : vues de France et du Québec* (pp. 75–92). Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Dialog, le réseau de recherche et de connaissances relatives aux peuples autochtones.

Benjamin, Melanie. (2014). "Bimaadiziwin: Living a Good Life". *2014 State of the Band Address, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe*, February 11. [http://millelacsband.com/district_news/bimaadiziwin-living-good-life/]

Booth, David, Leach, Melissa, & Tierney, Alison. (1999). *Experiencing Poverty in Africa: Perspectives from Anthropology, Background Paper No. 1(b) for the World Bank Poverty Status Report 1999, Final Draft, Apr 1999*. [http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi. org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6168.pdf].

Brant Castellano, Marlene. (2011). "Elders' Teachings in the Twenty-First Century: A Personal Reflection." In David Long and Olive Patricia Dickason (eds.), *Visions of the Heart: Canadian Aboriginal Issues*, 3rd edition (pp. 35–54). Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Brunetaux, Patrick, et Terrolle, Daniel. (Eds.). (2010). *L'arrière-cour de la mondialisation : Ethnographie des paupérisés*. France : Éditions du Croquant.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. (2010). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Ottawa: CIHR, NSERCC, SSHRSS.

Cornell, Stephen. (1987). "American Indians, American Dreams, and the Meaning of Success". *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 11(4): 59–70.

Dockstator, Jennifer S., et al. (2017). "Pursuing Mutually Beneficial Research: Insights from the Poverty Action Research Project". *Engaged Scholar Journal*, 2(1): 17–38.

Douglas, Mary. (2004). "Traditional Culture". In Vijayendra Rao & Michael Walton (Eds.), *Culture and Public Action*, pp. 85–109. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Duhaime, Gérard. (2017). « Vers une approche intégratrice de la pauvreté ». In Gérard Duhaime et Roberson Édouard (Eds.), *Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire*. Montréal: Nota Bene.

Duhaime, Gérard, & Édouard, Roberson. (2015). "Monetary Poverty in Inuit Nunangat". *Arctic*, 68(2): 223–232.

Fréchet, Guy, Gauvreau, Danielle, et Poirier, Jean. (Eds.). (2011). *Statistiques sociales, pauvreté et exclusion sociale* (pp. 21–31). Montréal : Presses Université de Montreal (PUM).

Gaboriau, Patrick, et Terrolle, Daniel (Eds.). (2003). *Ethnologie des sans-logis: Étude d'une forme de domination sociale*. Paris : L'Harmattan.

Gelot, Didier. (2011). « La mesure de la pauvreté ». *Alternatives Économiques*, No 304, juillet–août: 80–83.

Gonrad-Delcroix, Claire. (2003). *Les analyses qualitatives de la pauvreté : continuité ou rupture?*. Bordeaux : Université Montesquieu, Document de travail N° 81, Centre d'Économie du développement.

Iceland, John. (2003). "Why poverty remains high: The role of income growth, economic inequality and changes in family structure, 1949–1999". *Demography*, 40(3): 499–519.

Iceland, John, & Bauman, Kurt J. (2007). "Income poverty and material hardship: How strong is the association?" *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 36(3): 376–396.

Inglehart, Ronald. (1977). *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Liebmann, Matthew. (2002). "Demystifying the Big Horn Medicine Wheel: A Contextual Analysis of Meaning, Symbolism, and Function". *Plains Anthropologist*, 47(180): 61–71.

Little Bear, Leroy. (2000). "Jagged Worldviews Colliding". In Marie Battiste, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (pp. 77–85). Vancouver: UBC Press.

Lollivier, Serge. (2008). « La pauvreté : définitions et mesures ». *Regards croisés sur l'économie*, 2(4): 21–29.

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. (1971). *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Indian Brotherhood.

Maslow, Abraham. (1954). *Motivation and Personality*. New York, NY: Harper.

McCall, Christopher. (2017). « Aux yeux des autres : de l'inexistence sociale à la reconnaissance. » In Gérard Duhaime et Roberson Édouard (Eds.), *Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire* (pp. 87–109). Montreal: Nota Bene.

Merriot, Ivy. (2014). *Exploratory research on the big horn medicine wheel acting as an indigenous place-based pedagogical instrument for learning sky-earth relationships, skywatching fundamentals, and celestial mechanics*. Ph.D. Dissertations, American Studies, Montana State University. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 3630546. Available at scholarworks.montana.edu/xmlui/handle/1/9132?show=full

Messu, Michel. (2017). « La pauvreté n'existe pas, n'existent que des pauvres. Les enjeux sociopolitiques d'une définition et les jeux discursifs d'une représentation ». In Gérard Duhaime et Roberson Édouard (Eds.), *Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire*. Montréal: Groupe Nota Bene.

Mill, John Stuart. (1863). *Utilitarianism*. London: Parker, Son, and Bourn.

Morin, Brandi. (2017, July 5). "Wilton Littlechild sees his dream come true at World Indigenous Nations Games". *CBC News*. [http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/world-indigenous-nations-games-wilton-littlechild-1.4189980]

Myles, John, & Picot, Garnett. (2000). "Poverty Indices and Poverty Analysis". *Review of Income and Wealth*, 46(2): 161–179.

Narayan, Deepa. (2009). *The Promise of Empowerment and Democracy in India*. Volume 3 of *Moving Out of Poverty*. Washington, DC: Palgrave Macmillan and The World Bank.

Narayan, Deepa, Pritchett, Lant, & Kapoor, Soumya. (2009). *Success from the Bottom Up*. Volume 2 of *Moving Out of Poverty*. Washington, DC: Palgrave Macmillan and The World Bank.

O'Sullivan, Erin. (2011). *The Community Well-Being Index (CWB): Measuring Well-Being in First Nations and Non-Aboriginal Communities, 1981–2006*. Report submitted to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. [https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1345816651029/1345816742083]

Paugam, Serge. (2005). *Les formes élémentaires de la pauvreté*. Paris : Presses Universitaires de France [PUF].

Paugam, Serge. (2008). *Le lien social*. Coll. « Que sais-je ? ». Paris : PUF.

P'egp'iglha Council. (2007). *Traditional Laws of the P'egp'iglha*. Lillooet, BC: P'egp'ig'lha Council. [http://www.titqet.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=213:constitution&catid=63:culture-a-history].

Quesnel, Joseph. (2015, January 30). "Ottawa, First Nations should narrow poverty gap". *Winnipeg Sun*. [http://www.winnipegsun.com/2015/01/30/ottawa-first-nations-should-narrow-poverty-gap]

Sabourin, Paul. (2017). « Quelles connaissances avons-nous de ceux qui sont désignés comme 'pauvres' ? » In Gérard Duhaime et Roberson Édouard (Eds.), *Pauvreté quotidienne, pauvreté planétaire*. Montréal: Nota Bene.

Sarmiento Barletti, Juan Pablo. (2012). « Les enjeux politiques du 'bien-vivre' en Amazonie autochtone ». *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 42(2–3): 49–61.

Simmel, Georg. (2002 [1908]). *Les pauvres*, 2ème édition. Paris: PUF.

