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One Path, Many Directions:
**The Complex and Diverse Nature
of Contemporary Aboriginal Reality**

Une destination,
plusieurs chemins:
**diversité et complexité des
parcours en milieu autochtone**

Guest Editors/Rédacteurs invités :
Dan Beavon, Dr. Mark S. Dockstator
and/et Dr. Chantelle A. M. Richmond

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LETTERS/COURRIER

ONE PATH, MANY DIRECTIONS: THE COMPLEX AND DIVERSE NATURE OF CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL REALITY

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Mark S. Dockstator is a status Indian, a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and currently a professor of Indigenous Studies at Trent University. Professor Dockstator is a lawyer, having received his doctorate in law from Osgoode Hall Law School. He currently teaches in the areas of Indigenous knowledge, law and politics, with a specialty in Aboriginal governance, economic development and the analysis of contemporary issues. Dr. Dockstator is the Chairperson of the First Nations Statistical Institute, a newly formed national Crown corporation. He also has a great deal of business experience, having owned and operated a number of business enterprises. He currently operates a national consulting company that specializes in Aboriginal-based research.

Dan Beavon is Director of Strategic Research and Analysis at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Dan holds a B.A. and an M.A. in criminology from Simon Fraser University. He also pursued doctoral studies at Carleton University in sociology. He is affiliated with the University of Western Ontario as an Adjunct Research Professor in the Department of Sociology. Dan is the winner of the 2008 Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada Gold Medal Award that acknowledges outstanding scientific work which has led to the improvement and enhancement of public well-being.

The title for this journal issue is derived from a traditional Indigenous teaching. The fundamental tenant embedded in Indigenous philosophy, as illustrated by the teaching, is that we as Human Beings all travel the same path. Our common journey begins when we are born and ends, as with all things, when we pass away. In between these two points in time we exercise our free will and make choices. The choices we make, in how we live our daily lives, take us in many different directions and lead us to the strength of Humankind… our diversity.

This journal is an expression of this traditional teaching. As Aboriginal peoples we share in the common journey of all peoples and contribute to the marvellous diversity of Humankind. As a distinct group however, Aboriginal peoples experience a unique set of conditions that impact on and define the nature of our existence. The purpose of this journal is to give the reader a glimpse, however brief, into the diverse and complex nature of contemporary Aboriginal reality in Canada.

As stated in the title to this edition, this journal issue is built around a simple cause, helping to ensure that the public discourse on Aboriginal issues is based on a more complete understanding of the complex and diverse realities of First Nation, Inuit and Métis peoples and communities. Public deliberations about Aboriginal issues continue to be derailed by old preconceptions, incomplete understandings, and outright disinformation. Although levels of public awareness of Aboriginal issues have improved, there remains a great deal of room for improvement.

As researchers interested in public policy, we believe that effective knowledge transfer – including sound research, mobilization of research findings, and open and informed debate involving all stakeholders – ultimately leads to better research, better public policy, and better outcomes.

As Indigenous scholars, we feel a particular responsibility to set an example for public deliberations about key issues facing Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Indeed, a good deal of our time is spent enlightening students and colleagues about the tragic and painful pasts of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, providing frameworks through which they can understand current realities, and challenging them to educate others. Through this journal, we extend this work to the broader public policy discourse. We expose Canadians to the extent of diversity of

Aboriginal people, and challenge readers to move beyond the myths and misinformation that have tended to cloud their views and understandings of Aboriginal peoples.

As a means of doing this, in the following pages we offer the reader a sampling of information that addresses the complexity and diversity of Aboriginal peoples, and of the many complex issues they face, through four discrete lenses: cultural diversity and richness; geographic nuance; health and socioeconomic complexity; and diversity of public opinion.

Newhouse and Heiber lead off the first section on cultural diversity and richness. They provide an exciting study that details how Aboriginal people, culture and imagery have established a growing and vibrant presence in cyberspace. Anderson's discussion of treaty annuity payments explores the cultural, economic and political significance of historic treaties to Canada's First Nations, while simultaneously addressing the shortcomings of the annuity program. Next, Norris explains how linguistic classification systems, which most non-expert observers know very little about, can understate the extent of linguistic diversity in a region, as well as the robustness of individual languages. In the final paper of this section Galley calls for new policy approaches to supporting and recognizing Aboriginal languages.

The next section, geographic nuance, consists of an exhaustive study of Aboriginal migration and mobility trends. In this study, Clatworthy updates findings from previous reports with 2006 Census data, and shows how Aboriginal population growth in different regions and geographic settings is influenced by migration. It's an important study that directly challenges the oft-cited assertion that urban Aboriginal population growth is being driven by a mass exodus of First Nations people from reserves.

Cooke and Guimond lead off the third section, health and socioeconomic complexity, with an update of the Registered Indians Human Development Index showing that, between 2001 and 2006, progress in closing the socioeconomic gap between Registered Indians and other Canadians may have stalled. Next, Dewache presents findings from a qualitative validation study of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Community Well-being Index: based on a series of interviews with residents of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation, Dewache finds support for the well-being scores as they appear in the Community Well-being Index, but also concern that discussions of well-being ought not be limited to analyses of socioeconomic data but encompass issues such as health, cultural continuity and expressions of self-determination. Adams, meanwhile, uses findings from an opinion survey to illustrate how Aboriginal people in Manitoba view their living conditions, and are concerned with improving them.

Penney and colleagues explore the tragic problem of suicide in Inuit communities, and their findings suggest that factors relating to social connections and networks appear to be associated with lower suicide rates. Next, Eni and Senécal confront the sensitivities surrounding fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and argue the need for more social frameworks to be applied in research on this topic. Aman examines factors associated with success of Aboriginal high school students in British Columbia. Finally, Mann calls for a discussion of new approaches to mitigate the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and girls.

The fourth section, diversity of public opinion, wraps up the journal with a very brief glimpse at the complex range of questions that will define the future of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Jedwab, utilizing reams of public opinion data, seeks to situate Canadians' attitudes towards the place of Aboriginal people in the Canadian narrative in relation to attitudes towards Canadian cultural value constructs such as official bilingualism and multiculturalism; he concludes that the objective of relating "the multiple stories that reflect Canada's reality" represents "an ongoing challenge for Canadian policy-makers and educators."

A choice was made early on in the development of this journal to focus on the diversity and complexity of Aboriginal peoples historically and as they are today. In a 2007 interview, Stewart Clatworthy told CBC News that demographic analysis shows that if *Indian Act* rules regarding who is eligible for Registered Indian status are not changed, "you could essentially create a situation where there would be no one born who would qualify." Litigation currently before the Supreme Court of Canada has challenged the constitutionality of some of those same rules. Land and resource claims are slowly being settled, Métis registries are being established to facilitate the regulation of Métis Aboriginal hunting and fishing rights, and self-governing institutions in Inuit regions continue to grow. Many more journals could be filled exploring each of these questions in turn, along with others. The diversity of Aboriginal Canada cannot be captured in a still photo.

Nevertheless, it is our hope that this journal represents a useful snapshot of the diversity, the depth, the richness, of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. There is so much to know, to appreciate, to feel. So come, turn the page, and know us better.

TO REPRESENT OURSELVES: EMERGING ABORIGINAL DIGITAL IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper explores the emerging presence of Indigenous peoples as digital citizens in the new digital world. Its focus is on how Indigenous organizations in Canada are exercising digital citizenship adding a new dimension to cultural diversity within Canada. While this is no easy way to assess the size of the Indigenous presence on the web, a quick survey of social networking sites and a general Google search indicates a significant presence across the entire web that is identifiably Indigenous and modern. This digital presence includes both individuals and organizations that use elements of historical Indigenous culture as significant aspects of their representation. The rise of digital citizenship and the extension of Indigenous identities to this new space raise interesting questions about the reflexive nature of Indigenous identities and Indigenous communities.

Cet article explore la présence émergente des peuples autochtones comme cybercitoyens du nouveau monde numérique. Il met l'accent sur la manière dont les organisations autochtones du Canada exercent leur cybercitoyenneté en ajoutant une nouvelle dimension à la diversité culturelle au Canada. Bien qu'il n'existe aucun moyen simple d'évaluer l'importance de la présence autochtone sur le Web, une reconnaissance rapide des sites de réseautage social et une recherche générale avec Google révèlent une présence distinctement autochtone et moderne d'importance dans l'ensemble du Web. Cette cyberprésence inclut les personnes et les organisations qui utilisent des éléments de la culture historique autochtone en tant qu'aspects significatifs de leur représentation. L'augmentation du nombre de cybercitoyens autochtones et la prolongation de l'identité autochtone dans ce nouvel espace soulèvent des questions intéressantes sur la nature réflexive de l'identité et des collectivités autochtones.

Issues of identity and representation as acts of citizenship among Indigenous peoples in Canada have been a constant part of the cultural landscape since the inception of the 1876 *Indian Act* which defined who was and was not an "Indian." In traditional Indigenous societies, identities and representation were not citizenship issues in the way we conceive of them in the contemporary world (Peroff 1997; Weaver 2001). Individual and collective identities arose through a system of family, clan and nation and geographical location. The issue of identity choice as

a citizenship act, both individual and collective, is actually a modern concern (Grossberg 1996; Bauman 1996), evolving out of the European enlightenment that moved away from the use of formal class stratifications (lords, ladies, freemen and serfs) as identity markers to our current conceptions of identity as a negotiated site, consisting of a mélange of individual and collective conceptions wrapped in a force-field of power.

In a modern sense, we discuss identities in the plural rather than the singular, assuming that we may have

more than one and have moved away from the notion of a fixed identity for life (Gergen 2001). Modern life is comprised of multiple identities attempting to co-exist in overlapping social and political spaces. For Indigenous peoples in Canada (and around the world), identity has been a struggle against external representations, usually through stereotypes (Warry 2008) and a constant attempt to gain control over identity and its representation, an act which Newhouse (2000) considers a fundamental act of self-governance.

The digital world is perhaps the latest forum where these issues are again being played out as Indigenous peoples engage, project their identities outward and establish a new presence. The emergence of the internet as a new site for communication and presentation of self has provided Indigenous organizations in Canada with new means (text, image, video and sound) to reclaim and enhance the process of defining Indigenous identities, and to challenge the ability of others to represent them. Through the choice of images used on their websites, they can create new representations of Indigenous people in Canada, in effect, creating new identities for themselves. These representations can be complex and multi-faceted, challenging the older stereotypes of "savage" and "primitive." These websites illustrate a diversity of interests and involvements among Indigenous communities and organizations[1], adding a dimension to the representation of diversity in Canada when seen through the lens of "digital citizenship."

The growth in the use and popularity of the net over the last decade is having a profound effect on how people interact with each other, how organizations market and represent themselves, and how people acquire information and knowledge as well as represent themselves. The fact that the net is the first "location" in human history that potentially allows for world-wide access and freedom of expression, makes it the first community to which anyone (and everyone) can enter as equals, regardless of place, language or culture. Everyone equally has to go through the process of learning the technology and skills required to participate. People who traditionally have been omitted or lost from mainstream views can choose to participate in "digital citizenship" as an equal citizen (Niezen 2005).

The digital world also consists of newcomers and natives. Prensky (2001) makes a distinction between "digital natives," those individuals who began "surfing" the internet as children, sometimes before they can string a full sentence together, and the rest of us, whom he calls "digital immigrants." Given that Indigenous people in Canada represent its fastest growing cultural group and as a youthful population enjoys a majority of "digital natives," it should not be surprising then that Indigenous people in Canada as "digital citizens" have embraced this new form of citizenship as a way to define their own identities. Both "immigrants and natives" use the various mediums offered through the web, including videos, sounds, blogs and other social media such as Facebook or Myspace and most recently Ning and Twitter to create cyber communities and in the process altering how they are seen by others and their own view of themselves.

While a count of Indigenous websites is impossible, one can obtain an idea of the scope, extent and depth of Indigenous participation in digital citizenship. Niezen (2005) explores in some depth its characterization, dating it back to the early 1990's. The Canadian Aboriginal Portal (www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca) illustrates the depth and the current diverse presence of Canadian-based Indigenous websites. The Government of Australia also has a similar site: The Indigenous Portal (www.indigenous. gov.au). Bill's Aboriginal links (www.bloorstreet.com/ 300block/aborl.htm) provides an excellent set of links. NativeWeb (www.nativeweb.org) describes itself as "resources for Indigenous cultures around the world."

CREATING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES

Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada have embraced the internet as a way to engage and educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about their political agendas and social issues, extending their citizenship activities into the digital sphere. Participation takes the form of websites that provide voice in this new digital community for individuals and collectives. The Assembly of First Nations (www.afn.ca), a national body of chiefs representing First Nations peoples across the country, posts comments on recent developments involving Indigenous people in Canada and explains the issues and concerns of First Nations people in Canada. Through the web, they are proactively creating new images of modern Indigenous peoples in Canada, discussing their concerns and providing an alternative perspective than that provided by mainstream media. Their site also contains links to other Indigenous and government sites, creating a sense of a linked community. The web then becomes an expression of a foundational idea in Indigenous traditional thought: interconnectedness.

The Métis National Council (www.metisnation.ca) is another prominent Indigenous political organization in Canada. It is a member-elected organization that represents Métis peoples in Canada from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Its main concerns are Métis rights in Canada. Its presence on the web works to illuminate the diversity among Indigenous

peoples in Canada; not all Indigenous people in Canada share the same cultures or political objectives or social and political status. It communicates the unique heritage of Métis peoples in Canada, and works to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples about their culture. It also invites people to join them in advancing Métis political objectives, in effect, asking others to exercise their citizenship rights.

Indigenous women in Canada also have their own voice on the web; they are represented collectively through the Native Women's Association of Canada's website (www.nwac-hq.org). Urban aboriginal peoples are represented by the National Aboriginal Friendship Centres (www.nafc.ca) and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (www.abo-peoples.org). Inuit people are present through organizations such as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (www.itk.ca) and Inuit women by Pauktuutit (www.pauktuutit.ca). Aboriginal two-spirited people and two-spirited issues are represented at sites such 2spirits.com (www.2spirits.com). All of these organizations, through their websites, are creating new images of who Indigenous people in Canada are, and challenging entrenched stereotypes. These websites are examples of a strong, proactive presence in illuminating the diversity of Indigenous identities in Canada; they also add an additional layer to the multi-cultural representation of the country.

ADVOCACY AND IDENTITIES

Advocacy websites create a space where Indigenous voices discuss Indigenous issues. They also offer a way for individuals, both Indigenous and non, to educate themselves on the issues facing Indigenous people in Canada today from Indigenous perspectives. These websites play a role in the ongoing formation of Indigenous identity in Canada through the forums and information they offer. Through educating people in how the past plays a role in the present, they create a depth to Indigenous identity that is lost in the mainstream media and standard stereotypes. They fill in the spiritual, psychological and emotional dimensions that are often missing from the less interactive and personal information sources. Some examples include:

- The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (www.trc-cvr.ca) provides information about Indian Residential Schools and their effect on generations of people and communities, including individuals who never themselves attended these schools. The Commission plans to document survivor stories, creating a national archive to ensure this traumatic piece of Canadian and Indigenous history is not lost or forgotten.
- The Aboriginal Healing Foundation website (www.ahf.ca) provides a repository of research and best practices for dealing with the effects of Residential Schools.