Simmel, Georg. (1965). "The Poor". *Social Problems*, 13(2): 118–140. [Translated by Claire Jacobson]

Simpson, Leanne. (2011). *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence*. Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.

Valladares, Licia. (2006). *La Favela d'un siècle à l'autre*. Paris : Éditions de la maison des sciences de l'homme.

Vogt, David. (2014). "Medicine Wheels of the Great Plains". In Clive L.N. Ruggles (Ed.), *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy* (pp. 541–550). New York: Springer.

Wright, Lisa. (2014, February 20). "Ring of Fire must be a national priority: report". *Toronto Star*. [https://www.thestar.com/business/economy/2014/02/20/ring_of_fire_must_be_a_national_priority_report.html]

Introduction

Robert Oppenheimer

The two articles relating to the State of the Aboriginal Economy provide different perspectives. The article by Ramsay focuses on the size of the Aboriginal communities in Quebec, both on and off-reserve. The case is made that the small population of many of these communities present significant limitations for their economic development. The article by Oppenheimer presents the employment, participation, unemployment and wage rates for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals from 2007 through 2016. It shows the changes over this 10-year period and highlights the direct relationship between the education level completed and the rates of employment and wage levels for Aboriginals as well as for non-Aboriginals.

Aboriginal Employment and Wages in Canada: A Decade of Positives and Negatives

Robert J. Oppenheimer
PROFESSOR EMERITUS
JOHN MOLSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
MONTREAL, CANADA

ABSTRACT

The employment and participation rates for Aboriginals improved in 2016 over 2015, while the unemployment rate remained the same. However, Aboriginals, as well as non-Aboriginals, have not reached the 2007 levels they were prior to the recession of 2008–2009. Wages have improved annually and in most years at a rate greater than the consumer price index. This applies for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, except in 2016, when wages were basically unchanged for Aboriginals. In general, the rates of employment, unemployment, participation and wages are more favourable for non-Aboriginals than for Aboriginals. However, when examined by the level of education completed, employment rates are similar.

Employment and wages are examined for the previous ten years, focusing on changes in 2007, which was prior to the recession, in 2010, immediately after the recession and in 2015 and 2016. Gender, age and educational differences are discussed.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

There are multiple ways to assess the state of an economy. A common method is the use of the gross domestic product or GDP; however, this is not a readily accessible measure for Aboriginals in Canada. An alternative and perhaps more meaningful approach is to examine wage rates and the employment rate, unemployment rate (those who are actively seeking employment) and participation rate (those employed and unemployed, divided by the population). In this article these are examined for non-Aboriginals and for Aboriginals living off-reserve and who are 15 years and older. All references are to these populations.[1]

[1] To enable clearer comparisons between the rates prior to the recession (2007), immediately afterwards (2010), and for the previous two years (2015 and 2016), the data for each of the years from 2007–2015 are not presented in this article but they may be referred to in the article by Oppenheimer (2015).

TABLE 1
Labour Force Characteristics for Aboriginals Living Off-reserves and for Non-Aboriginals, 15 Years and Over, Canada, Annual Averages

		2007	2010	2015	2016
Aboriginal population	Population ('000)	638.3	740.5	876.2	911.7
	Labour force ('000)	415.1	460.8	552.1	587.5
	Employment ('000)	370.7	395.9	483.7	514.8
	Unemployment ('000)	44.4	64.8	68.4	72.7
	Not in labour force ('000)	223.2	279.7	324.1	324.3
	Unemployment rate (%)	10.7	14.1	12.4	12.4
	Participation rate (%)	65.0	62.2	63.0	64.4
	Employment rate (%)	58.1	53.5	55.2	56.5
Non-Aboriginal population	Population ('000)	25,823.2	26,833.6	28,403.7	28,675.5
	Labour force ('000)	17,424.7	17,980.1	18,716.8	18,843.9
	Employment ('000)	16,390.5	16,555.1	17,451.8	17,553.7
	Unemployment ('000)	1,034.3	1,425.0	1,265.0	1,290.2
	Not in labour force ('000)	8,398.5	8,853.5	9,686.9	9,831.5
	Unemployment rate (%)	5.9	7.9	6.8	6.8
	Participation rate (%)	67.5	67.0	65.9	65.7
	Employment rate (%)	63.5	61.7	61.4	61.2

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, CANSIM table 282-0226

Unemployment Rates

Unemployment rates for Aboriginals are considerably higher than they are for non-Aboriginals. The unemployment rate for Aboriginals was 12.4 in 2015 and 2016. This was better than the 14.1 rate immediately after the recession in 2010, but not as good as it was prior to the recession in 2007, when it was 10.7. Non-Aboriginals unemployment rates were 6.8 in 2016 and 2015, an improvement from 7.9 in 2010, but not as good as 5.9 in 2007. (See Table 1.)

Employment Rates

Employment rates for Aboriginals are lower than they are for non-Aboriginals. The employment rates for Aboriginals were 56.5 in 2016, an increase from 55.2 in 2015, and an improvement from 53.5 in 2010, but lower than 58.1 in 2007. The non-Aboriginals employment rates declined in each of the four time periods presented in this article. They were 61.2 in 2016, a decrease from 61.4 in 2015 and from 61.7 in 2010 and from 63.5 in 2007. (See Table 1.)

Participation Rates

The participation rate is the percent of those employed and seeking employment in the population. An increasing participation rate is generally considered positive. The participation rate for Aboriginals was 64.4 in 2016, an increase from 63.0 in 2015. In 2010, it was at its lowest level of 62.2 for the ten years and was at 65.0 in 2010. The participation rate for

non-Aboriginals has declined to 65.7 in 2016, from 65.9 in 2015. It was 67.0 in 2010 and 67.5 in 2007. (See Table 1.)

The steady decline in both the employment rate and the participation rate for non-Aboriginals may have significant implications, but it is beyond the scope of this article to examine these issues.

EMPLOYMENT RATES BY GENDER AND AGE

Employment rates were higher from 2007 to 2016, for non-Aboriginal men and women in all three age groups, with four exceptions. The employment rate in 2007 for Aboriginal men was higher than for non-Aboriginal men 55 years and older, and the employment rates for Aboriginal women were higher in 2010, 2015 and 2016 than for non-Aboriginal women 55 years and older.

The employment rate for Aboriginal men increased marginally in 2016 to 58.5 from 58.3 in 2015. This was a further improvement from the 55.4 rate in 2010, but lower than the pre-recession rate of 62.9 in 2007. The employment rates are higher for non-Aboriginal men, but decreased in 2016 to 65.0 from 65.5 in 2015, which was where it was in 2010, but down from 68.0 in 2007.

For Aboriginal women the employment rate also increased in 2016 to 54.5 from 52.3 in 2015 and from 51.7 in 2010, but unlike the men, it was higher in 2016 than in 2007, when it was 53.7. In 2016 and 2015 the employment rate for non-Aboriginal women was 57.5. In 2010 it was higher at 58.0 as well as in 2007 when it was 59.1.

The employment rates for Aboriginal men decreased in 2016 from 2015 for those 15–24 years old and for those 25–54 years old, but increased for those 55 years and older. The employment rates decreased for non-Aboriginal men in 2016 from 2015 for all three age groups.

The employment rates were higher in 2016 than in 2010 (after the recession) for everyone (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men and women for each of the age groups) except for non-Aboriginal women in the 15–24 age group, for whom the employment rate was the same.

Employment rates were lower in 2016 than in 2007 (before the recession) for Aboriginal men and for non-Aboriginal men and women 15–24 and 25–54. Employment rates were higher in 2016 than in 2007 for Aboriginal women in all three age categories as well as for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men, 55 years and older.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY GENDER AND AGE

Unemployment rates have been higher in each of the last ten years for Aboriginals than for non-Aboriginals in every category. That is, for males and females in each age category, 15–25, 25–54 and 55 and over, Aboriginal unemployment has been higher than for non-Aboriginals.

Unemployment rates were higher for Aboriginal men in 2016 than in 2015 (13.9 from 13.1) as well as for non-Aboriginal men (7.5 in 2016 from 7.3 in 2015). These 2016 unemployment rates are better than they were in 2010 (15.7 for Aboriginals and 8.7 for non-

TABLE 2
Employment Rate (%) for Aboriginals Living Off-reserves and for Non-Aboriginals, by Gender and Age Groups, Canada, Annual Averages

			2007	2010	2015	2016
Aboriginal	Both sexes	15 years and over	58.1	53.5	55.2	56.5
		15-24 years	49.8	45.2	49.8	49.2
		25-54 years	69.9	65.8	67.5	69.1
		55 years and over	32.5	29.8	34.4	35.4
	Men	15 years and over	62.9	55.4	58.3	58.5
		15-24 years	50.9	44.6	51.5	48.4
		25-54 years	75.5	69.5	72.1	71.8
		55 years and over	38.7	29.7	35.3	39.7
	Women	15 years and over	53.7	51.7	52.3	54.5
		15-24 years	48.7	45.8	48.2	50.0
		25-54 years	64.6	62.4	63.2	66.7
		55 years and over	27.3	29.9	33.7	31.3
Non-Aboriginal	Both sexes	15 years and over	63.5	61.7	61.4	61.2
		15-24 years	59.8	55.2	56.0	55.6
		25-54 years	82.5	80.9	81.8	81.7
		55 years and over	31.7	33.6	35.1	35.4
	Men	15 years and over	68.0	65.5	65.5	65.0
		15-24 years	59.4	53.4	54.5	54.3
		25-54 years	86.5	84.2	85.6	85.4
		55 years and over	38.1	39.4	40.8	40.6
	Women	15 years and over	59.1	58.0	57.5	57.5
		15-24 years	60.2	57.1	57.6	57.1
		25-54 years	78.5	77.5	78.0	78.1
		55 years and over	26.0	28.4	29.9	30.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_main_AN.ivt

Aboriginals men) but worse than they were in 2007 (11.2 for Aboriginals and 6.3 for non-Aboriginal men).

For Aboriginal women, unemployment rates decreased in 2016 from 2015 (10.8 from 11.7). The unemployment rate for non-Aboriginal women remained the same at 6.1 in 2016 and 2015. This was a decrease (an improvement) from their 2010 unemployment rate of 7.1, but worse than the 2007 rate of 5.6. Similarly, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal women was better in 2016 (10.8) than it was in 2010 (12.4), but worse than it was in 2007 (10.1).

In 2016 unemployment rates for Aboriginal men increased for those 15–24 and 25–54 from 2015, but improved for those 55 and over. For non-Aboriginal men 15–24, the unemployment rate decreased, but increased for those 25–54 and for those 55 and over, in 2016 from 2015.

The unemployment rates were higher in 2010 and lower in 2007 than they were in 2016 for everyone (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men and women in each of the three age groups). See Table 3.

TABLE 3
Unemployment Rate (%) for Aboriginals Living Off-reserves and for Non-Aboriginals, by Gender and Age Groups, Canada, Annual Averages

			2007	2010	2015	2016
Aboriginal	Both sexes	15 years and over	10.7	14.1	12.4	12.4
		15-24 years	16.9	21.1	18.8	19.0
		25-54 years	8.9	12.1	11.0	10.8
		55 years and over	8.4	11.7	8.6	9.6
	Men	15 years and over	11.2	15.7	13.1	13.9
		15-24 years	18.5	24.5	19.5	21.5
		25-54 years	9.1	13.0	11.2	12.2
		55 years and over	9.6	14.5	11.5	10.7
	Women	15 years and over	10.1	12.4	11.7	10.8
		15-24 years	15.3	17.8	18.0	16.6
		25-54 years	8.7	11.1	10.9	9.3
		55 years and over	0.0	9.2	5.6	8.3
Non-Aboriginal	Both sexes	15 years and over	5.9	7.9	6.8	6.8
		15-24 years	11.0	14.7	13.0	12.9
		25-54 years	5.0	6.8	5.7	5.8
		55 years and over	4.8	6.2	5.7	6.0
	Men	15 years and over	6.3	8.7	7.3	7.5
		15-24 years	12.1	17.1	14.9	14.6
		25-54 years	5.3	7.3	6.1	6.3
		55 years and over	4.9	6.9	6.1	6.6
	Women	15 years and over	5.6	7.1	6.1	6.1
		15-24 years	9.9	12.4	11.0	11.1
		25-54 years	4.7	6.3	5.3	5.3
		55 years and over	4.7	5.4	5.2	5.2

NOTE: Table cells showing 0.0 refer to estimates that are suppressed (cannot be published) because they are below **the confidentiality threshold**. The LFS estimates are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling variability. As a result, monthly estimates will show more variability than trends observed over longer time periods. Estimates for smaller geographic areas or industries also have more variability. For an explanation of sampling variability of estimates and how to use standard errors to assess this variability, consult the 'Estimates quality' section of the publication Labour Force Information (Catalogue number71-001-X).

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_main_AN.ivt

EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals employment levels are similar when examined by the level of education completed. This is a significantly different result than looking at the overall employment rates, which shows that non-Aboriginals have higher employment rates than Aboriginals. Further, when examining the education level completed, the employment rates for Aboriginals in 2016 were slightly higher than for non-Aboriginals, with the exception of those who completed post-secondary education.

For non-Aboriginals, their employment rates have declined for all of the four educational levels and for each of the four years (2007, 2010, 2015 and 2016) examined. This

negative trend also applies for the Aboriginals who were high school graduates. Their employment rate in 2016 was 58.1. Aboriginals with less than high school had higher employment rates in 2016 (33.6) versus 2015 (32.3) and 2010 (31.8). This was also the case for Aboriginals who completed post-secondary in 2016 (71.0) versus 2015 (69.2) and 2010 (68.4). Aboriginals with a university degree had an employment rate of 78.1 in 2016. This compares to rates of 75.2 in 2015 and 77.6 in 2010. For all four education levels the employment rates were higher in 2007 than they were in 2016.

It is quite clear that the higher the education level completed, the higher the employment level. See Table 4.

UNEMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The unemployment rates for Aboriginals are significantly higher than for non-Aboriginals, even when comparing the same level of education completed. This is contrary to the results for the rates of employment. Aboriginals with less than high school have the highest rate of unemployment, but was the only level of the four educational levels that had a lower rate of employment in 2016 (22.4) than in 2015 (22.8). Unemployment rates were higher for Aboriginal high school graduates in 2016 (13.1) than in 2015 (12.4) and were higher for those who completed post-secondary in 2016 (8.3) than in 2015 (8.2) as well as being higher for university graduates in 2016 (5.8) and in 2015 (5.7). The Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal unemployment rates were highest in 2010, immediately after the recession, and the lowest prior to the recession in 2007, for each of the four level of educations in the four years presented (2016, 2015, 2010 and 2007). See Table 4.

TABLE 4
Employment and Unemployment Rates by Educational Level

	Employment Rates							
	Aboriginals				Non-Aboriginal			
	2007	2010	2015	2016	2007	2010	2015	2016
Less than high school	37.5	31.8	32.3	33.6	36.9	33.7	32.3	32.0
High school graduate	69.1	59.9	58.5	58.1	65.3	61.7	58.3	58.0
Completed post-secondary education	73.7	68.4	69.2	71.0	74.3	72.6	71.8	71.2
University degree	79.6	77.6	75.2	78.1	76.7	75.2	74.3	73.8

	Unemployment Rates							
	Aboriginals				Non-Aboriginal			
	2007	2010	2015	2016	2007	2010	2015	2016
Less than high school	17.0	24.0	22.8	22.4	11.9	15.6	13.4	13.4
High school graduate	9.0	14.1	12.4	13.1	6.0	8.6	7.8	7.7
Completed post-secondary education	7.8	9.4	8.2	8.3	4.3	5.9	5.2	5.4
University degree	5.0	5.3	5.7	5.8	3.7	5.3	4.7	4.9

WAGE RATES

There are positives and there are negatives.

The positives

Wages have consistently increased for non-Aboriginals and Aboriginals for each year since 2007, except in 2016, when the average hourly wage rate declined for Aboriginals by one cent, to 23.30 in 2016 from 23.31 in 2015.

On average, Aboriginals have received slightly higher percentage hourly wage increases than non-Aboriginals.

Aboriginals have worked slightly more time per week than non-Aboriginals; however on the negative side, this has not meaningfully affected the average weekly pay rates.

The average hourly wage increases for Aboriginals were higher than for non-Aboriginals for five of the years, less in three of the years and were the same in one year. But on the negative side, this has done very little to close the wage gap.

Average hourly wage rates have increased more than the consumer price index (CPI) for Aboriginals in six of the nine years, less than the CPI in two years and equal to the CPI in one year. The Average hourly wage rates for non-Aboriginals increased more than the CPI in six of the years and were less in three of the years.

The Negatives

The average hourly wages and average weekly wages are lower for Aboriginals than for non-Aboriginals.

This has been the case in each of the ten years reported here.

The overall wage gap has not narrowed in a meaningful way. In 2007 non-Aboriginals earned on average 20.46 per hour, while Aboriginals earned on average 17.84 per hour.

This was a difference of 2.60 per hour in 2007. In 2016 the difference was 2.49. In 2016 non-Aboriginals earned an average of 25.79, while Aboriginals earned an average of 23.30 per hour.

But the negatives are not all that negative. When we examine wage rates by the educational level achieved, the data paints a different picture.

HOURLY WAGE RATES BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

The higher the education completed the higher are the average hourly wage rates. This applies for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals for each of the ten years in this article.

The average hourly wage rates have increased over each of the four time periods for Aboriginals, except in 2016, when those who completed post-secondary education and for University graduates, had lower average hourly wage rates than in 2015.

The average hourly wage rates have been lower for Aboriginals than for non-Aboriginals, with the exceptions of those who have less than high school and for high school graduates in 2016.

Aboriginals who have completed post-secondary education and those who have graduated University have lower average hourly wage rates for each of the four time periods reported. This might have one conclude that there is systemic discrimination regarding pay. However, to determine whether this is the case it would be necessary to examine the wage

TABLE 5
Average Hourly and Weekly Earnings for Aboriginals Living Off-reserves and for Non-Aboriginals, Canada, Annual Averages

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Aboriginal										
Average weekly wage rate ($)	665	715	726	743	760	796	816	832	861	855
Average hours worked per week	37.3	37.4	36.8	37.1	37.1	37.1	37.2	37.0	36.9	36.7
Average hourly wage rate ($)	17.84	19.12	19.70	20.06	20.47	21.46	21.96	22.46	23.31	23.30
Percent hourly rate increase		7.2	3.0	1.8	2.0	4.8	2.3	2.3	3.8	0.0
Non-Aboriginal										
Average weekly wage rate ($)	753	783	804	819	838	865	883	899	924	943
Average hours worked per week	36.8	36.7	36.5	36.4	36.5	36.6	36.6	36.6	36.6	36.5
Average hourly wage rate ($)	20.46	21.33	22.04	22.49	22.94	23.61	24.13	24.56	25.24	25.79
Percent hourly rate increase		4.3	3.3	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.2	1.8	2.8	2.2
CPI — Percent change from previous year		2.3	0.3	1.8	2.9	1.5	0.9	2.0	1.1	1.4

Source:
Wage Rates: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_wage_AN.ivt
Consumer Price Index (CPI): Statistics Canada, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ46a-eng.htm

TABLE 6
Hourly Wage Rates by Educational Level

	Aboriginals				Non-Aboriginal			
	2007	2010	2015	2016	2007	2010	2015	2016
Less than high school	14.30	15.98	17.85	17.86	14.00	15.56	17.39	17.57
High school graduate	16.47	18.00	20.60	20.91	17.38	18.94	20.78	20.86
Completed post-secondary education	21.04	23.38	27.19	26.64	23.54	25.55	28.29	28.97
University degree	25.44	29.15	32.16	32.07	29.75	32.75	34.52	36.16

data for those in similar positions, industries, seniority and experience levels. Such an analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the increasing number of Aboriginals recently completing post-secondary education and graduating University would indicate that non-Aboriginals, on average, have greater seniority and experience, which may explain the difference in average hourly wage rates.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Employment, participation and unemployment rates vary considerably as the overall economy changes. These rates are all better in 2016 than they were after the recession in 2010, but are worse than they were in 2007, before the recession. This is the case for both Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals. Employment rates improved for Aboriginals in 2016 and

their unemployment rate stayed the same. For non-Aboriginals their unemployment rate stayed the same and their employment rate declined.

Unemployment rates increased for Aboriginal men and non-Aboriginal men in 2016. They decreased for Aboriginal women and remained the same for non-Aboriginal women in 2016.

Employment rates increased for Aboriginal men and women in 2016. They decreased for non-Aboriginal men and remained the same for non-Aboriginal women in 2016.

Average wages have increased each year since 2007 for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, except for 2016, when they were lower for Aboriginals.