- The Sisters in Spirit campaign (www.nwac-hq.org/en/background.html), seeks to bring attention to the large number of Indigenous women in Canada that go missing and the fact that these disappearances do not receive the due diligence of the investigative authorities in Canada to find them. It provides a pictorial listing of missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- The Native Women's Association's website gives Indigenous women in Canada their own voice to counteract the stereotypes that they continue to face, as well as a place to reclaim their traditional position as influential voices in their communities.

All of these organizations, through their websites, are examples of the proactive steps Indigenous people in Canada are taking to create identities for themselves. They offer a depth to the struggles facing Indigenous peoples by providing specific examples and real people ordinary Canadians can identify with.

DIGITAL IMAGES AND IDENTITIES

Indigenous organizations are aware of their role as prominent voices on Indigenous issues on the net and have chosen to use particular pictures and symbols to help portray the image they want others to see. The portrayal of Indigenous issues and identities have often been problematic for Indigenous people in Canada as historically they have been represented by the words, interpretations and images of non-Indigenous people (Warry 2008). Such images include the stereotypes of the "noble savage," or the drunken Indian. Sometimes the stereotype is simply that of living in poverty, undereducated and unmotivated. For Indigenous women, it includes being subservient labourers and sex symbols. Indigenous organizations are using the web and their digital citizenship to present a more complex and self-defined image of the realities of Indigenous peoples.

The idea that Indigenous people are using the web to put forward an image of a more diverse group of people with complex issues and identities can be said to be a move towards an acknowledgement of the fusion of the traditional and the Euro-modern lives that most Indigenous people in Canada are living – or perhaps a move towards embracing a more bicultural stance within Canada. What is interesting about how Indigenous organizations are portraying themselves is that many are choosing to use a collage of images. These images, instead of providing a clear definition of what that organization thinks it is to be Indigenous in Canada, leave room for interpretation, following a more Indigenous paradigm of learning through personal thought and experience (Deloria 1997).

FIGURE 1: Chiefs of Ontario Header.

Source: Chiefs of Ontario. 2009. Home. http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/.

For example the website for the Chiefs of Ontario (www.chiefs-of-ontario.org) uses the image of an Indigenous man, probably in his early twenties, in a full head dress, standing on the side of a pristine clear lake (fig. 1). Behind the young man, slightly blurred, is what looks like a factory with a series of Canadian flags strung out along its side. We interpret this collage of images as challenging past stereotypical images through representing indigeneity in its current form: that of traditions forged with the reality of the Canadian nation-state. But the ultimate meaning of the image remains open to interpretation: what does this image of a mixture of Indigenous and Canadian symbols mean to this organization? Does the blurriness of the objects representing Canada signify uncertainty of the connection between Indigenous people and the nation-state of Canada? The use of a collage of images clearly demonstrates the complexity of Indigenous identities in Canada and shows how the internet is being utilized to explore this complexity.

FIGURE 2: AFN Header.

Source: Assembly of First Nations. 2009. Home. http://www.afn.ca/.

The use of collage to represent the diversity of Indigenous identities and issues in Canada is also embraced by other Indigenous organizations. The website for the Assembly of First Nations has a collage of a group of Indigenous men in traditional regalia, a war veteran in uniform with his remembrance poppy and flag whose symbol is not clear but is the colours of red, white and black (colours commonly found on the medicine wheel), a young Indigenous child and a picture of a dreamcatcher (fig. 2). These images are both traditional and current, Indigenous and Canadian. We see this as representative of the fused reality (Little Bear 2000; Newhouse 2004) of Indigenous identity in Canada.

The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit organization of Canada, has a picture of wildflowers gone to seed, a young Inuit boy dressed in modern everyday clothes and a large inukshuk (which looks much like the current symbol for the 2010 Olympic Games) at the edge of the ocean on a pristine day (fig. 3). This is another fused identity embracing a reality of traditional and modern symbols, in this case also merged in the inukshuk itself.

FIGURE 3: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. 2009. Home. http://www.itk.ca/.

Another example of the blending of the traditional with the modern is found on the website of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. It has as its logo the Toronto skyline within a dreamcatcher; the portrait of an Indigenous family is in the forefront (fig. 4). The Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society has at its logo a black print of a human foot with a red maple leaf (the symbol on the Canadian flag) connected strategically to the curve of the footprint, both outlined in white (fig. 5). Perhaps the motive behind these collages is to promote a variety of images to be associated with both Indigenous people and specifically these organizations. Although pictures on many of the Indigenous websites often include images of children, or of a young person dressed in traditional regalia, together with pictures of the land they are from (purportedly) as well as ancestral pictures or images, on

FIGURE 4: Native Child and Family Services Toronto.

Source: Native Child and Family Services Toronto. 2009. Home. http://www.nativechild.org/.

FIGURE 5: Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society.

Source: Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society. 2006. http://www.blackfoot.ca/.

the web these organizations are choosing to move beyond these images to create a more complex image of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We argue that these organizations are proactively creating images of modern Indigenous peoples and the organizations that represent them, challenging the image of the stereotypical Indigenous person perhaps to one who is a member of a group of people who are diverse in both interests and identities. Whether these identity images are effective is beyond the scope of this paper and requires further research.

CREATING CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Many Indigenous organizations use traditional cultural symbols alone or presented within organizational logos to create their identity on the web. The common denominator among many of the logos being created by these Indigenous organizations is that they are mostly contained within a circle or the image of a dreamcatcher or medicine wheel. Both take as the foundational form a circle, which for many Indigenous nations in Canada has spiritual and cultural significance. Most have a detailed story within the circle. For example, the Sisters in Spirit

FIGURE 6: Sisters in Spirit Logo.

Source: Native Women's Association of Canada. 2009. Sisters in Spirit — Background. http://www.nwac-hq.org/en/background.html.

"The late artist Dick Baker designed the Kwakuitl Moon for the front of the poster, as well as carving a memorial that now stands in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Grandmother Moon is a powerful teaching about Aboriginal women's special connection to our Grandmothers who have passed into the Spirit world. Grandmother Moon provides us direction, strength, knowledge and wisdom in taking our sacred place in our families, communities and beyond. She teaches us about our sacred role as the life-givers and the heart of our nations — for without women our nations cannot go on. We need Grandmother Moon's presence in our lives now more than ever, especially for our young women who live in the dark and struggle to live in the light." (Native Women's Association of Canada 2009, under "Sisters in Spirit Logo")

Campaign run by the Native Women's Association of Canada has a face that encompasses the circle in the colours of blue and black (fig. 6). The website explains that it is the face of Grandmother moon and the implications of the colours and the symbol to the organization. Many websites provide an explanation of the symbols they use. The website of the Gitxsan Chief's Office (www.gitxan.ca), a cultural and political site, has as its symbol a canoe with a large hooked end reaching skywards. In the canoe are fish and what looks like eggs and sea beings and within

FIGURE 7: Gitxan's Chief's Office.

Source: Gitxsan Chief's Office. 2009. Home. http://www.gitxsan.com/.

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"Depicted is a canoe with the bow hooking sharply skyward to our forebearers. Water, earth, fish and people are in the canoe. The faces represent the Gitxsan guiding (Gimlitzwit) the canoe, with the face at the stern being the one who steers (Gaayuuhadayet). Above the canoe are the elements of sun, earth and moon. There is a salmon and a river with eagle down on the surface of the water. This symbolizes the ceremony welcoming the first returning salmon that takes place each year. We are all people in one canoe, dependent upon, and a part of, the natural elements abundant in our territories." (Gitxsan Chief's Office 2009, under "About the Gitxsan logo")

the body of the canoe are faces to represent human beings (fig. 7). The website provides a detailed explanation of what this symbol represents to this organization and the Gitxsan people.

The images are carefully chosen to create a connection to a historical cultural past while giving it a contemporary presentation. They serve to connect past with present. These symbols can also represent the continuation and strengthening of the cultural heritage of each Indigenous group. They foster an identity built upon a solid cultural foundation while clearly a part of a contemporary age. They present tradition as part of an emerging Aboriginal modernity (Newhouse 2000)

Cultural preservation and revitalization are also important components of Indigenous websites that originate from Canada. For example, Anishinaabemodaa (www.anishinaabemdaa.com) is a language site supporting the revitalization and preservation of the Anishinaabe, known by mainstream Canadians as Ojibway. Another site, Ohwejagehka:ha>degaenage (www.ohwejagehka.com), a Haudenosaunee (known by mainstream Canadians as Iroquois) website, explains the meanings behind Haudenosaunee songs and has clips that

can be downloaded for free. This site also has songs that can be purchased and downloaded. The Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park has a website that provides information on Blackfoot history and culture.

Many First Nations communities also have their own websites that present and discuss their history, traditions and current issues. The Six Nations of the Grand River (www.sixnations.ca) has a website that is cultural, political and socially oriented. They are currently involved in land claim disputes and use their website to educate the public, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, about the history and ongoing situation with respect to their various claims.

The roles these websites play, and thus the images they use, are different than the collages used by the websites more concerned with promoting the diversity of Indigenous people in Canada. These organizations promote their specific identities and in the way illustrate the extent of the diversity of nations, issues and interests that Indigenous peoples are connected or involved with currently in Canada.

CREATING COMMERCIAL IDENTITIES

Another way in which Indigenous people in Canada have exercised their digital citizenship is through the promotion of commercial ventures online. As Aboriginal businesses have grown, and like businesses everywhere, they have also engaged the web as a site that can be used to advance their interests and generate revenues. They have created a commercial identity that has allowed groups even in remote communities to have a web business presence and identity, extending markets and business reach far beyond local markets. Goodminds.com (fig. 8) is an Indigenous bookseller that operates out of the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, and ships

FIGURE 8: Good Minds.

Source: Goodminds.com. 2009. Home. http://goodminds.com/.

books connected to Indigenous culture and heritage around the world. Indigenous ecotourism has really taken advantage of the benefits of the internet. Aboriginal Tourism Canada (www.aboriginaltourism.ca) showcases and links to twenty-eight Indigenous ecotourism sites in Canada (fig. 9). Many First Nations communities use their own websites to promote annual pow wows to the public: these are significant cultural events, but they also generate economic activity and revenue for the community. Many cultural sites and heritage museums also use

FIGURE 9: Aboriginal Tourism Canada.

Source: Aboriginal Tourism Canada. 2009. Home. http://www.aboriginaltourism.ca/.

the internet to generate interest and revenue for their venues: one such example is Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park (www.blackfootcrossing.ca).

The extensive Aboriginal web presence challenges negative stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples as uninterested in business and unable or unable to participate in modern commercial enterprise. Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada have embraced the internet as a way to both promote and conduct commercial activities. These sites typically present themselves using elements of historic Aboriginal cultures, clearly identifying themselves as "Aboriginal" in this modern medium. The strategy appears to be one of linking "indigeneity" or "aboriginality" to quality and stability; a direct challenge to an old stereotype.

EMBRACING INTERNET COMMUNITIES

As technology evolves, Indigenous people have been embracing new ways of communicating on the internet and extending their identities into this new space (Niezen 2005). Indigenous people and communities are using the video sharing website known as YouTube (www.youtube.com) as a place to update and educate people about Indigenous culture and specific social-political issues. A search of YouTube (September 09, 2009) using the terms "Aboriginal," "First Nations," "Indigenous," "Inuit," "Métis," and "Native American" uncovered nearly 200,000 videos across a broad spectrum of topics: traditional teachings, political information, advocacy for specific issues, art videos, music videos to name a few. Searching using specific cultural groups yields additional results: using the keyword "Cree" yields 76,200 videos, again across a broad range of topics and organizations. There is clearly a substantial Indigenous presence on this new medium. YouTube has become a place to showcase Indigenous culture and knowledge through videos of Indigenous dance, music and arts as well as community events. Indigenous resistance movements are also using this internet community as a place to educate people about social,

political and environmental issues. Communities such as Grassy Narrows First Nation in Ontario (www.youtube. com: search term Grassy Narrows First Nation) are posting videos to better illustrate the issues they are facing or fighting against. In the case of Grassy Narrows, they have posted videos illustrating the environmental damage caused by clear cutting, an issue they have been fighting for years. As videos posted are both professional and amateur, communities like Grassy Narrows also post videos from demonstrations and fundraising events to build awareness and stay connected to members of their community.

Indigenous individuals also use the web to create a digital presence online through personal blogs. Online communities have developed around these sites, creating another type of Indigenous community and adding to the representation of diversity. The increased use of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace have gone beyond personal blogs in creating dialogue and community. These web 2.0 networking tools, where individuals and organizations can post information, photos and videos and then invite people to join their

websites, the posting of videos, listing of events, as well as the layering of privatizations so that the public can connect with certain sections of the Ning, such as event calendars and videos, while members (who are regulated by the administrators) can have more personal conversations in a private environment. Organizations are using Nings to showcase themselves to the public, while at the same time allowing members (often employees) to participate in private blogs and have access to information that the public cannot see.

As the popularity of Ning grows, Indigenous organizations and social networks have begun to use them. The Michif Métis Trading Post Ning, Creehealth Ning and the Elsipogtog First Nation Ning, are all Nings which have public homepages explaining their community, providing history and cultural information, and offering links to public blogs, Indigenous radio and videos. At the same time, they offer private blogs for members. Other Nings, such as the Inuit Traditional Stories Ning and the National Aboriginal Arts Administrators and Funders Gathering are private Nings that are accessible by invitation only. These digital communities, comprised of people

"On the internet, no one knows you are a dog (Peter Steiner, New Yorker, July 5, 1993)"

community are also contributing to an Indigenous on line presence that is participative, collaborative and interactive. Indigenous people and communities use these sites to create networks of Indigenous communities and build ties with non-Indigenous people who otherwise would not be connected. Indigenous peoples recognize the ability of the web to build alliances and they have been utilizing these tools to develop intercultural communities and support for their causes around the world, creating a sense of a global community and a new sense of connected personhood, community and perhaps nationhood. The effects on Indigenous identities are yet to be theorized and explored. If identity and community are inter-related, as they are taught in Indigenous traditional teachings, we can certainly expect these new types of community to increase the diversity already present in Indigenous communities.

A relatively new free social networking site is Ning. While Facebook and MySpace are geared towards individuals connecting in general, Ning is targeted at organizations, social groups and individuals who want to create a more specific online community; as such it provides more customization options than either Facebook or MySpace. A Ning allows for links to other blogs and

with similar interests but different backgrounds are widely scattered can have the effect of challenging stereotypes and increasing the complexity of Indigenous representation on the web.

Twitter is the latest evolution in cyberspace communication, through instant messaging available from individual cell phones as well as through computers. It is a system of quick short messages. It is used to make announcements of things going on, usually as they happen. There is no membership beyond having an account and this had led to huge groups of people following the "tweets" of others. This messaging is bound to have an effect on Indigenous organizations and resistance movements in the future as news now travels instantly. It will be the tool for future resistance movements as a way to quickly and efficiently mobilize people in support of an issue or crisis.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Indigenous people are embracing the internet as a place to extend and assert their own identities. They are becoming digital citizens, creating their own spaces and presence in new and growing

cyber-communities. The representations are multilayered and illustrate the diversity of Indigenous presence and experience. Overall, the digital presence suggests vibrant, contemporary and modern Indigenous communities and organizations comprised of creative, innovative and forward-looking individuals, knowledgeable of their cultural heritage and traditions, and willing to engage the contemporary world from a foundation rooted in their traditional cultures. The images and identities they are creating on the internet challenge conventional stereotypes and speaks to the diversity of issues, interests and routes to representing traditional heritages while at the same time engaging as full citizens in the open space of the World Wide Web.

On the other side, digital identities also challenge our own notions of identity and identity formation and what is real and truthful. The diversity that we see represented has been deliberately created as a result of the willful choices of individuals. It is important to understand that a digital citizen is created and reflects what its creator wants others to see. The diversity that we encounter, while real, needs to be both embraced and challenged. Digital identities exist in a reflexive relationship to what we might call "the material world." A future research project could explore how digital citizenship activities of Indigenous peoples affect their lived social and political reality.

NOTES

* It is hard to know what term to use to describe this new digital space: it has been called the world wide web, the internet, the web or simply the net. In this paper, for simplicity of use, we refer to the net to describe this huge set of interconnected sites.

FOOTNOTES

1 Ronald Niezen (2005) discusses the use of the internet as a place where Indigenous peoples globally have engaged in changing or recreating their identities.

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TREATY ANNUITIES AND LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE: RE-IMAGINING THE MODERN TREATY RELATIONSHIP*

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper briefly examines the rationale, intent and evolution of the treaty annuity as part of historic treaties between the Crown and First Nations in Canada. The annuity payment is shown to be an integral part of an overall treaty objective of providing livelihood assistance for First Nations and their descendants. The author argues that both sides of the treaty relationship understood this, but had different ideas and perceptions about the extent of and process for providing livelihood assistance under the treaty relationship. Government often perceived the annuity and other treaty livelihood assistance to be a temporary means of support in a period of transition towards enfranchisement and self-reliance, while First Nations often perceived the annuity payment as renewal of a nation-to-nation agreement whereby the terms of the relationship could be reviewed and readjusted as circumstances might warrant. The author concludes that a re-examination of the treaty relationship of livelihood assistance and treaties as living and forward looking agreements is necessary to address the socio-economic gap in well-being between treaty First Nations and other Canadians.

Ce document examine brièvement la raison d'être, l'intention et l'évolution des annuités découlant des traités dans le cadre des traités historiques signés par la Couronne et les Premières nations au Canada. On y montre que le paiement des annuités fait partie intégrante de l'objectif général des traités qui est de fournir une aide à la subsistance aux Premières nations et à leurs descendants. L'auteur fait valoir que les deux parties signataires du traité comprennent cet objectif, mais qu'elles ont des points de vue et des perceptions différents concernant le processus utilisé et la mesure dans laquelle cette aide à la subsistance doit être fournie dans le cadre des relations découlant du traité. Le gouvernement a souvent perçu les annuités et autres mesures d'aide à la subsistance découlant des traités comme une aide temporaire durant une période de transition vers l'affranchissement et l'autonomie, alors que les Premières nations estiment souvent que le versement des annuités est le renouvellement d'une entente de nation à nation dont les modalités peuvent être revues et adaptées si les circonstances l'exigent. L'auteur conclut qu'il faut réexaminer l'aide à la subsistance fournie dans le cadre des relations découlant des traités et considérer les traités comme des ententes en évolution si l'on veut combler le fossé socioéconomique entre les Premières nations signataires des traités et les autres Canadiens.

Today, under terms of thirteen historic treaties signed by the Crown and First Nations covering over half of the land mass of Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada still distributes $4.00 or $5.00 annually to each of over 300,000 registered Indians. For the federal government, the annuity payment represents partial fulfilment of on-going treaty obligations in exchange for surrendered Indian title to land – what amounts to a legal obligation of a contractual nature. For First Nations, the written record and oral tradition both indicate that the treaty annuity represented renewal of nation-to-nation agreements to share the land in exchange for assurances of livelihood assistance for themselves and future generations.[1] Increasingly, there have been calls to revisit the historic treaties, not only in terms of modernizing the annuity payment system, but by revitalizing or renewing the treaty relationship based on concepts of livelihood assistance.

This paper shows that both the Crown and First Nations understood livelihood assistance to be a significant consideration leading up to, during and long after initial treaty negotiations, and that the annuity payments were to be a key component of the livelihood assistance provided. The two parties differed significantly, however, on how the intent to provide livelihood assistance was to be satisfied through the on-going treaty relationship. Government assumed that the terms of treaty were fully bound up in unchanging perpetuity in the written text, while First Nations assumed that treaty terms could be reviewed and renegotiated as part of an annual treaty renewal.

That these treaties did not deliver on the original intention of providing livelihood assistance for future generations in exchange for land can be demonstrated simply by the socio-economic disparity that continues to exist today. This disparity is likely to continue, unless solutions are rooted in deep historical understandings of the treaty relationships. To effectively address this disparity requires re-examination of the original treaty intent to provide livelihood assistance, whether for traditional pursuits (hunting, fishing, trapping) or the transition to new means of survival in a changing world (farming, ranching, other economic opportunity). Evidence is presented of both government and First Nation perceptions of the annuity as providing livelihood assistance, followed by evidence of the annuity as continuation of an Aboriginal tradition of relationship renewal, and the First Nation view of treaties as living and evolving agreements. Throughout, the intent is to underscore the importance of both historic and modern-day treaty renewal and the need to come to a mutually acceptable understanding on the question of treaty livelihood assistance.

THE ANNUITY AS LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE

Treaty-making for the Crown was essentially an exercise in imperialism – whether to open up new lands for settlement or to access natural resources or otherwise secure a right-of-way. Once government made up its mind to clear title to land that was thought to be useful for settlement or access to resources, its priority was to do so as quickly and cheaply as possible. However, while the welfare of the Aboriginal people living on these lands may often appear to have been a secondary consideration,[2] the evidence is also clear that livelihood assistance was a significant consideration for government and First Nations alike.

There were many factors at play in the policy shift from larger one-time treaty payments to smaller annual payments, beginning with the pre-confederation treaties in 1818. A significant, and perhaps primary, motivation was as a cost cutting measure: to limit or negate the initial expense at a time when it was felt that First Nations would either assimilate or otherwise disappear in time.[3] It was also argued, however, that annual payments would better address Aboriginal welfare needs than one-time payments, which were not seen to have any lasting benefit.[4] This more humanitarian motivation would also come to be closely linked to the pre-confederation "civilization program" which saw the annuities used to pay for such items as schools, houses and agricultural equipment, as well as to promote a number of agricultural settlements in Upper Canada.[5] Furthermore, annuity payments had been part of treaty-making in the United States since at least 1794, and First Nations who were later treated with in Upper Canada seemed well aware of the terms that were offered on the American side. Lastly, annuities were a natural extension of a longstanding precedent of Aboriginal annual relationship renewal and gift diplomacy that had been adopted by colonial governments to establish or maintain military alliances (Jones 1988; Friesen 1999).

There is considerable evidence, beginning in about the mid-nineteenth century, of First Nations' expectations that the treaties, including the annuity amount, would provide sufficient on-going government livelihood support in exchange for their lands. Chiefs were pragmatic about their people's future in a changing world. They required assurances that they could hunt, fish and trap on their lands as they had always done, but also insisted on treaty terms sufficient to help those who chose to settle down and farm: Chief Peau de Chat during the Robinson Treaty negotiations of 1849 asked government to pay for a schoolmaster, a doctor, a blacksmith, a carpenter, a magistrate and an agricultural instructor; Ojibwa Chief Wa-sus-koo-koon during Treaty 1 negotiations in 1871

requested that a house be built and furnished and a plough and cattle be provided for each Ojibwa who decided to farm; and Saulteux Chief Ma-we-do-pe-nais during Treaty 3 negotiations in 1873 justified a list of twenty written demands as necessary "…so that we may be able to support our families as long as the sun rises and the water runs."[6]

There are many examples throughout the nineteenth century of government officials characterizing the annuities as important economic support for Aboriginal livelihood. Treaty Commissioner Simpson had characterised the annuity during Treaty 1 negotiations as a "bounty" which would give the Aboriginal signatories an economic advantage over the white settlers. Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris explained during Treaty 3 negotiations that the terms of the treaty were to "put into their hands the means of providing for themselves and their families at home…"[7] Morris often spoke of the well-being of children, and of "children's children" during negotiations, which was a powerful expression that future generations would be looked after under the treaty relationship. Some examples of this language include: "I only ask you to think for yourselves, and for your families, and for your children and children's children," "…the promises we have to make to you are…not only for you but for your children born and unborn," "it is for you now to act…whether or not you will…let your children grow up and do nothing to keep off the hunger and the cold that is before them," "…I would like your children to be able to find food for themselves and their children that come after them," and "I have told you that the money I have offered you would be paid to you and to your children's children."[8] It was the annuity that most outwardly represented these assurances.

Given that the annuity was understood by government officials in the context of livelihood assistance, how the money was spent was of considerable concern throughout the nineteenth century as part of treaty implementation. The annual reports are full of commentary on how the annuity money was being used, or should be used, and how government policy and practices should direct the spending of annuities. There are consistent entries that indicate whether, in the opinion of the agent, the annuity was spent wisely on items that could assist with attaining a livelihood, especially over the winter months. Annuities were sometimes specifically targeted to programs of agriculture or education, and could be used communally to pay for such items as teacher's salaries, livestock, saw or grist mills or church related purposes. At other times, the annuity was thought of in terms of support for traditional economies. In some cases, government proved reticent to sign treaties at all in areas where it was felt that First Nations could continue to live

off the land with a minimum of interference, and in other cases government was practical in its support of a hunting economy in the treaty terms, even if that seemed counter-intuitive to its assimilationist policies.[9]

For all the language of metaphor of the treaties lasting as long as the sun shines and the rivers flow, there is considerable evidence that government often thought of the annuity and other treaty benefits as temporary livelihood assistance in a period of transition towards self-reliance and enfranchisement. Under government's policy of assimilation, reflected in legislation passed between 1857 and 1876, individuals were considered wards of the state until enfranchised, either voluntarily or mandatorily, and the process of becoming full Canadian citizens included being able to live without treaty-based assistance. Beginning with the *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857, applicants for voluntary enfranchisement, which were extremely rare, had to meet certain criteria designed to ensure that they would be able to live without government or treaty assistance, such as be formally educated and free of debt. Government, for much of the nineteenth century, allowed individuals on a case by case basis to leave treaty to take up Métis scrip, which was a one-time allotment of land or money. This practice, however, was questioned when government began to fear growing poverty by those not covered by treaty-based assistance. An Indian agent's report of the Scrip Commission's consideration of withdrawals in the Treaty 6 area assured that "…none but those who would support themselves and families in the future were discharged [from treaty]."[10]

There is occasional mention in the Indian Affairs Annual Reports of the necessity of the annuity, or for advances made against the annuity, to carry certain families over winter. Often, however, the annuity was seen more as part of an overall livelihood strategy that could include the selling of grain or cattle, traditional pursuits and seasonal employment. A $5 annuity in 1871 could have bought approximately 100 pounds of flour or 30 pounds of beef,[11] and an annuity of $5 for a family of five in the early 1880s was equivalent to about one month's wages as either an Aboriginal farm labourer[12] or saw-mill worker.[13] There is further evidence from Treaty Elder testimony that the annuity had an important economic significance for families and communities well into the 1950s (FSIN 2000, 14).

In fact, the oral evidence from Treaty Elders is remarkably consistent in the view that promises of livelihood assistance were a primary consideration during treaty negotiations. A continuing right of livelihood is one of five guiding principles of the understandings of treaty that came out of extensive Elder testimony outlined in the book *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan* (Cardinal and Hildebrandt 2000, 36). Likewise, the Treaty and

Aboriginal Rights Research group's years of interviews with Elders in Alberta revealed an overarching belief that the treaties concerned first and foremost peoples' livelihoods (Hickey, Lightning, and Lee 1999, 103-60; Vader 2000, 91). The authors of *The true spirit and original intent of Treaty 7* concluded: "That they would be taken care of was the theme reoccurring throughout the elders' testimony" (Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council 1996, 120-1).[14]

THE ANNUITY AS TREATY RENEWAL

Gift giving was a central tenet of First Nation traditional diplomatic practices of relationship renewal, and formed the basis of many of the relationships forged between First Nations and newcomers, whether military alliances or fur trade relations. By the time annuities were introduced into the Upper Canada treaties of 1818, there had long been an established practice of gift diplomacy. After 1812, these diplomatic practices turned into formal distributions of annual presents made at specified times and locations as a means of maintaining and honouring military alliance. The annual presents and the annuities were mostly recognized as serving two distinct purposes, but were often made up of the same types of goods (Leslie and Baldwin 2006, 66, 91), and could even on occasion be distributed at the same time and location (Morrison 1996, 126). What is important here is that the concept of an annual payment fit well within a trend that saw the continuation of an Aboriginal tradition of treaty or relationship renewal.

Evidence that the annuity payments followed a tradition of gift diplomacy is even more prevalent for the post-confederation numbered treaties. Prior to the treaties, fur traders and First Nations had negotiated social protocols and practices of gift exchange that were deeply rooted in Aboriginal concepts of renewal and reciprocity. Many of the fur trade practices would in turn come to inform the treaty relationship. When the government purchased the Hudson's Bay Company Charter in 1870, it also inherited the company's responsibility for providing relief to Aboriginal families in times of need. The fact that many of the numbered treaties were negotiated around the question of government responsibility for looking after First Nations harkens back to these fur trade relations. As fur traders often advanced goods on credit to assist certain families over winter, so government officials often advanced goods against future annuities, also to assist families over winter.[15] In this way, the treaties continued and further formalized for First Nations what had been on-going relations of mutual benefit that had evolved out of the fur trade.

An analysis of the different perceptions of the annuity adds to an already large body of literature demonstrating that First Nations saw the treaties quite differently than government. For government, the treaties were once-for-all land transactions that bound both parties to certain on-going obligations. These obligations were fixed in place by the written terms of the treaty. First Nations' traditions did not include such a concept of obligations being bound-up in the unchanging words on a page. For First Nations, the treaties were sacred agreements made in the presence of the Creator, which could also not be broken once they were made. This, however, did not mean that the agreements could not be adjusted as circumstances might warrant.

For First Nations the treaty terms were fluid, rather than fixed, and there was an expectation that terms could be discussed and reviewed as part of an annual treaty renewal (Leslie and Baldwin 2006, 170).[16] There are numerous references, for example, of First Nations refusing to accept the annuity payment.[17] In 1884, Indian Inspector Wadsworth wrote about the usual practice of grievances being voiced during annuity payment periods: "it is the occasion in the year upon which they feel bound to mention them [grievances], as again receiving the money is looked upon by them as a ratification of the treaty."[18] The refusal to accept the annuity, in these terms, was thus a refusal to ratify the treaty at a given time. There is further linguistic evidence that the Ojibwa term for treaty had the meaning of an "open contract" (Morrison 1996, 157), and that the Cree word for treaty had the meaning to "weigh and measure" the relationship (Vader 2000, 46).