One of the clearest and most consistent findings is that the higher the level of education completed the lower the unemployment rate, the higher the average hourly wage rate, and the higher the employment rate. These findings hold for Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals for each of the ten years reported in this article.

Those serious about improving the economic well-being of Aboriginals and/or non-Aboriginals should initiate actions that would increase the likelihood that our youth obtain the highest level of education they are capable of achieving.

REFERENCES

Oppenheimer, Robert. 2015. "Aboriginal Employment in 2015: A Year of Negative Results." *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development*, 10(1): 71–92.

Statistic Canada, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ46a-eng.htm

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, CANSIM table 282-0226

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_main_AN.ivt

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, CANSIM table 282-0226, custom tabulations NUt01an.ivt, abo_nwt12an.ivt and abo_yukt01an.ivt

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_ind_AN.ivt

Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey*, custom tabulation 4ctl_abo_wage_AN.ivt

The Geographic Dispersion of Aboriginals in Quebec and Its Economic Limitations

Charles-Albert Ramsay
ECONOMICS FACULTY, KIUNA INSTITUTION /
CENTRE D'ÉTUDES COLLÉGIAL INSTITUTION KIUNA
ODANAK, QUEBEC

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the state of economic activity in Aboriginal Quebec, Canada, focusing on the size of settlements both on-reserve and off-reserve. Size is an important variable in understanding the economic possibilities of a community. Data is also presented for off-reserve Aboriginals living in big cities and in smaller towns.

Findings show there are relatively few Indigenous people in Quebec and that they are scattered across many distinct nations. Most Indigenous people on-reserve live in very small settlements. Most towns in Quebec hold an Indigenous community, albeit not necessarily visible. Most Indigenous people off-reserve live in larger centres (Greater Montreal, Gatineau, Quebec City). The Outaouais region, on the north-shore of the Ottawa River, is a unique part of Quebec with its high percentage of Indigenous populations living off-reserve.

INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the geographic dispersion of the Aboriginal nations of the province of Quebec and discusses some of the economic limitations caused by the small size of many of these communities. The focus on this particular province comes from the author's own professional situation. Teaching economics at Kiuna Institution, a pre-university college,[1] led me to search for data relevant for my students, whose Aboriginal backgrounds include Kanienkehaka (Mohawk), Anicinabe (Algonquin), Abenaki, Innu (Montagnais), Atikamekw, Maliseet, Mi'kmaq, Wendat (Huron) and Eeyou (Cree).[2]

[1] Kiuna is a "centre d'études collégiales", a satellite school affiliated to Dawson College and the Cegep d'Abitibi-Témiscamingue. It is run by the Conseil en éducation des Premières Nations (CEPN), and is located in Odanak, an Abenaki community settled along the Saint-François river, near the mouth of the Saint-Lawrence.

[2] For the time being, our school has not had the pleasure to enroll Inuit students from Nunavik, or elsewhere.

Aboriginal cultural diversity is quite broad in Quebec. This diversity may be somewhat unique to Quebec, one of Canada's provinces with the highest variety of Aboriginal nations (11), whilst having a very low count of Aboriginals overall (1.8 percent). The portrait of Aboriginals in Quebec is also unique in that many speak their native languages, which cover three distinct language groups (Algic, Iroquoian, Inuit). Many also speak French and/or English, and are not covered by the "numbered" treaties of Ontario and Western Canada.

The economic situation of Aboriginals in Quebec is also very broadly diverse. Some of the poorest living conditions are found here, along with some of the highest living standards. The scale of the variation is impressive, and allows clues into the proper policies needed to fix some of the long-standing development issues Aboriginals face in Canada.

The first section will cover a short description of the populations of Aboriginals in Quebec. The second section presents the size of each First Nations/Inuit community. The third section will present data for off-reserve Aboriginals living in big cities. The fourth section presents data for smaller towns. Finally, the discussion and conclusions are presented in the fifth section.

1. IDENTITY FIGURES

The most important resource of any economy is its labour force, which conversely also acts as the most important force of consumption. The labour force is however contingent on demographics. For this reason, we start with a look at how many Aboriginals live in this country. Aboriginal populations are not absent of the Canadian labour market.

According to Statistics Canada's 2011 Census, Aboriginal population was 1,400,685 in 2011. They accounted for 4.3 percent of the total population of Canada. In Quebec, Aboriginals count for 141,915 people, which is 1.8 percent of the province's population.

This obviously means that the economic and political clout of Aboriginals vary from province to province. Their demographic weight is higher in the Western Provinces.[3] Aboriginals are a majority population in Nunavut (86.3 %), and Northwest Territories (51.9 %). They are very present in Yukon (23.1 %), Manitoba (16.7 %) and Saskatchewan (15.6 %).

TABLE 1
Population of Aboriginals in Canada and Quebec, according to Identity, 2011

Aboriginal Group	Quebec	Percentage	Canada	Percentage
Inuit	12,772	8.9	59,115	4.2
Metis	35,478	25.0	418,380	29.9
First Nations	93,664	66.1	923,190	65.9
TOTAL	141,915	100.0	1,400,685	100.0

[3] Tables and graphs from http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370438978311/1370439050610

2. COMMUNITIES AND RESERVES

Aboriginal communities in Quebec range in size but would usually be termed the size of a village or small town. Their population ranges from as little as 306 (Wôlinak) to 10,336 (Kahnawake) according to 2012 data collated by the Quebec government, from the federal Registry of Indians. (See Tables 2 and 3.)

One must consider that both Cree and Inuit are officially not considered "Indians" under the Indian Act. Neither nation refers to its settlements as "Indian Reserves". The Cree were removed from the Act when they signed the Northern Quebec and James Bay Agreement in 1975. Their villages are termed Category I land. The Inuit were never considered "Indians", their settlements are termed municipalities under Quebec law (Code municipal).

Graph 1 shows that half of the communities (29 out of 60), are inhabited by less than a thousand people. This is the case of places like Pakuashipi, Mingan, Kuujjuarapik, Eastmain, and Ouje-Bougoumou.[4] When villages have 300 or so inhabitants, it becomes difficult to provide basic economic services such as schools, health centres, sanitation and public utilities. Even with a village size of 2000 people, it is difficult to sustain a high school, a trade college, and a competitive marketplace for groceries, gas and pharmacy.

Graph 1 also shows that a good third of the communities are between 1,000 and 2,000 in population. These "mid-sized" communities are such as Inukjuak, Wemotaci, and Gesgapegiag. A few communities are large enough to be considered large villages (between 2,000 and 5,000 population). These are places like Waswanipi, Odanak, Kanesatake, Manawan, Waskaganish, Kitigan Zibi, Listuguj, Mistissini, Betsiamites, Wendake, Chisasibi, and Uashat-Maliotenam.

Only a handful of communities are larger than 5,000 people. These are Akwesasne (5,528 on the Québec side), Mashteuiatsh (6,176, but only a third live on reserve), and Kahnawake (10,336).