THE ANNUITY TODAY

So what does all of this mean in a modern context? Of course, as much as the annual payment may be perceived as an important symbolic renewal of a relationship and as outwardly representative of all of government's treaty promises, there are those who find the distribution of $4.00 or $5.00 a year to be demeaning if not unethical (Vanraes 2008; Cuervo 2008). There have been a number of calls to revisit the treaties and to revitalize or modernize the historic treaty relationship. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) report, for example, noted that the annuity payment was regarded by First Nations as a formal opportunity to discuss and renew the relationship each year, and argued that the treaties need to be flexible enough to address new concerns of an evolving relationship. Among the RCAP recommendations was the establishment of a formal process of treaty revitalization that included reconsideration of the "...treaty promises of wealth

transfer" (Canada 1996, 77). Jean Allard and John Richards have both argued in separate research papers that a large individualized annuity benefit, instead of block transfers to First Nations, would empower individuals and establish greater accountability of First Nation governance (Allard 2000a, 2000b; Richards 2003, 2006). Allard had proposed an increase of the annuity amount from $5 to $5,000, while Richards proposed halving this amount to $2,500. This view of annuity modernization, however, would have to take much more into account than a simple indexation of the amount. An analysis of the consumer price index and wholesale price index shows that $5 in 1871, when Treaties 1 and 2 were signed, is worth approximately $100 in today's currency (Stewart Clatworthy, pers. comm., 2008).

CONCLUSION

The modern significance of a historical analysis of the treaty annuity is twofold. First, it speaks to the extent of livelihood assistance intended by the treaties. Government clearly viewed the annuity as a significant economic expenditure and benefit, and First Nations were ultimately led to believe that the annuity and other treaty terms would represent a significant benefit for themselves and for future generations. Sadly, that the annuity and other treaty terms have not been effective as livelihood assistance is clear from the disparity that exists today between treaty First Nations and other Canadians. Secondly, an analysis of the annuities demonstrates a different treaty perspective. Evidence is strong in both the historical written record and Elder oral testimony that, from the First Nation perspective, the treaties were part of a living and evolving relationship, where treaty terms were not bound by the written word but could be reviewed and renegotiated from time to time. Today, the lack of a common understanding of the treaties has led to deep feelings of mistrust that impact virtually all aspects of the modern relationship. A re-imagining of the modern treaty relationship must not only recognize and respect the initial intent of the treaties to provide livelihood assistance, but also allow for interpretation of the treaties as living and forward-looking agreements.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Certainly the view of many Treaty Elders is that First Nations agreed to share the land, not give it up or sell it. One common view is that First Nations, as stewards of the land, could not sell something that they did not own. Other Elders have stated that the question of land never came up in negotiations over what were fundamentally considered treaties of peace. Of course, the fact that government often made assurances that First Nations could hunt, fish and trap on their lands as they had done before treaties were signed is in itself a form of land sharing.

[2] For evidence of government's inaction in responding to First Nations' requests for treaty as a means of livelihood assistance, until such time as the land was deemed to be of value for settlement or natural resource use, see Richard Daniel, *The spirit and terms of Treaty 8* (1999) and Denis Madill, *Treaty research report: Treaty Eight* (1986).

[3] In 1819, Lieutenant Governor Peregrine Maitland reasoned that if government could privately sell some of the land received through treaty at auction, using a method that included a mortgage with a ten percent down payment, the interest from the down payments could then be used to finance the annuity (Leslie and Baldwin 2006, 36, 166; Gates 1968, 159; Surtees 1983, 30, 174-5; Surtees 1994, 112-3; Joan Holmes and Associates 2003, 63-4, 110-1; Miller 2000, 117).

[4] Colonial Secretary Lord Bathurst took this position in 1816 (Leslie and Baldwin 2006, 166).

[5] Annuities began to be credited to band accounts in 1829, along with money from the sales and leases of Indian lands, where it was partly used to help establish settlements at Coldwater, the Narrows, St. Clair and Munceytown (Leslie and Baldwin 2006, 48; Joan Holmes and Associates 2003, 45-50, 112).

[6] These primary source quotes were taken from Leslie and Baldwin (2006, 72, 123-4, 146 respectively).

[7] These primary source quotes were taken from Leslie and Baldwin (2006, 169-170, 149 respectively). See also Ray, Miller, and Tough (2000, 78) for evidence of the suggestion that annuities would secure a livelihood for signatories.

[8] All of these quotes were taken from Alexander Morris (1880); the first was from Treaty 3 negotiations (61), the next two were from Treaty 4 negotiations (96, 117), and the last two were from Treaty 6 negotiations (204, 211).

[9] See, for example, Kenneth S. Coates, *Treaty research report: Treaty no. 10.* In 1884 Deputy Superintendent General Vankoughnet argued, in the context of applicable game laws, that if First Nations were prevented from hunting for subsistence purposes, they would then have to be fed by government (Joan Holmes and Associates 2007, 47). See also Tough (1996, 90) for the view that annuities were "a means to maintain Indian labour in a commercial hunting economy."

[10] Mitchell, Report of Indian Agency – Treaty No. 6, Saddle Lake, N.W.T. (1887, 93); see also Tough (1996, 120).

[11] Hudson's Bay Company post records, Red River, as indicated in Leslie and Baldwin (2006, 134).

[12] Ogletree, Report of the Manitoba Superintendency, Portage la Prairie Agency (1881, 61).

[13] McColl, Report of the Office of the Inspector of Indian Agencies, Manitoba Superintendency (1883, 137). Arthur Ray has shown that in 1870 a hunter with a family could equip himself for the year for about $20-$25, the equivalent to an annuity for a family of four or five (Ray 1990, 200).

[14] See also evidence of Treaty 4 Elders' testimony in Taylor, *Treaty research report: Treaty Six* (1985).

[15] The HBC commonly provided hunters in the autumn with goods on credit that were collectively referred to as "winter outfits," including ammunition, nets, fishing line, twine, traps, knives, etc. (Ray 2009).

[16] There is also evidence of a "renewal ceremony" that existed within the fur trade, whereby a calumet (pipe) was either left at a fort by the First Nation trading captains or Chiefs to indicate contentment, or taken with them to indicate the opposite (Ray, Miller and Tough 2000, 9, 20; Miller 2007, 70).

[17] Poundmaker, Piapot and Big Bear all refused annuities in the early 1880s in an attempt to draw attention to renegotiation of treaty terms (Morin 2007, 133-5; Tobias 1991, 232). See also Vader (2000, 56), for Beardy and the Duck Lake Indians' refusal to take annuities in 1879. Further, there are at least 15 instances in the Indian Affairs Annual Reports alone of First Nations and Chiefs refusing to accept annuities, and constant attempts to renegotiate aspects of the Treaty.

[18] Wadsworth, Report of Treaty No. 6 (1884, 154).

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IN BRIEF: FIRSTS FOR FIRST NATIONS – THE INDIAN TAXATION ADVISORY BOARD

The *First Nations Fiscal and Statistical Management Act (FSMA)* became law in 2005. This legislation was a significant milestone as it established four First Nation-led institutions, including the first-ever First Nation-based crown corporation. The FSMA was explicitly designed to enable economic development activity *by First Nations, for First Nations*, and it marks the first time a First Nation institution in Canada has had a legislative base. The legislation was championed by First Nations, and its origins can be traced to the establishment of the Indian Taxation Advisory Board.

In 1988, the former Chief of the Kamloops Indian Band in British Columbia, C.T. (Manny) Jules, led the "Kamloops Amendment" (Bill C-115) to the *Indian Act*. This amendment gave First Nation governments new powers to tax the interests within reserves, establishing their jurisdiction, creating economic development opportunities, and providing a basic tool for self-government. The Indian Taxation Advisory Board (ITAB) – the original First Nation institution dedicated to this strategy – was created in 1989 to facilitate the approval of First Nation property tax by-laws enacted pursuant to s.83 of the *Indian Act*.

ITAB built a remarkable list of accomplishments over the next eighteen years, in addition to its role in developing and championing passage of the *FSMA*. In 1997, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and ITAB formed a research partnership that produced a dozen papers exploring how to create a positive First Nation investment climate, as well as how to create a new First Nation fiscal relationship; this research informed drafting instructions for the *FSMA*, many ITAB policies, and continues to inform policies of the First Nations Tax Commission (FNTC), which succeeded ITAB following adoption of the FSMA. In 1998, this research helped ITAB become the first First Nation organization in Canada to submit a formal pre-budget submission to the parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance. The FNTC continues to build on its research partnership with INAC.

By 2007, 115 First Nations had collected over $55 million per year in property taxes. ITAB recommended over 1200 First Nation by-laws for ministerial approval – all of which were approved by eleven different Ministers of Indian Affairs. Over 150 First Nation tax administrators received training in budget-based tax rate setting, assessments, assessment appeals and property tax administration.

Another notable contribution of ITAB is its creation of the Tulo Centre of Indigenous Economics, Thompson Rivers University, which enables knowledge transfer through university accredited certificates and diplomas in First Nation Economics and Public Administration. In the years to come, the FNTC and Thompson Rivers University plan to expand their portfolio of accredited certificate programs.

Throughout their history, ITAB and the FNTC have been committed to addressing the legal and administrative gaps that contribute to market failure on First Nation lands. Through legislation such as the FSMA and the continuing development of institutions such as the FNTC, there is a very real potential for First Nations to expand their revenues, create land title certainty and access competitive and economic infrastructure financing. These developments are only illustrative of the many initiatives ongoing, at this very moment, to secure a better future for First Nations and Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

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LINGUISTIC CLASSIFICATIONS OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES IN CANADA: IMPLICATIONS FOR ASSESSING LANGUAGE DIVERSITY, ENDANGERMENT AND REVITALIZATION

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Any study of language diversity and endangerment necessarily reflects the linguistic classification underlying the data. This paper explores the connections between the classification of Aboriginal languages in Canada and the potential impacts on framing the picture of regional diversity, language vitality, endangerment, and revitalization; and, their implications for language planning, policy and programs. The impacts of two separate linguistic classifications are explored using census-based language data. Different outcomes are highlighted along various language indicators such as: the degree of language endangerment; regional measures of viable and endangered languages; and revitalization of endangered languages through second language learning.

Toute étude portant sur la diversité des langues et leur risque de disparition reflète nécessairement la classification linguistique sous-tendant les données. Le présent document explore les liens existant entre la classification des langues autochtones au Canada et les répercussions possibles de celle-ci sur le portrait d'ensemble formé par la diversité régionale, la vitalité, le risque de disparition et la revitalisation des langues, ainsi que les incidences de ce bilan sur la planification, les politiques et les programmes linguistiques. Les répercussions des deux classifications linguistiques distinctes sont étudiées au moyen de données linguistiques fondées sur le recensement. Divers résultats sont mis en évidence, ainsi que divers indicateurs linguistiques tels que le degré de risque de disparition des langues, l'évaluation régionale de la viabilité et du risque de disparition des langues, ainsi que la revitalisation des langues au moyen de l'apprentissage d'une langue seconde.

INTRODUCTION

Canada is known to have a rich diversity of Aboriginal languages, comprising First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages that reflect a variety of distinctive histories, cultures and identities. The state of these many different languages also varies considerably, some with flourishing populations of speakers, young and old, while other languages are smaller and endangered, with declining and aging numbers of speakers.

The classification of languages is a necessarily important consideration in any study of language diversity and endangerment, especially since linguistic classifications can vary, depending on the purpose and criteria used in the identification of languages. In fact, the definition of language itself can be problematic:

> Due to the nature of language and the various perspectives brought to its study, it is not surprising that a number of issues prove controversial. ...The definition of language one chooses depends on the purpose one has in identifying a language. Some base their definition on purely linguistic grounds. Others recognize that social, cultural, or political factors must also be taken into account... Not all scholars share the same set of criteria for what constitutes a "language" and what constitutes a "dialect." (Gordon and Grimes 2005, 8)

This paper explores the connections between the classification of languages and the potential impacts on shaping the picture of regional diversity, language vitality, endangerment, and revitalization; and consequently, on the implications for language planning, policy and programs. The significant impacts of two separate linguistic classifications are demonstrated through examples that highlight their different outcomes along various measures, such as: the classification and numbers of Aboriginal languages, speakers and their communities by degree of language endangerment; regional numbers and shares of viable and endangered languages; and the extent of language revival through second language learning, by degree of endangerment.

BACKGROUND

Observers of Aboriginal languages in Canada are fortunate to be able to draw on a rich source of data in the Census to better understand the diversity and state of Aboriginal languages, especially at the community level. Furthermore, census data on languages spoken within specific communities can also be utilized in relation to other more detailed linguistic classifications (Norris 2009), as employed in this paper.

The linguistic classification underlying census data is based on Kinkade (1991), which identifies some 50 different Aboriginal languages spoken by First Nations, Inuit and Métis, categorized into 11 language families or isolates. From this linguistic classification the Census provides data, not for all 50 languages, but for 35 separate categories, owing to small numbers of speakers.[1] By contrast, the most recent fifteenth edition of *Ethnologue: Languages of the world*, estimates that within Canada there are 78 living (spoken as a first language) languages "Indigenous" to the country (Gordon and Grimes 2005).

The classification framework utilized in the third edition of the UNESCO A*tlas of the world's languages in danger* (2009a), lists 86 Aboriginal languages. This estimate is based on three major sources: Statistics Canada census data; the previous second edition of the *Atlas*, which identifies 104 languages (UNESCO 2001), and the *Ethnologue*, which, as noted above, identifies 78 languages (Gordon and Grimes 2005). With respect to the third edition, the decrease from the second edition is attributable mainly to the dropping of the Trade or Pidgin languages and the long-extinct (greater than 100 years) languages. It is most compatible with, although not identical to, that of the *Ethnologue*, yielding 86 distinct languages, plus two that are known to have become extinct within living memory. The gap relative to the *Ethnologue* is attributable mainly to the splitting of Inuktitut into several distinct dialects, similar to those previously identified in the second edition (Norris 2009).

While Kinkade, UNESCO and the *Ethnologue* all recognize the significant linguistic diversity of Aboriginal languages in Canada, the UNESCO framework provides not only a more detailed classification of languages for measuring level of endangerment, but also, more importantly, obtains perhaps a more consistent approach across regions in detailing the number of different languages, thereby allowing for more reliable comparisons of regional diversity and endangerment. It is always necessary to be cognizant of the limitations of comparability across geographic areas associated with consistency of linguistic classifications, whether across regions within the same country or across different countries. As the *Atlas* notes regarding international comparisons of language endangerment, "...countries with high linguistic diversity tend to have high numbers of endangered languages, while countries where very few languages are currently spoken tend to have few that are endangered... [yet, in terms of the comparability of the level of endangerment] ...ratios of languages in danger cannot be calculated until consistent methodologies are applied in

assessing the total number of languages in each country or area" (UNESCO 2009b).

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

It has been estimated that only about a third of Aboriginal languages originally spoken in Canada have a good chance of survival and that "fewer than half… are likely to survive for another fifty years…" (Kinkade 1991). According to the 2006 Census, out of the 1,172,800 people who self-identified as First Nation, Métis or Inuit Aboriginal, 220,000, or one in five (19%), said they had learned an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue or first language (Statistics Canada 2008); this is down from 21% in 2001.[2] Over the past twenty five years, many Aboriginal languages in Canada have undergone long-term declines in intergenerational transmission and mother tongue (first-language) populations, the effect being that some endangered languages now have fewer than 200 first-language speakers, and that these endangered languages are spoken mostly by the older parental, grandparental or great-parental generations.

ASSESSING LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

In terms of assessing degree of language endangerment of different languages there are various approaches and criteria that can be considered, just as in language identification. For example, Kinkade (1991) developed a five-category classification of Aboriginal language viability and endangerment mainly on the basis of speaker populations and communities as follows: "Viable large" languages have a large enough population base that long-term survival is relatively assured; "Viable but small" languages have more than 1,000 speakers, spoken in isolated and/or well-organized communities with strong self-awareness; "Endangered" languages, spoken by enough people to make survival a possibility given community interest and support; "Near Extinction" beyond the possibility of revival (spoken by only a few

elderly people); and "Already Extinct" (no speakers) (Kinkade 1991). Languages differ significantly in the size of their speaker populations, with the more endangered having few speakers, some less than a hundred, compared to the more viable large and widespread languages having relatively large numbers, generally in the thousands.

A more comprehensive approach is used in UNESCO's framework for assessing language vitality and endangerment. This framework of nine major evaluative factors, which recognizes that no single factor alone can be used to assess a language's vitality, incorporates a number of demographic measures, including: intergenerational language transmission, absolute number of speakers, and proportion of speakers within the total population (UNESCO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages 2003). UNESCO's third edition of the *Atlas of the world's languages in danger* employed the major factor of "intergenerational language transmission" for purposes of determining degrees of language endangerment. These intergenerational classifications, summarized in Table 1, indicate the extent to which the languages are spoken by all generations, including children, or just the older adult generations of parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and others. They range from "vulnerable" (potentially endangered but corresponding more to Kinkade's "viable" category); "definitely" endangered; "severely" endangered; and "critically" endangered (similar to Kinkade's "close to extinction" category) and extinct.

In the case of Canada, the level of endangerment assigned to each language in the Atlas for most languages of the country's 86 languages is based on community-level measures and indicators developed from the 2001 Census where data permit.[3] Indicators included the average age of the mother-tongue population (first language speakers) combined with the absolute number of speakers to estimate the UNESCO factor of "intergenerational language transmission," Factor 1 (Norris 2009). Languages that are viable or healthy, and are being passed on to the next generation of children, have lower average ages than

TABLE 1: Classification of Languages by Degree of Language Endangerment Based on UNESCO Factor 1 of Intergenerational Transmission

DEGREE OF ENDANGERMENT	INTERGENERATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSMISSION
Safe	Language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> *not included in the Atlas*
Vulnerable	Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g. home)
Definitely endangered	Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
Severely endangered	Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
Critically endangered	The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
Extinct	There are no speakers left >> *included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s*

Source: UNESCO. 2009. Atlas of the world's languages in danger. http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas/.

endangered ones. The level of endangerment assigned to a given language is based on the characteristics of first-language speakers residing in the Aboriginal communities associated with that particular language. Since the derivation of the more detailed language classifications in the Atlas is dependent on the location of Aboriginal communities, level of endangerment could therefore not be assigned to speakers outside of these communities.[4]

The following discussion explores the extent to which the Census and UNESCO classifications may yield different outcomes with respect to measures of regional diversity, language endangerment and revitalization of Aboriginal languages in Canada. In order to assess the impact of the two different linguistic classifications the same methodology for assigning level of endangerment as employed in the *Atlas*, is used for both. This involves applying the same measures of endangerment based on 2001 Census community-level data to languages classified according to Statistics Canada's census-based linguistic classification. Levels of intergenerational transmission were calculated for communities belonging to each of the 32 individual Census language categories where census data were available (data were not available for three of the 35 categories).

The UNESCO classification provides considerably more linguistic detail as compared to the Census, mainly in the case of the smaller, endangered languages, but also for the larger, more viable languages. For example, in the case of larger viable languages, the Census classification treats Cree and its variants as one language, whereas the UNESCO classification recognizes six different versions of Cree as separate languages rather than dialects; similarly the UNESCO framework provides more detailed Inuit language categories, with 11 different languages, compared to one of Inuktitut prior to 2006 Census (two listed in 2006). Regionally, the UNESCO classification yields higher numbers of languages, especially in British Columbia and Ontario, owing mainly to the impact of a greater number of languages that have only a few speakers.

The more detailed UNESCO classification yields a somewhat different picture of language endangerment in comparison to that based on the Census classification. On one hand, for some viable languages like Cree, more linguistic detail can produce a greater number of viable languages, increasing from one "viable large" language of Cree, in the Census, to two counts of "viable large" languages of Plains Cree and Swampy Cree, and four counts of "viable small" Cree languages. On the other hand, in the case of endangered languages, more linguistic detail not surprisingly results in greater numbers of more severely or critically endangered languages. Using the

example of "other Salish" in the Census, community-level calculations for the UNESCO factor 1 of "intergenerational transmission" yielded a degree of endangerment of "severely" endangered overall. With the more detailed UNESCO-based Salish languages, corresponding separate community-level calculations specific to each of the several languages yielded counts of: one definitely endangered language; four severely endangered; and three critically endangered languages.

CLASSIFICATION OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES BY DEGREE OF ENDANGERMENT

Both the Census and UNESCO frameworks demonstrate that the majority of languages – 66% and 72% respectively – are endangered. But a significant difference emerges between the two linguistic classifications concerning the degree of endangerment: 32 languages, or well over a third, 37%, of the 86 different UNESCO-based languages, are critically endangered in contrast to just five or 16% of the 32 Census-based languages. Much of that

FIGURE 1: Distribution of Aboriginal Languages by Degree of Language Endangerment, based on UNESCO Factor of Intergenerational Transmission

Classification of Aboriginal Languages:
32 Census Languages; 86 UNESCO Languages
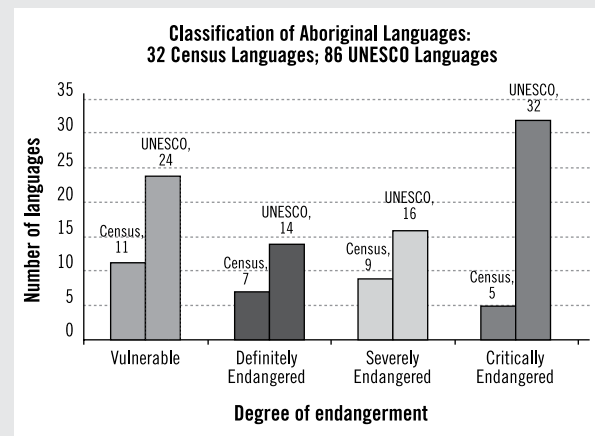
differential is associated with more detailed languages shifting from "severely" endangered category under the broader Census classification (at 28%) to "critically," within the UNESCO classification, with a lower proportion, at 19%, "severely" endangered (Figure 1).

The distribution of close to 900 Aboriginal communities by degree of language endangerment differs somewhat between the two different classifications,

reflecting UNESCO's higher number and share of endangered languages. Under the Census classification, 62% of communities have traditional languages that are categorized as "vulnerable," (but not endangered) whereas under the UNESCO classification, the number of communities in the "vulnerable" category drops to 440, or 50% of communities (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2: Number of Communities, by Degree of Endangerment, Based on Census and UNESCO Linguistic Classifications, Canada, 2001

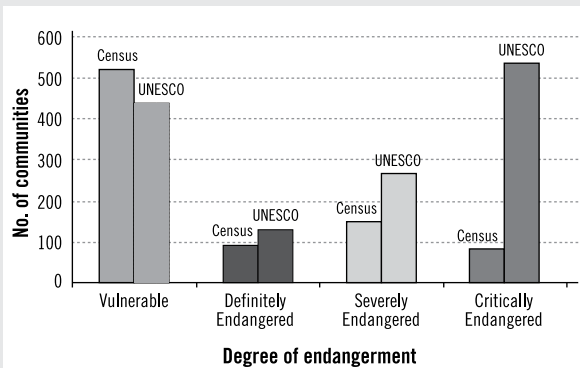## INVERSE RELATIONSHIPS OF ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES, SPEAKERS AND COMMUNITIES, BY LEVEL OF LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

According to the UNESCO classification, the 37% of Aboriginal languages that are critically endangered are spoken by only 1,200 or 1% of first-language speakers; conversely, the 28% of languages (24) that are "vulnerable" or viable (not considered endangered), are spoken by the vast majority, some 134,000, or 90%, of Aboriginal language speakers in communities. The census-based classification yields similar, but less pronounced observations: 16% of languages critically endangered are spoken by just 1% of first-language speakers; whereas the 34% of languages not endangered are spoken by 93% of speakers (Figure 3).

Languages not only vary in numbers of speakers; they also differ significantly in the number of communities they are spoken in, with some languages having only one or two communities, and others with a large number of communities, some numbering in the hundreds. According to the UNESCO-based classification, 62 or

nearly three out of four languages (72%) are endangered; however, they represent the traditional languages of just half of Aboriginal communities, while the remaining 28% of languages that are "vulnerable" or viable – but not endangered, are spoken in the other half of communities. Furthermore, the proportion, 37%, of languages critically endangered is four times the proportion of communities (9%) where critically endangered languages are spoken. The census-based classification yields similar, though less pronounced contrasts: while two out of three languages (66%) are endangered, they are spoken in just 38% of Aboriginal communities, conversely the 34% of languages that are not endangered are spoken in almost two out of three communities; the proportion of languages critically endangered; 16%, is also four times the community share at 4% (Figure 3).

Overall, both linguistic classifications demonstrate the inverse relationships between numbers of languages, speakers and communities with respect to degrees of endangerment. Although the majority of Aboriginal languages are endangered, they are spoken by a minority of speakers, and represent the traditional languages of half or less of Aboriginal communities (depending on the classification). Some differences between classifications are especially significant: according to the UNESCO classification, well over a third of languages, 37%, are critically endangered- yet under the less detailed Census classification, that share is much lower at just 16%; similarly, languages are critically endangered in one in ten Aboriginal communities compared to just one in twenty with the Census linguistic classification (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: Number and Percent Distribution of Aboriginal Languages, Communities and First Language Speaker Populations, by Degree of Language Endangerment, Canada, 2001
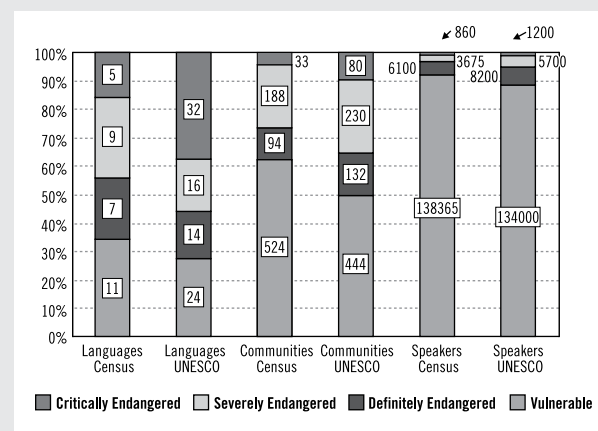
FIGURE 4: Number of Aboriginal Languages, According to Census and UNESCO Linguistic Classifications, by Provinces and Territories, 2001
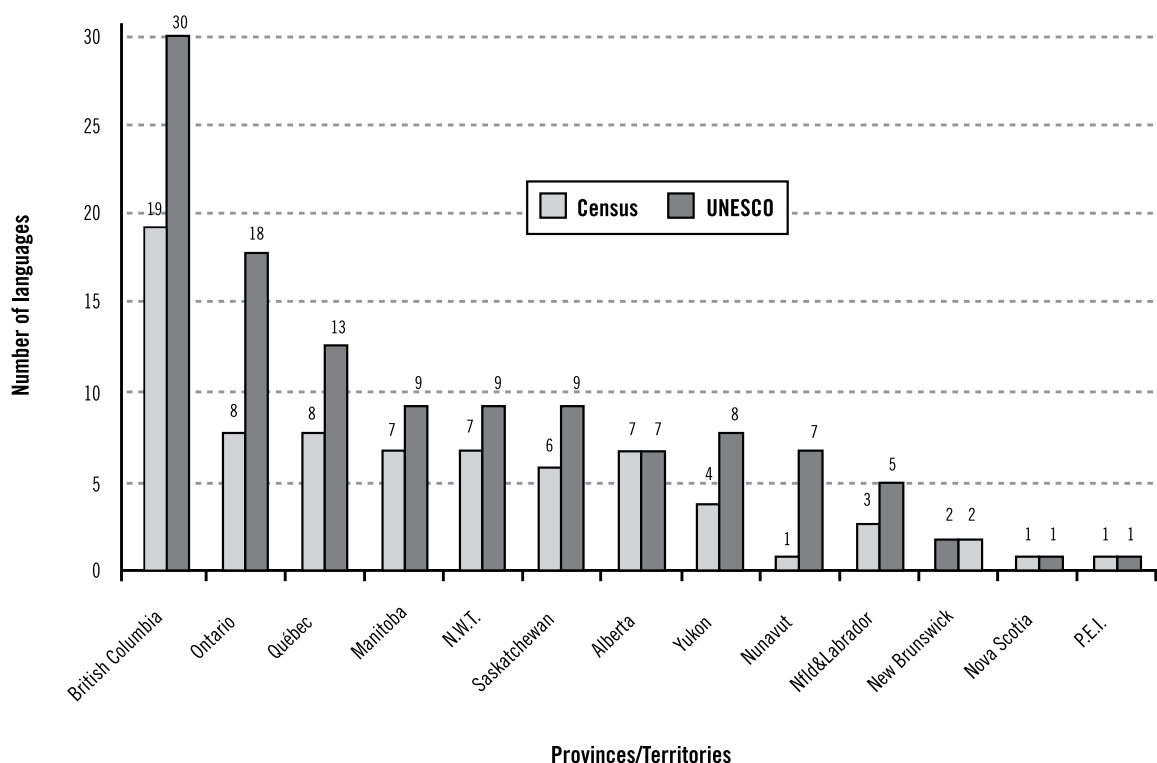
REGIONAL PATTERNS, COMPARISONS OF DIVERSITY AND ENDANGERMENT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT

The differences between the Census and UNESCO classification frameworks are most visible when looking at linguistic diversity at the provincial/territorial level. The measure of linguistic diversity is most affected in the province of British Columbia, the area of highest linguistic diversity in Canada. Under the more detailed classification, 30 of the 86 different languages in Canada are identified in British Columbia, compared to 19 out of the 35 classified under the Census classification. With the more detailed UNESCO classification the numbers of languages are also higher notably in the provinces of Ontario, Québec and the territories of Yukon and Nunavut (Figure 4).