[4] Keep in mind that on one hand, some of these numbers may even be over-estimating populations. Many Aboriginals live off-reserve, but when time comes, they may declare themselves to live on reserve for various reasons. Their presence off-reserve may be temporary (studies, health, etc.). On the other hand, the data might also under-estimate populations. Many non-Aboriginals live in these communities and are not included in Table 2 — Population of First Nations communities, and Table 3 — Population of Inuit communities.. These numbers come from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the North, Indian Register.

TABLE 2
Population of First Nations communities, according to Nation, 2012

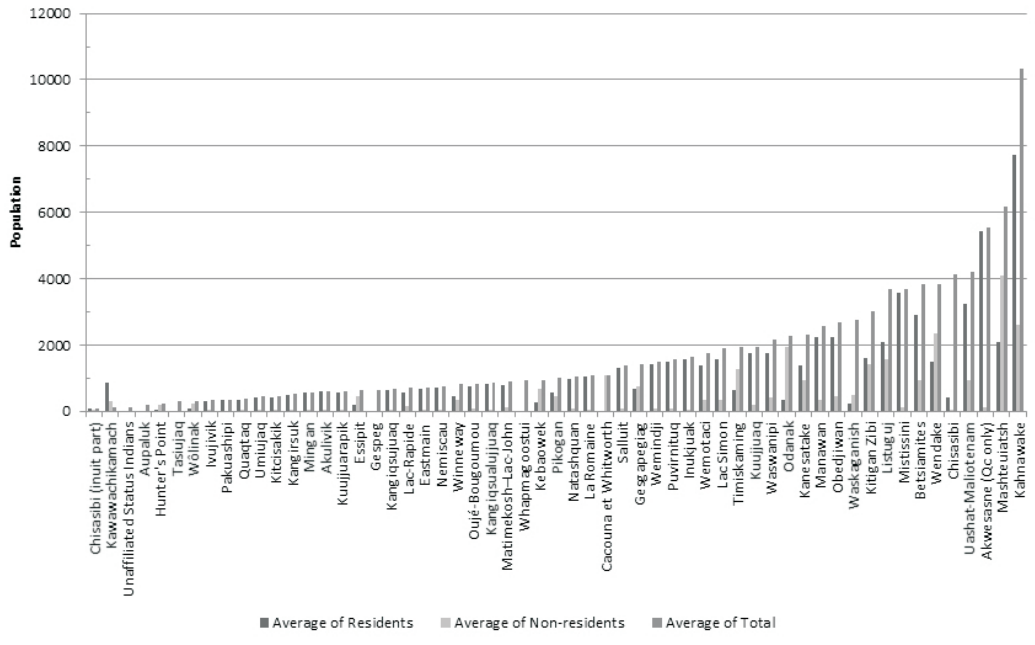
First Nation	Communities	On-Reserve	Off-Reserve	Total Aboriginal Population
Abenaki	Odanak	337	1,934	2,271
	Wôlinak	74	232	306
	TOTAL	411	2,166	2,577
Anicinabe (Algonquin)	Hunter's Point	10	212	222
	Kebaowek	276	675	951
	Kitcisakik	407	62	469
	Kitigan Zibi	1,593	1,428	3,021
	Lac-Rapide	571	141	712
	Lac Simon	1,583	329	1,912
	Pikogan	553	443	996
	Timiskaming	641	1,285	1,926
	Winneway	456	361	817
	TOTAL	6,090	4,936	11,026
Attikamekw	Manawan	2,227	361	2,588
	Obedjiwan	2,254	443	2,697
	Wemotaci	1,396	351	1,747
	TOTAL	5,877	1,155	7,032
Cree	Chisasibi	4,090	43	4,133
	Eastmain	684	32	716
	Mistissini	3,563	128	3,691
	Nemiscau	720	51	771
	Oujé-Bougoumou	753	67	820
	Waskaganish	2,290	481	2,771
	Waswanipi	1,768	411	2,179
	Wemindji	1,413	68	1,481
	Whapmagoostui	*	*	921
	TOTAL	15,281	1,281	17,483
Huron-Wendat	Wendake	1,494	2,351	3,845
Innu	Betsiamites	2,907	937	3,844
	Essipit	198	441	639
	La Romaine	1,055	43	1,098
	Mashteuiatsh	2,082	4,094	6,176
	Matimekosh–Lac-John	783	112	895
	Mingan	553	26	579
	Natashquan	969	79	1,048
	Pakuashipi	347	*	349
	Uashat-Maliotenam	3,258	934	4,192
	TOTAL	12,152	6,668	18,820
Maliseet	Cacouna et Whitworth	0	1,102	1,102
Mi'kmaq	Gespeg	*	*	643
	Gesgapegiag	672	740	1,412
	Listuguj	2,086	1,586	3,672
	TOTAL	2,758	2,326	5,727
Kanienkeha'ka (Mohawk)	Akwesasne (Qc only)	5,423	105	5,528
	Kahnawake	7,745	2,591	10,336
	Kanesatake	1,383	938	2,321
	TOTAL	14,551	3,634	18,185
Naskapi	Kawawachikamach	857	313	1,170
Status Indians Not Affiliated With a Nation		*	*	124
Total First Nations Population		59,471	25,932	87,091

Source: Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones du Québec. http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/nations/population_en.htm

TABLE 3
Population of Inuit Communities, 2012

Nation	Communities	Residents	Non-residents	Total
Inuit	Akulivik	590	18	608
	Aupaluk	na	na	178
	Chisasibi (partie inuite)	90	12	102
	Inukjuak	1,586	64	1,650
	Ivujivik	323	19	342
	Kangiqsualujjuaq	813	64	877
	Kangiqsujuaq	655	39	694
	Kangirsuk	488	56	544
	Kuujjuaq	1,740	197	1,937
	Kuujjuarapik	569	45	614
	Puvirnituq	1,486	100	1,586
	Quaqtaq	341	25	366
	Salluit	1,318	84	1,402
	Tasiujaq	na	na	298
	Umiujaq	430	12	442
Total Inuit Population		10,429	735	11,640

GRAPH 1
Quebec Aboriginal Communities Ranked by Total Population, 2012



3. OFF-RESERVE IN THE BIG CITIES

What about Aboriginals living off-reserve? According to census data, most of them live in the larger cities. Table 4 shows the population of city dwellers in Quebec who declared being from Aboriginal "ancestry".[5]

The largest group of these is in Montreal, but they only represent 2.2 percent of the population. With Laval and Longueuil, there are 51,855 Aboriginal people in the metro area. Quebec City, Gatineau, Sherbrooke and Saguenay also have larger Aboriginal populations.

Keep in mind here that these data are coded as "Aboriginal ancestry", which is a way to self-identify as Aboriginal, if you have some lineage.

The census also defines "Aboriginal identity" in a much more strict way. For example, in Montreal, Aboriginal population drops to 9,510 when measured as "identity." This includes only those who have a federally recognized status as First Nations, Inuit[6], or Métis.

Again, Laval and Longueuil are at the top of the chart. Quebec City and Gatineau, both government towns, are in high standing. Among the Aboriginals, the First Nations usually outnumber the Métis and Inuit. Exception in Saguenay, where the Métis are the majority.