Significant shifts occur between the two different classifications for some provinces. For example, British Columbia's share of Aboriginal languages spoken in Canada is just over half (about 55%) under the Census

classification, but is lower at about a third (35%), with the UNESCO classification; Ontario's share remains more or less the same between the two classifications, at 23% and 21% respectively.

It is important to note that large numbers of languages do not necessarily correspond to large numbers of speakers. While British Columbia does have the largest number of languages (according to both linguistic classifications), as well as the largest number of Aboriginal communities (284), it has one of the smallest provincial populations in Aboriginal communities with an Aboriginal mother tongue (5,700). In contrast, the provinces of Québec and Manitoba have fewer languages, (13 and 9 respectively), and fewer Aboriginal communities (55 and 84 respectively), but the largest populations in Aboriginal communities reporting an Indigenous mother tongue, of nearly 34,000 and 27,000 respectively (Figure 5). To some extent these patterns reflect the *Atlas* observation that areas of high linguistic diversity tend to have high numbers of endangered languages, which is certainly the case with British Columbia.

FIGURE 5: Numbers of Aboriginal Language Speakers and Aboriginal Communities, by Provinces and Territories, 2001
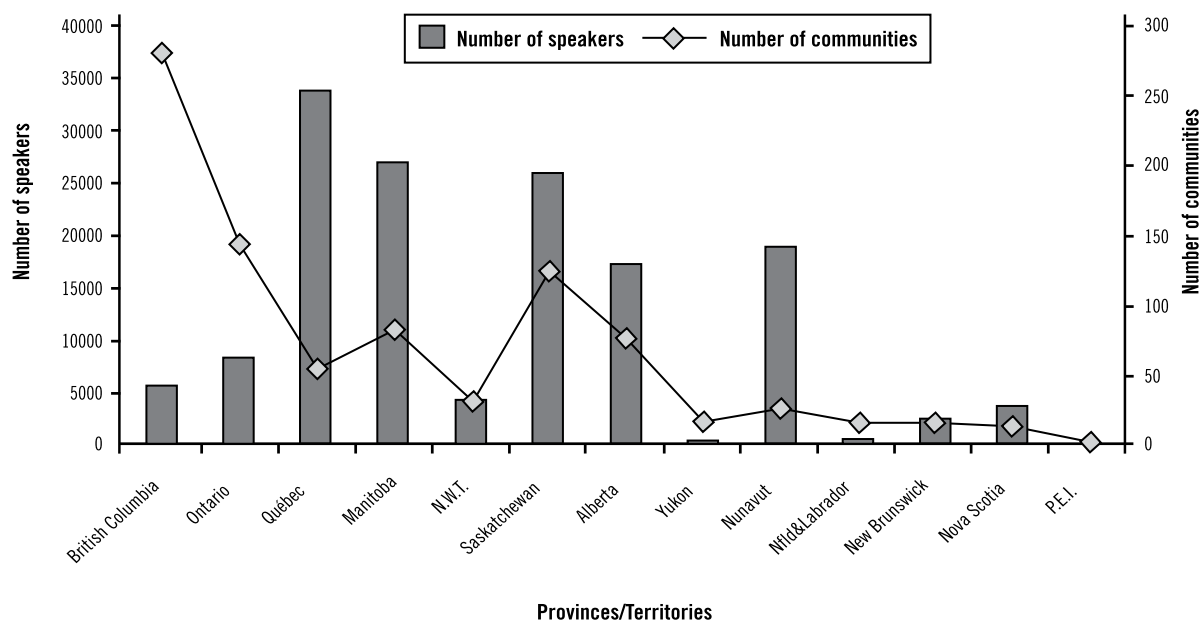
INCREASES IN "CRITICALLY" ENDANGERED LANGUAGES FOR SOME REGIONS

Differences between linguistic classifications do have significant implications in assessing the state and endangerment of Aboriginal languages across provinces, and territories, and most notably for the areas of highest linguistic diversity. In the case of British Columbia, for example, a significantly higher number, 13, and proportion, 43%, of the province's 30 languages were categorized as critically endangered from the more detailed UNESCO classification as compared to four, or 24% of its 17 census-classified languages (two of 19 languages not classified due to insufficient Census data). Those provinces and territories that saw increased linguistic diversity with the more detailed language classification also tended to have higher numbers and proportions of their languages categorized as critically endangered (Figures 6a and 6b).

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES IN REGIONAL SHARES OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

Similarly, provincial shares of endangered languages in Canada differ significantly between the two different classifications. British Columbia's provincial share of

endangered languages represents the large majority (71%) of the 21 endangered languages under the Census classification – but less than half (45%) of the 62 endangered languages with the UNESCO classification.

The two language classifications also differ in the categorization of Aboriginal communities and their speakers by degree of endangerment. This reflects in part the additional non-census language information about endangerment of specific languages and their communities. For example, information for the many smaller endangered languages in Ontario from the more detailed UNESCO classification would suggest that the province's Aboriginal languages are endangered in about two-thirds of communities, as opposed to possibly 17% (including communities with insufficient Census data) or just 1% if limited to communities with Census data. In Ontario, some of the additional languages classified with UNESCO include some of the smaller Mohawk and Iroquois languages, for which 2001 Census data are unavailable.[5]

As well, with greater linguistic detail, the proportion of speakers whose language is categorized as endangered increases for some, but not all, provinces and territories; differing in some cases relatively little, such as in British Columbia (owing to the few speakers associated with the additional smaller endangered languages). In Labrador, though, when community-level

FIGURE 6A: Aboriginal Languages, by Degree of Language Endangerment, for Provinces and Territories with at Least Five Languages According to Both Census & UNESCO Linguistic Classifications, 2001
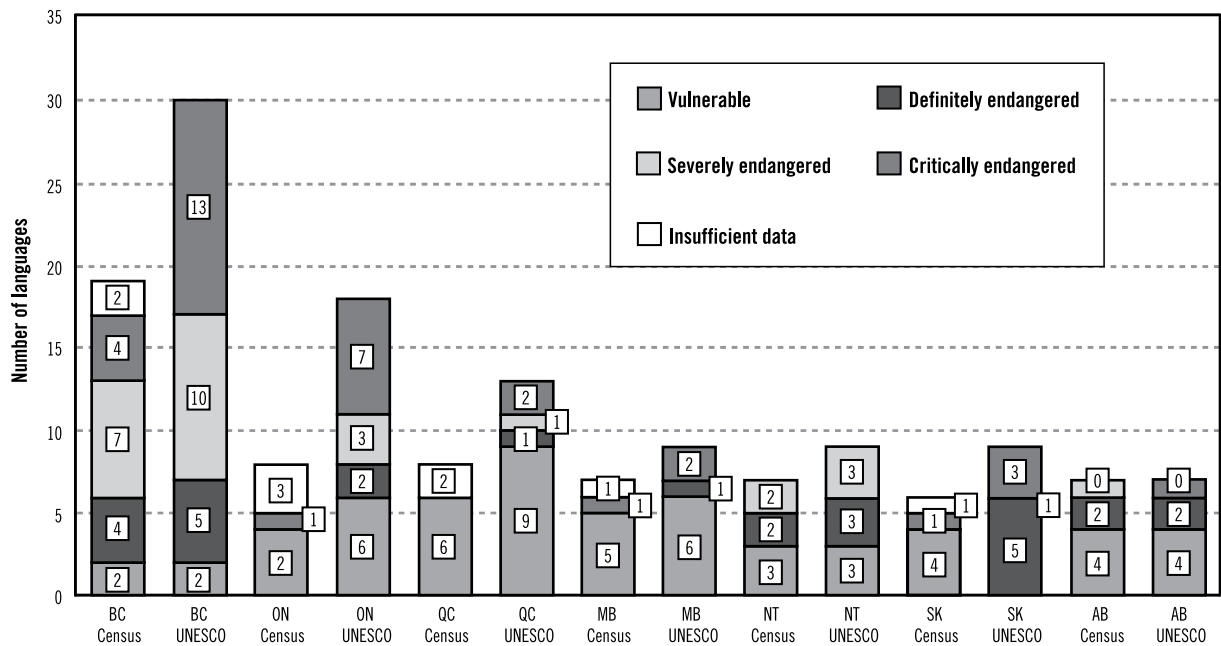
FIGURE 6B: Aboriginal Languages, by Degree of Language Endangerment, for Provinces and Territories with Less Than Five Languages According to Census Linguistic Classifications, 2001
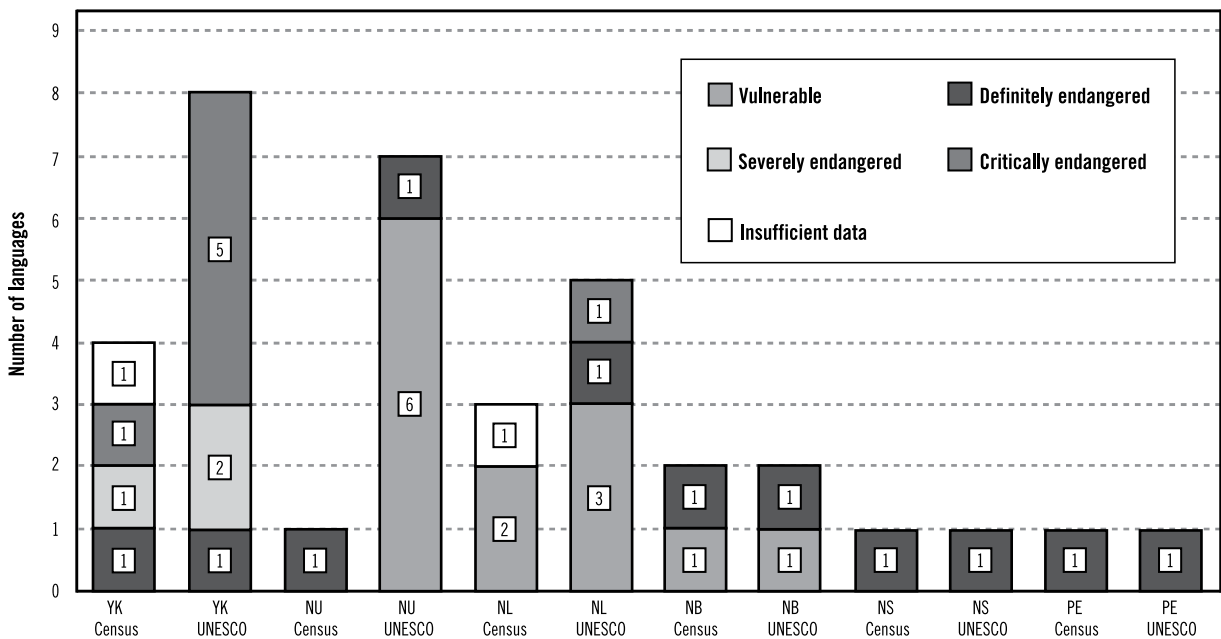
indicators are based on the specific Inuit language of Nunatsiavummiutut, which is categorized as definitely endangered, practically all, 97%, of the Inuit speaking population of Labrador is categorized as speaking an endangered language, rather than the non-endangered (vulnerable/viable) language of Inuktitut.

REVITALIZATION, SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING AND "SECONDARILY SURVIVING" LANGUAGES

Notwithstanding widespread signs of language erosion, according to the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, learning to speak an Aboriginal language is important to all generations – youth, parents, adults – within and outside Aboriginal communities (Norris 2007; Statistics Canada 2003, 32). Census data suggest signs of revitalization among endangered languages, especially among Aboriginal youth who are showing interest in learning the languages of their parents or grandparents as second

languages. Second language learning is increasingly a necessary response for endangered languages where mother tongue populations are aging beyond child-bearing years. The contribution of children and youth can be significant given that they comprise practically half of the Aboriginal population (median age of 27 in 2006).

Assessing the extent of second-language learning is especially relevant to the revitalization of endangered Aboriginal languages in Canada. The *Encyclopedia of the world's endangered languages* indicates that "...most efforts among North American Indians to preserve some knowledge of their traditional languages have focused on second language learning" (Moseley 2007); which could have some interesting implications regarding the long-term outlook for endangered languages.

The phenomenon of endangered languages surviving that would otherwise be considered extinct, due to high rates of acquisition as a second language, may be best described as "secondarily surviving" languages (Hinton 2001; Moseley 2007). It is reasonable to expect that "the number of secondarily surviving languages will grow

FIGURE 7: State of Language Learning in Aboriginal Communities by Level of Language Endangerment, Canada, 2001
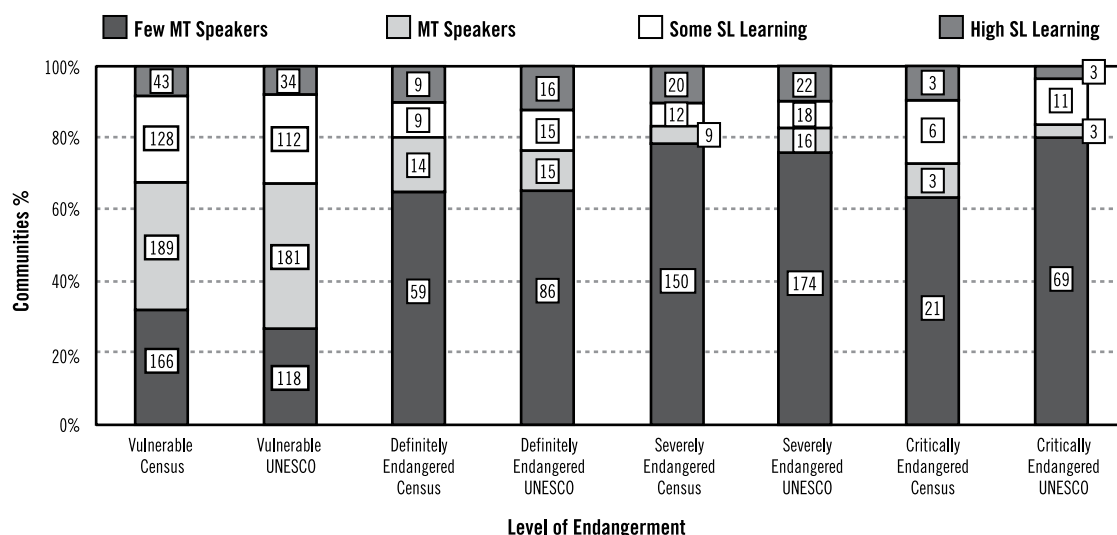
FIGURE 8: Number of Communities Where Endangered Aboriginal Languages are Being Learned as a Second Language, by Degree of Endangerment, Based on Census and UNESCO Linguistic Classifications, Canada, 2001
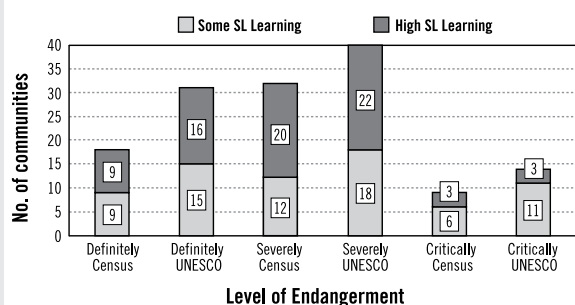
considerably in the next few decades;" further, at least "some languages that at present must be considered extinct may attain secondary survival status as communities of heritage learners create and learn codes on the extant documentation" (Moseley 2007, 9). In Canada, Huron could be an example of a "secondarily surviving" language.[6]

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING MORE PRONOUNCED IN COMMUNITIES WHERE LANGUAGES ARE ENDANGERED

Communities where "viable" or "vulnerable" languages are the traditional language are more likely than those with endangered languages to have first-language speakers and to transmit their traditional languages as a mother tongue, regardless of the classification framework used. Conversely, the more endangered the community's traditional language, the more likely second learning will predominate among those who can speak their language. According to calculations based on the UNESCO classification, of the 445 communities with "vulnerable" or viable languages, natural transmission as a mother tongue is the main form of language acquisition in about 41% (181 of 445), with second language acquisition accounting for another 34% (146) of communities. In contrast, for the 132 "definitely endangered" language communities natural transmission accounts for only 11% of communities (15 of 132) whereas second language acquisition predominates in 23%. Similarly, natural transmission and second language acquisition account for 3% and 16% respectively of the 86 communities with "critically" endangered languages (the majority, 81%, having few if any speakers) (Figure 7).