TABLE 4
Aboriginal Ancestry Populations in Quebec Cities, Ranked by Size of City, 2011

Location	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total	Percent Aboriginal
Montreal	36,270	1,576,375	1,612,645	2.2%
Quebec City	14,300	488,295	502,600	2.8%
Laval	7,450	385,270	392,725	1.9%
Gatineau	19,910	241,755	261,665	7.6%
Longueuil	8,135	219,835	227,970	3.6%
Sherbrooke	5,920	144,330	150,255	3.9%
Saguenay	5,755	135,580	141,335	4.1%
Lévis	3,130	132,700	135,835	2.3%
Trois-Rivières	3,620	123,355	126,975	2.9%
Terrebonne	3,385	102,225	105,605	3.2%
Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu	3,685	86,695	90,380	4.1%
Repentigny	2,275	79,090	81,370	2.8%
Brossard	1,355	77,430	78,790	1.7%
Drummondville	2,300	67,025	69,325	3.3%
Saint-Jérôme	2,770	63,735	66,500	4.2%
Granby	2,115	59,365	61,480	3.4%
Blainville	1,475	51,590	53,070	2.8%
Saint-Hyacinthe	1,555	49,440	50,995	3.0%
Shawinigan	1,530	46,500	48,035	3.2%
Châteauguay	1,750	43,400	45,150	3.9%

[5] The census data was downloaded by the author who proceeded to table the data.

[6] Doubts may be raised about the accuracy of the data, especially concerning the Inuit in Montreal. The figure here seems very low.

TABLE 5
Aboriginal Identity Populations in Quebec Cities, Ranked by Size of City, 2011

Location	Inuit	Metis	First Nations	Total Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total Population	Percent Aboriginal
Quebec City	100	1,770	2,430	4,630	497,960	502,590	0.9%
Laval	55	820	1,265	2,330	390,395	392,725	0.6%
Gatineau	110	4,025	4,625	9,065	252,605	261,670	3.5%
Longueuil	45	645	1,330	2,225	225,745	227,970	1.0%
Sherbrooke	0	480	765	1,350	148,905	150,255	0.9%
Saguenay	20	2,235	1,120	3,545	137,785	141,330	2.5%
Lévis	0	310	345	745	135,090	135,835	0.5%
Trois-Rivières	0	565	805	1,425	125,550	126,975	1.1%
Terrebonne	0	130	555	740	104,865	105,605	0.7%
Saint-Jean-Richelieu	0	235	555	855	89,525	90,380	0.9%
Repentigny	0	235	300	570	80,800	81,370	0.7%
Brossard	0	125	165	310	78,480	78,790	0.4%
Drummondville	0	240	265	585	68,745	69,330	0.8%
Saint-Jérôme	0	290	355	680	65,820	66,500	1.0%
Granby	0	145	245	425	61,055	61,480	0.7%
Blainville	20	120	255	415	52,660	53,075	0.8%
Saint-Hyacinthe	55	60	250	390	50,605	50,995	0.8%
Shawinigan	0	190	370	585	47,450	48,035	1.2%
Châteauguay	70	140	525	740	44,415	45,155	1.6%

4. OFF-RESERVE IN THE SMALL TOWNS

Some smaller cities in Quebec have a high proportion of Aboriginals, and usually hold a strategic geography concerning these populations. Using ancestry data, a small town like Fort-Coulonge, in the Outaouais region, shows a surprising level of Aboriginal population at 53.7 percent. It seems to be the only city in Quebec where a majority of the population is of Aboriginal ancestry.

Most of the cities listed in the Table 6 are neighbouring Aboriginal reservations, such as Maniwaki, Oka, Chandler, Les Escoumins, La Tuque, Sept-Îles, Roberval, Port-Cartier, Rouyn-Noranda, and Chibougamau.

Using identity data, the percentages fall as shown in Table 7. However, Fort-Coulonge still merits attention. With a share of 32.6 percent Aboriginal identity, it is really a unique town in Quebec demographics. The cities of the valleys of the Ottawa and Gatineau rivers (Outaouais region) stand out. Maniwaki, Pontiac, Cantley, La Pêche, Val-des-Monts, and finally Gatineau, are in the top 20 list of Quebec cities. This is a testament of the presence of Anicinabe in the Ottawa Valley. One manifestation of this is the Alliance autochtone du Québec, whose main office is in Gatineau. This federally recognized organization represents the interests of off-reserve Aboriginals who may not be included in the Indian Registry, or be self-identified as Métis. On the Ontario side, this presence was recognized recently by the inclusion of off-reserve Aboriginals in a 2012 land-settlement deal between the province of Ontario, the federal government and Algonquins. On the Quebec side, the absence of

TABLE 6
Aboriginal Ancestry Populations in Quebec Towns,
Ranked by Share of Aboriginals, 2011

Community/City	Aboriginal Population	Non-Aboriginal Population	Total Population	Percent Aboriginal
Fort-Coulonge	650	560	1,210	53.7%
Maniwaki	955	2,810	3,765	25.4%
Rivière-Rouge	665	3,690	4,360	15.3%
Pontiac	805	4,815	5,615	14.3%
Chandler	870	6,700	7,570	11.5%
Oka	405	3,400	3,805	10.6%
Val-des-Monts	1,095	9,320	10,410	10.5%
Les Escoumins	180	1,795	1,980	9.1%
La Tuque	965	10,160	11,125	8.7%
Cantley	800	9,080	9,880	8.1%
Mont-Laurier	1,075	12,320	13,395	8.0%
La Pêche	600	6,885	7,480	8.0%
Gatineau	19,910	241,755	261,665	7.6%
Sept-Îles	1,920	23,420	25,335	7.6%
Roberval	710	9,015	9,720	7.3%
Port-Cartier	450	6,075	6,530	6.9%
Dolbeau-Mistassini	885	12,805	13,690	6.5%
Rouyn-Noranda	2,355	37,635	39,990	5.9%
Chibougamau	430	7,050	7,480	5.7%
Salaberry-de-Valleyfield	2,225	36,505	38,725	5.7%

TABLE 7
Aboriginal Identity Populations in Quebec Towns,
Ranked by Share of Aboriginals, 2011

Location	Inuit	Metis	First Nations	Total Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal	Total Population	Percent Aboriginal
Fort-Coulonge	0	290	65	395	815	1,210	32.6%
Maniwaki	0	340	215	565	3,200	3,765	15.0%
Les Escoumins	0	210	70	290	1,690	1,980	14.6%
Pontiac	0	490	140	685	4,930	5,615	12.2%
Oka	0	30	290	330	3,475	3,805	8.7%
La Tuque	0	315	475	960	10,160	11,120	8.6%
Rivière-Rouge	0	265	80	355	4,010	4,365	8.1%
Roberval	0	315	375	720	9,000	9,720	7.4%
Sept-Îles	50	990	495	1,560	23,775	25,335	6.2%
Port-Cartier	40	220	60	370	6,155	6,525	5.7%
Dolbeau-Mistassini	0	580	125	725	12,960	13,685	5.3%
La Pêche	0	215	130	350	7,125	7,475	4.7%
Gaspé	0	420	220	650	14,085	14,735	4.4%
Cantley	0	225	190	425	9,450	9,875	4.3%
Val-des-Monts	0	175	225	415	9,995	10,410	4.0%
Chibougamau	0	155	100	295	7,185	7,480	3.9%
Chandler	0	220	50	285	7,285	7,570	3.8%
Gatineau	110	4,025	4,625	9,065	252,605	261,670	3.5%
Saint-Félicien	0	215	75	305	9,700	10,005	3.0%
Val-d'Or	0	395	405	850	30,370	31,220	2.7%

reserves near Ottawa-Gatineau, or upstream the Ottawa River, should not lead one to believe in the absence of Anicinabe peoples in the area.

Another trend is the Métis-First Nations issue. In the smaller cities, there are generally more Métis, than First Nations (Status Indians). This was not the case in the larger cities, where First Nations where the majority of Aboriginals.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Those who are interested in furthering the economic development of Indigenous peoples in Canada will find it interesting to see that we can sum up a few facts for the case of Quebec.

- There are relatively few Indigenous people in Quebec, and they are scattered across many distinct nations.
- Most Indigenous peoples on-reserve live in very small settlements.
- Most towns have an Indigenous community, albeit not necessarily visible.
- Most Indigenous peoples off-reserve live in the three larger centres (Greater Montreal, Gatineau, Quebec City).
- The Outaouais region, on the north-shore of the Ottawa river, is a unique part of Quebec with its high percentage of Indigenous populations living off-reserve.

What can these findings be helpful to understand? Firstly, any local authority should be interested in the demographics of his or her locality. Indigenous peoples have needs in terms of public services such as health care, education, and justice, which have long gone underserved, both on, and off, reserves.

Secondly, those in charge of economic development may find it beneficial to see that opportunities lay where numbers warrant activity. One may be tempted to recommend that the size of settlements be increased to allow for the implementation of public services on a feasible scale. When villages grow to 3,000 people or more, it becomes much easier to provide schools, health care, and justice services.

For example, it is not usually possible to provide a local high school in a community where the student body population, aged 12 to 17, is less than 400. This means that most villages of fewer than 3,000 people cannot sustain a high school, and therefore forego the employment opportunities in the education sector, to say nothing of the social and economic benefits of a locally determined and culturally appropriate education. The same reasoning applies to health care provision, courts of law, and private-sector services such as Internet services, grocery stores, restaurants, and auto mechanics.

Thirdly, those in charge of urban issues should appreciate the information. Authorities in Montreal and Gatineau should recognize the importance of setting up projects of all sorts which could benefit Indigenous peoples already living in these cities. The cities must also find ways to allow Indigenous cultures to thrive, for example with restaurants, hotels, tourism facilities, cultural centres, Indigenous-run museums, etc. Such initiatives are already underway in many places, these numbers can maybe help convince authorities of the relevance of such projects.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2011 Census. (2011). *National Household Survey — Aboriginal Peoples Survey*. Ottawa : Statistics Canada. Data retrieved on 13 October 2016, organized in tables by author.

SAAQ. (2012). *Tableau des nations autochtones du Québec*. Québec : Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones du Québec. http://www.autochtones.gouv.qc.ca/nations/population_en.htm

Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development

Call for Papers
Volume 11, 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.

Volume 11, Issue 1 of JAED will be published in Fall 2018 in preparation for the Cando 25th Annual National Conference & AGM. Papers should relate to one of the following areas:

- Aboriginal Community Economic and Enterprise Development
- Aboriginal Small Business and Entrepreneurship
- The Analysis of the Aboriginal Economy
- Sharing and/or Evaluating Current Aboriginal Economic Activity
- Aboriginal Corporate Responsibility, Social Auditing, and the Triple Bottom Line
- Economic Partnerships and Government Relationships
- The Relationship between Indigenous Knowledge and Economic Development
- Indigenous Land Management and Economic Development
- Aboriginal Organizations and Management
- International Aboriginal Trade and the Global Economy
- Aboriginal Community Development: The Role of Elders, Women and Youth
- Change: Traditional and Modern Aboriginal Economies
- An Historical Analysis of Aboriginal Economic Development in Canada
- The Role of Research in Aboriginal Community, Economic, and Business Development
- Community Wellness and Making Poverty History

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

Warren Weir — Editor
c/o Svitlana Konoval
Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers
9635 — 45th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6E 5Z8
E-mail: skonoval@edo.ca
Phone: 1-800-463-9300, ext. 231
Fax: (780) 429-7487

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 11, Issue 1, is March 31, 2018**. 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 11, Issue 2. Should you require further information please contact Svitlana Konoval, Cando Manager, Administrative Services 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.

Submission of a manuscript implies commitment to publish in the Journal. Submission to JAED also implies that the manuscript has not been published elsewhere, nor is it under consideration by another journal. Authors who are in doubt about what constitutes prior publication should consult the editor.

The Journal features academic articles, examples from economic practitioners, book reviews and the state of the Aboriginal economy.

Learning from Experience from practitioners, academics, consultants and executives include interpreted case studies, evaluation and commentary on popular and current approaches and tools of Aboriginal economic development, advocacy of particular approaches and solutions, successful or failed efforts, and the identification of important economic development problems that are in need of solutions.

Lessons from Research from academics features scholarly inquiry, debate and commentary on how we frame, perceive, interpret, research and contribute to the field of Aboriginal economic development.

The State of the Aboriginal Economy will feature current views on the evolving state of the Aboriginal economy and responses to changes in the global economy, corporate activity, government policy — for example the Federal Framework on Aboriginal Economic Development, or the social economy.

Reviews of Current Books and Literature features recent literature exploring aspects of economic development relevant to Aboriginal peoples and community development.

We believe such submissions will be particularly valuable, and it is our objective to publish as many as possible, if not in this issue then in subsequent issues of the JAED and/or in Cando N-Side News. We want to know what people are doing, what is working, what is not working, and why.

NIEEF | National Indigenous Economic Education Fund

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

National Indigenous Economic Education Fund (NIEEF) Scholarships

NIEEF is Cando's charitable organization, which grants annual scholarships to Indigenous students studying in a field related to economic development. To be eligible, students must be attending or currently enrolled in a program at a post-secondary institution, and must be a Cando student member.

Each year, NIEEF grants three scholarships each worth $2,000.

Aboriginal Economic Developer Certification Process

Cando has certified over 300 professionals across Canada at both the Technician Aboriginal Economic Developer (TAED) and Professional Aboriginal Economic Developer (PAED) Levels. Being certified assures employers that you are highly qualified to practice in the field of Aboriginal Economic Development.

If you're looking to enhance your skills, further your career and be recognized as an expert in Aboriginal economic development, then Cando's Certified Aboriginal Economic Developer Process is for you.

National Youth Panel

The National Youth Panel is an inspiring showcase of the achievements of six highly motivated Indigenous youth from across Canada who have been nominated by their peers and recognized as national role models. All selected panelists are invited to the Annual National Cando Conference & AGM where they will share their inspiring stories to a National audience.

Visit **www.edo.ca** for more information.

2016 National Youth Panelists