FIGURE 9: In Communities Where Endangered Languages are Spoken, Second Language Learners Make up an Increasing Share of all Speakers, with Increasing Degree of Language Endangerment : Implications for Secondarily Surviving Languages
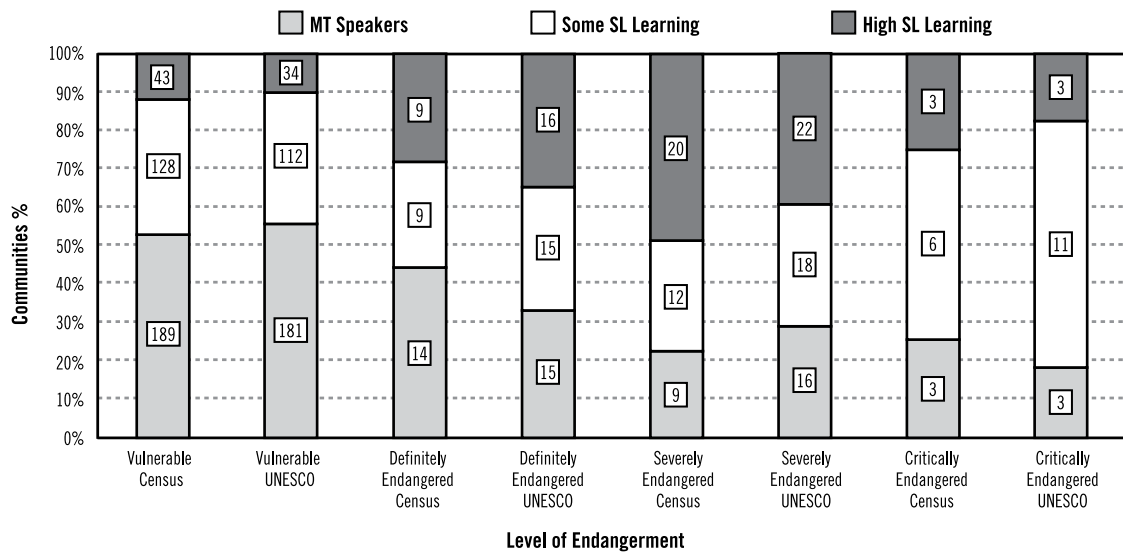
REVITALIZATION OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES: GREATER EXTENT REVEALED WITH MORE DETAILED LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATION

The numbers of communities with endangered languages where second language learning is occurring differs depending on the language classification used. Overall, the more detailed UNESCO language classification yields 85 Aboriginal communities of endangered linguistic heritage where revitalization is occurring as members learn their traditional languages as second languages, 26 more than the 59 communities derived through the census-based classification (Figure 8). The more detailed language classification provides a clearer picture of the extent to which second language learning is occurring among communities where Aboriginal languages are endangered, and furthermore the extent of this contribution is seen across all levels of endangerment (definitely, severely and critically).

SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING OFFSETTING "EXTINCTION" THROUGH SECONDARILY SURVIVING LANGUAGES

Clearly the importance of the contribution of second language learning to the survival of endangered languages, including "secondarily surviving," increases the more endangered the community's language, a pattern that appears supported by both language classifications. Based on the UNESCO classification, in communities where Aboriginal languages are spoken, second language learning predominates in less than half (45%), of communities with "vulnerable"/viable languages; but represents a growing majority of communities as endangerment increases, accounting for: 56% of communities where languages are "definitely endangered"; 71% with "severely endangered" languages, and 83% with "critically endangered" languages. Patterns are somewhat similar with the census-based language classification (Figure 9).

TABLE 2: Aboriginal Languages in Canada: Selected Indicators of Diversity, Endangerment and Revitalization, by 2001 Census and UNESCO-based Linguistic Classifications

SELECTED INDICATORS	CENSUS	UNESCO
Diversity		
Number of Aboriginal languages	32	86
Endangerment		
Number of endangered languages	21	62
Proportion endangered	66%	72%
Definitely	22%	16%
Severely	28%	19%
Critically	16%	37%
Proportion of communities where traditional Aboriginal language is endangered	38%	50%
Proportion of communities where traditional Aboriginal language is critically endangered	4%	9%
Regional perspectives		
Number of languages spoken in:		
British Columbia	19	30
Ontario	8	18
Proportion of languages in Canada spoken in:		
British Columbia	55%	35%
Ontario	23%	21%
Proportion of endangered languages spoken in:		
British Columbia	71%	45%
Ontario	19%	19%
Proportion of province's languages that are endangered (includes those in "insufficient data" category of census classification):		
British Columbia	89%	93%
Ontario	50%	67%
Revitalization of endangered languages		
Number of communities with endangered languages where second language learning is occurring	59	85
Proportion of communities with some or high degree of second language learning by level of endangerment:		
Vulnerable	48%	45%
Definitely	56%	67%
Severely	78%	71%
Critically	75%	82%

CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates that linguistic classifications are an important consideration in assessing the diversity, state and prospects of Aboriginal languages in Canada. Furthermore, while census data do provide a valuable source of demographic and community-level data, it is also the case that the available data can be insufficient, especially for some of the smaller endangered languages and their communities. As such, a more accurate portrayal of Aboriginal languages and their communities must also be supplemented with non-census sources of language information.

As discussed, Census and UNESCO-based language measures differed along a number of key dimensions of diversity, endangerment and revitalization, as illustrated for a number of selected indicators in Table 2. Clearly, the more detailed UNESCO classification depicts not only greater diversity and degree of language endangerment, but also significant variations in regional perspectives. As well, the UNESCO classification suggests greater evidence of language resilience and revitalization across communities of endangered languages, as revealed through measures of second language learning (Table 2).

Given ongoing trends in language viability, endangerment and revitalization, it can be expected that there will be a growing need for more detailed language classifications in order to more accurately reflect across Canada's regions, not only diversity, but also endangerment and revitalization. This is especially important for endangered languages, in relation to the phenomenon of "secondarily surviving" languages. And, certainly, the more precise and detailed the linguistic classification that underlies language measures, the better informed will be language planning, policy, and programs with respect to the needs and prospects of Aboriginal languages in Canada.

Finally, while implications of language classifications are profound for Aboriginal languages across the country, it must be noted that there is no one definitive classification of Aboriginal languages in Canada. Furthermore, many factors such as historical, cultural, social and political – can enter into language classifications – in addition to the various linguistic considerations of language families, languages and dialects (including variations in spelling and naming of languages). As such, it might be anticipated that linguistic classifications of Aboriginal languages could at times possibly generate debate in their application, and in general may be expected to warrant increasing attention and importance in the areas of language planning, policy and program development.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Due to statistical considerations such as small population counts, the Census classification system does not provide counts separately for the smaller languages identified in Kinkade's linguistic classification, often grouping smaller languages together for purposes of providing data.

[2] This decline in the proportion of speakers is also affected by the high increase in the denominator of the population with Aboriginal identity between 2001 and 2006.

[3] The analysis presented in this paper is based on Statistics Canada's 2001 Census data, since the language classification of the UNESCO *Atlas* utilized 2001 Census-based indicators in assessing the degree of language endangerment.

[4] Although most first-language speakers tend to reside in predominantly Aboriginal communities, others reside outside such communities, in cities and rural areas. The 2001 Census (the principal data source) included language statistics for 886 communities across Canada, representing 149,000 persons with an Aboriginal mother tongue (first-language speakers). This accounts for nearly three quarters of the total mother tongue population of 203,000. Among first-language speakers living outside Aboriginal communities, close to 39,000 resided in major cities across Canada, while the remaining 15,000 lived in smaller towns and rural areas.

[5] Due to incomplete enumeration of their reserves in the census, speaker counts are not complete for the Iroquoian languages.

[6] "While Huron-Wendat is extinct in the sense that the last Aboriginal speakers died in the first half of the 20th Century, there are efforts to bring the language back to life…" (John Steckley, Professor, Humber College, pers. comm. 2002).

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AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES ACT: RECONSIDERING EQUALITY ON THE 40ᵀᴴ ANNIVERSARY OF CANADA'S *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This commentary was written to highlight the merits of developing federal statutory legislation for First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages which allows for initiatives that foster language revitalization, specifically the speaking of languages in First Nations, Inuit and Métis homes. A philosophical argument is made for re-conceptualizing equality, a fundamental principle of Canada's *Official Languages Act*, and championing diversity in order to address the more than fifty-five Aboriginal languages whose status lies on a spectrum from vibrancy to nearing extinction. This piece draws upon Canada's *Official Languages Act*, scholarly literature regarding an Aboriginal languages act and the NWT *Official Languages Act* and relevant documents. Using the NWT *Official Languages Act* as an example, it is concluded that through re-conceptualizing equality, developing relevant statutory legislation for the revitalization of the more than 55 Aboriginal languages is possible.

Ce commentaire a été rédigé dans le but de souligner le bien-fondé de l'élaboration des mesures législatives fédérales concernant les langues des Premières nations, des Inuits et des Métis qui ont permis de mettre en œuvre des projets favorisant la revitalisation linguistique, particulièrement les projets qui encouragent les Premières nations, les Inuits et les Métis à parler ces langues à la maison. Une argumentation philosophique y est présentée en faveur de la reconceptualisation de l'égalité, principe fondamental de la *Loi sur les langues officielles du Canada*, et pour la défense de la diversité linguistique dans le but d'améliorer la situation de plus de 55 langues autochtones dont le statut se situe quelque part entre l'adaptation éventuelle et la disparition prochaine. Ce texte s'inspire de la *Loi sur les langues officielles du Canada*, de publications scientifiques concernant une loi sur les langues autochtones, de la *Loi sur les langues officielles* des T.N-O. et d'autres documents pertinents. En citant la *Loi sur les langues officielles* des T.N-O. comme exemple, on montre que la reconceptualisation de l'égalité et l'élaboration d'une loi pertinente pourraient permettre de revitaliser plus de 55 langues autochtones.

Conservation or revitalization of a language demands maintaining or restoring intergenerational language transmission. Since intergenerational transmission depends primarily on family and community networks, the focus on language conservation and revitalization efforts must shift from formal institutions to Aboriginal communities, families and social networks. This does not mean that other avenues should be ignored. It does mean, however, that the effect of all actions on language use and transmission in everyday communications must be taken into consideration. (Canada 1996, 616-7)

INTRODUCTION

The Northwest Territories government has demonstrated that Indigenous language revitalization can be addressed through a legislative initiative and today, during this, the fortieth anniversary year of Canada's *Official Languages Act*, it is time for Canada to follow suit. Despite the fact that several Indigenous languages are endangered and others have become extinct, there is neither a piece of federal statutory legislation nor an overarching policy for the recognition and revitalization of Indigenous languages in Canada. Reason for optimism lies in the 2001 census which shows Aboriginal people are acquiring our languages as second languages (Norris 2007). In Canada, there are more than fifty-five Aboriginal languages with their status lying on a spectrum from vibrant to nearing extinction (Canada 2005).

Given the number of diverse languages in diverse situations, how then can First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples best approach a legislative initiative that will result in revitalization strategies for Indigenous languages? While the *Official Languages Act* focuses on what Fettes (1998) calls "high prestige activities" such as ensuring the delivery of public services and parliamentary proceedings in both official languages, Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers and linguists adamantly argue that speaking Indigenous languages at home is the most necessary action for language revival (McCarty and Watahomigie 1998).

Re-examining the principle of *equality* as foundational to federal language legislation is one philosophical starting point. Legal scholar Slattery (1991), argues that the "constitutional space" for federal legislation exists in part because Indigenous languages were used as official languages through customary practice during treaty negotiations. The suggestion that our notion of *equality* must extend beyond simply having the same rights, to *equality* of *respect* and *interest,* is examined. The Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper articulated a context for *respect* in his June 2008 Apology to Indian residential school survivors, acknowledging that it was wrong to separate Aboriginal children from their rich and vibrant cultures.

Aboriginal people have an *interest* in revitalizing our languages because only by speaking our languages do we retain our distinct cultures as peoples. To this end, how legislative and policy initiatives can be used to restore the many diverse Indigenous languages to their once central nature in Aboriginal life is introduced. Using the NWT *Official Languages Act* as an example, the objective of this commentary is to highlight that it is possible to develop and implement Indigenous language legislation that addresses the diverse situations of several languages by accommodating the importance of community ownership.

A BRIEF SNAPSHOT: REASON FOR OPTIMISM

Many Aboriginal people, Indigenous studies scholars and proponents of social justice are frustrated over the status of Indigenous languages. In Canada, several Indigenous languages are endangered, while countless others have become extinct (Canada 2005). At the time of contact First Nations people lived in territories which now comprise Canada, speaking an estimated 450 languages and dialects belonging to eleven different language families (Canada 1992, xiii).

Today that number is decimated. Over the past one hundred years alone, an estimated ten Indigenous languages have become extinct in Canada (Norris 2007). According to the 2001 census, 235,000 of the 976,300 people (about 24%) who identified as being Aboriginal said they are able to conduct a conversation in an Aboriginal language; this represents a significant decline from 29% in 1996 (Norris 2007). A similar trend exists for the number of Aboriginal people with an Aboriginal mother tongue, showing a decline from 26% in 1996 to 21% in 2001.

On the positive side of the ledger, as Norris points out, the fact that more people could speak an Aboriginal language than had an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue suggests that Aboriginal people are acquiring their respective Aboriginal language as a second language, a positive development. This trend is not only reason for optimism; it is also evidence of an enduring commitment among Aboriginal people to maintain their languages, which in turn is cause to lobby governments throughout

Canada to elevate the status of Aboriginal languages through legislative and policy initiatives.

CANADA'S *OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT*: SILENT ON ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES

From 1963 to 1967, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism undertook the work which laid the foundation for the *Official Languages Act.* In the final report, the commissioners clarified that the examination of Indigenous languages is outside of the scope of their mandate, justifying why their inquiry focused upon the "two founding peoples" – English and French (Canada 1967, xxii, xxvi).

The *Act* adopts a "centralist rights-based philosophy" (Fettes 1998) which is evident in both the preamble and the purpose, where the *Act* focuses on ensuring the "equality of status and equal rights and privileges." The *Act* also guarantees the right to communicate in either official language within Parliament or federal government institutions – central institutions in Canada.

The *Act* also guarantees the following:

- The right of any member of the public to receive services in either English or French;
- Equal opportunities for officers and employees of Parliament or the Government of Canada to work in either official language;
- The commitment of the government to enhance the vitality of English and French linguistic minorities and to foster the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society;
- The cooperation with provincial governments and institutions to support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities;
- The enhancement of the bilingual character of the National Capital Region; and
- The recognition of the importance of preserving and enhancing the use of languages other than English and French while strengthening the status and use of the official languages. (*Official Languages Act* 1985)

The domains that the *Act* addresses are evidence for Fettes' characterization of the *Act*'s centralist philosophy, and focus on "high prestige activities". The *Act* focuses on central institutions and on the enhancement of the bilingual character of the National Capital Region. However, this approach would not allow Aboriginal language groups to "win the linguistic battle" (Fettes 1998), and the fact of a centralist rights-based philosophy for the *Official Languages Act* is not justification for applying that approach in the creation of policies to support Aboriginal languages.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

Slattery (1991) argues that Aboriginal languages ought to be considered official languages in some sense. First, the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights of Canadians and Aboriginal people to express ourselves in any language we choose, including Aboriginal languages. Second, while this guarantee of freedom of expression does not guarantee official status for Aboriginal languages in Canada, a guarantee of official status for Aboriginal languages can be drawn from the seemingly contradictory nature of the *Charter* (Slattery 1991; Gibson 1991): while Section 16[1] of the *Charter* declares that English and French are the official languages of Canada, implying that there are no others, Section 22, provides that nothing in sections 16 to 20 "abrogates or derogates from any legal or customary right or privilege acquired or enjoyed either before or after the coming into force of this Charter with respect to any language that is not English or French" (Slattery 1991). Finally, Slattery argues that Section 25 also addresses language rights:

> You also find in section 25 a provision that explicitly shields from the adverse impact of *Charter* guarantees 'any aboriginal, treaty or other rights or freedoms that pertain to the aboriginal peoples of Canada,' which would clearly cover language rights. (Slattery 1991)

In his analysis, Slattery reminds us that Aboriginal languages were used as "official languages" through customary practice in the formal exchanges made through ceremonies and in the negotiations of treaties when English, French and Aboriginal languages were used with interpreters playing an important role in these negotiations. Slattery concludes that while these two sections "clear a constitutional space for aboriginal language rights, they do not provide a foundation for them" (Slattery 1991).

EQUALITY REVISITED

*Equality i*s the main legislative paradigm in which the *Official Languages Act* was written. Opening a dialogue about an Aboriginal languages act requires expanding the discussion of equality beyond the English-French dichotomy to include First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages. The discussion of equality needs to be approached thoughtfully, such that language rights can be justified as they create an "egalitarian environment for Aboriginal peoples" (MacMillan 1998). Here three perspectives regarding the basis on which Aboriginal groups can claim equal status are briefly examined.

First, the *number of speakers* is one aspect of the issue of equality. If we were to determine whether or not Aboriginal languages should be officially recognized based upon the number of speakers, we would conclude that they should not (MacMillan 1998): as noted previously, the 2001 census found that about 235,000 people who identified as Aboriginal, said they had knowledge of or were able to converse in an Aboriginal language; this means that less than one percent of the total population of Canada speaks an Aboriginal language as a home language.[2]

The fact that so few Aboriginal people speak their Aboriginal language at home, however, does not preclude us from considering another perspective of equality: the *equality of respect*. A commitment to linguistic equality is synonymous to the *equality of respect* according to political philosopher, Kymlicka (1989). On June 11, 2008, Canadian politicians acknowledged that the respect for Aboriginal languages has historically been absent when they formally apologized for the aftermath of the Indian Residential School system – a system created in the late 1800s in the name of removing Indigenous languages from the consciousness of countless Aboriginal children and thereby, the collective consciousness of Aboriginal communities and Canada (Canada 2009). On June 11, 2008, Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper said in the House of Commons:

> First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools. Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools and others never returned home. The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language… We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. (Canada 2008)

Not only is the apology an acknowledgement of the historical wrongs enacted on Aboriginal peoples' languages, but it also creates a context for a renewed *respect* for these languages.

The international community has also inspired a renewed respect for Indigenous languages. The essential need to support Indigenous language revitalization has been acknowledged in the United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Articles 11, 13, 14, 15 and 16 (adopted in 2007 by the UN). In Canada this Declaration is the subject of ongoing political debate: the Government of Canada voted against the Declaration at the UN vote in 2007; however, Parliament voted to endorse the declaration on April 8, 2008, notwithstanding the objections of the minority government. To date Canada has not changed its formal position on the Declaration.

In 2008, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) made Indigenous languages (and their connection to biocultural diversity) a priority for its Seventh Session, which was held in New York from April 21 – May 2, 2008. During this annual meeting, approximately 1,000 Indigenous organizations, government representatives and non-governmental organizations gathered to address the themes of climate change, biocultural diversity and livelihoods; the stewardship role of Indigenous peoples and new challenges. Indigenous languages featured prominently in the discussion, with a half day being devoted specifically to Indigenous language revitalization. Not only were best practices for revitalization featured; the essentiality of diversity which is manifest in languages, Indigenous languages as a development issue; Indigenous languages as a children's issue and Indigenous languages as a human rights issue were among the discussion themes that were brought to the fore. Given the recent adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the affirmation of the urgent global situation regarding Indigenous languages at the UNPFII, the timing is right for a renewed respect of Indigenous languages in Canada.[3]

Third, *equal consideration of interests* requires recognition. Johnston reminds us why Aboriginal languages merit our collective interest.

> [Native peoples] lose not only the ability to express the simplest of daily sentiments and needs but they can no longer understand the ideas, concepts, insights, attitudes, rituals, ceremonies, institutions brought into being by their ancestors; and, having lost the power to understand, cannot sustain, enrich, or pass on their heritage. No longer will they think Indian or feel Indian. And though they may wear 'Indian' jewellery and take part in pow-wows, they can never capture that kinship with and reverence for the sun and the moon, the sky and the water, or feel the lifebeat of Mother Earth or sense the change in her moods; no longer are the wolf, the bear, and the caribou elder brothers but

beasts, resources to be killed and sold. They will have lost their identity which no amount of reading can ever restore. Only language and literature can restore the "Indian-ness." (Johnston 1998)

For Johnston, the significance of Indigenous languages lies in understanding and passing down our distinct heritage (Battiste 2000). This means knowing and speaking our respective Indigenous languages as they express concepts, ceremonies and our institutions. Rather than the size of a language community, the importance then lies in the *equality of respect* and *interests*.

If interest is demonstrated through the placement of Indigenous languages as central to daily life, then how interested are Aboriginal people in Canada in revitalizing and retaining their languages?[4] Why should governments in Canada address languages that Aboriginal people (seemingly) do not use, asks MacMillan (1998)? Ironically, the policies such as the Indian Residential Schools policy, which led to the precarious state of the majority of Aboriginal languages, are what fuelled the displacement of Aboriginal languages from their once central nature in Aboriginal life. Using legislative and policy initiatives in today's context of reconciliation to restore Aboriginal languages merits attention.

AN ABORIGINAL LANGUAGES ACT: CHAMPION DIVERSITY AND MAKE IT RELEVANT

Where Indigenous languages are concerned, we need to look at the essential need for *diversity* which is different than *equality*. Equality means having the same rights or status (Fowler 1995). Diversity means a variety or a different kind (Fowler 1995). The *Official Languages Act* has ensured the equality of the English and French languages, but remained silent on championing diversity which could be achieved by ensuring the survival of the some fifty-five Indigenous languages in Canada. The prospect of the diversity of life being irreversibly interrupted by the decline in Indigenous languages is one reason for developing an Aboriginal languages act.

Just as Indigenous Elders and philosophers such as Johnston have done, Maffi speaks to the interrelations between cultural, linguistic and biological diversity and the consequences for their loss (Maffi 2005). Maffi suggests that if any one of the cultural, linguistic or biological diversity is affected, then one or both of the others will be too. When linguistic diversity is negatively affected, this results in the diminished capability of humanity to draw upon different world views of

Indigenous languages to address the issues, problems and concerns in the world (Maffi 2005). Having recognized that Indigenous languages inspire thought, she challenges the world to care about the revitalization of Indigenous languages. This can be done by language speakers, language activists and policy makers alike.

An Aboriginal languages act needs to address the linguistic issues which are relevant to Aboriginal communities. In Canada, Aboriginal communities can be characterized as "small, declining, oral language communities" (Fettes 1998). Indigenous traditional knowledge keepers and linguists adamantly attest to the fact that Indigenous languages must be spoken in the home if they are to be revived and retained (McCarty and Watahomigie 1998). How, then, can an Aboriginal languages act accommodate the need for Indigenous people to speak their languages in their homes? Legislation must be *relevant* to the need. Unlike the *Official Languages Act* which promotes official bilingualism in Parliament and the public service, an Indigenous languages act must focus upon preservation, development and enhancement activities (Fettes 1998) in an effort to ensure *diversity*. Rather than adopting the "centralist rights-based" philosophy of the *Official Languages Act*, an Aboriginal languages act needs to focus on the fact that revitalization demands that people speak their languages at home.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT: EVOLUTION FROM EQUALITY TO DIVERSITY

A precedent for Aboriginal language legislation has been established in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Their *Official Languages Act* has evolved from focusing on equality for the use of English and French to diversity, which is brought about by initiatives to preserve, promote and protect Aboriginal languages. In 1984 the Legislative Assembly passed its *Official Languages Act* (modeled after the federal *Official Languages Act*) for two express purposes: (1) to guarantee equal status for the use of the public who access government programs and services, and (2) to officially recognize the Aboriginal languages in use in the NWT (Northwest Territories 2008). In 1990, the NWT Government amended the *Act* to bolster the status of Aboriginal languages in an effort to "preserve and promote Aboriginal cultures through protection of their languages" (Northwest Territories 2008). Again, in 2004, major amendments were made to the Act, which resulted in the role of promoting and preserving NWT's official languages being turned over from the Official Languages Commissioner to the newly created position of Minister Responsible for Official Languages. The Minister, in turn,

established two boards: (1) the Official Languages Board and (2) the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board. While the Official Languages Board reviews the use of official languages in the administration and delivery of services to government institutions, the Aboriginal Languages Revitalization Board is responsible for reviewing programs and initiatives dealing with Aboriginal languages, and promoting and revitalizing Aboriginal languages (Northwest Territories 2008). Included in these amendments was the increase in the number of official languages in the NWT from eight to eleven.

Mark Fettes, language policy scholar, criticized the Government of the Northwest Territories for modeling its initial *Official Languages Act* after Canada's and thereby focusing on language use for government services rather than Aboriginal language programs designed around the goals of preservation and revitalization (1998). While it is unknown whether Fettes played a role in the NWT legislative changes, they were enacted in response to the *Final Report – Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act* (Northwest Territories 2003). The reality is that official languages legislation can address the importance of community ownership – a necessary ingredient for language preservation.

CONCLUSIONS: A FUTURE VISION, REFLECTING ON THE PAST

Forty years from now, in 2049, imagine a grand celebration of the *Official Languages Act* of Canada as the diversity of our languages is celebrated. Imagine reflecting upon the preceding forty years and how Canada, a once bilingual country, became known globally for language diversity. Picture yourself in conversations about how the Government of Canada apologized to Aboriginal people for enacting the Indian Residential Schools policy which tried to rid Aboriginal people of Canada of their languages and cultures. Hear yourself citing studies such as the *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* and *Towards a New Beginning: A Foundational Report for a Strategy to Revitalize First Nation, Inuit and Métis Languages and Cultures* and about how the *Aboriginal Languages Act* which, unlike the 1969 and subsequent amendments to Canada's *Official Languages Act*, turned our attention to language diversity and the relevant, community-based initiatives to achieve this.

Perhaps, you have delved into the archives only to uncover the legislative models, such as the one from the Northwest Territories, which contributed to this much needed change. And catch yourself reflecting that when this legislative initiative was truly undertaken, the numbers of Aboriginal language speakers did not warrant it but the commitment to the principles – equality of

respect and the equality of interest – allowed us to draw upon our belief that this needed to be pursued. Finally, reflect on the day when Canada realized that its appeal for the *equality* of English and French, while sidelining Aboriginal languages, who manifest the glorious *diversity* of Canada, was woefully misguided for Aboriginal people and Canadians alike.

[1] Also, see Galley (2009). Here, the term "Aboriginal" refers to the Indians (First Nations), Inuit and Métis of Canada as defined in the *Constitution Act* 1982. It is acknowledged that the First Nations, Inuit and Métis, given their respective positions to remain distinctive and strong preferences to not be party to pan-Aboriginal approaches would likely lobby for their own respective pieces of legislation. For the purpose of the more general analysis which is presented in this paper, the term "Aboriginal" is used when referencing people or peoples; the term "Indigenous" is also employed when discussing languages.

[2] This is based upon calculations using 30,021,251 as the population of Canada according the 2001 Census (Canada 2004).

[3] Note that no specific references have been cited; this synopsis is based upon the author's attendance at the 7th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in May 2008 in New York City (United Nations 2008).

[4] A valid response to this question can only be explored through a comprehensive nation-wide study regarding the attitudes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people toward their languages.

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IN BRIEF: INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS CANADA'S "LIVING CONDITIONS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES" PHOTOGRAPHIC PROJECT

Launched in the fall of 2007, this project brought thirteen Aboriginal photographers to various First Nations and Inuit communities located across Canada. The goal was to take images that help to represent the living conditions of Aboriginal Communities based on the indicators used in Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Community Well-Being Index (CWB):

- Educational attainment;
- Income / Economies – traditional and non-traditional;
- Labour force participation (people at work); and,
- Housing and community infrastructure.

The photographs collected through this project are visual documents that challenge viewers' perceptions of actual living conditions in Aboriginal and Inuit communities. Tying images of actual living conditions in these communities to the research results of the Community Well-being Index makes for a powerful message: Canada faces significant challenges in raising the levels of well-being in First Nation and Inuit communities relative to other Canadian communities.

Participating communities include:
- Beaver Creek, YK
- Behchoko, NT
- Berens River, MB
- Bloodvein, MB
- Brokenhead, MB
- Buffalo Point, MB
- Haines Junction, YK
- Hay River, NT
- Inuvik, NT

- Kuujjuaq, QC
- Ministikwan, SK
- OceanMan, SK
- Osoyoos, BC
- Sanikiluaq, NU
- Shesheep, AB
- Tsawwassen, BC
- Tsinstikeptum, BC
- Tsussie, BC
- Yellow Quill, SK
- Wendake, QC

We worked hard to ensure there is a balanced approach to this project that neither glosses over reality nor only celebrates success. Therefore, we included communities that fall at all levels of the CWB: communities that are doing better than the average Canadian community, those that are below the average Canadian community and those that have shown improvement over time.

A small selection of the photos obtained through this project were on display over the summer of 2009 at the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Art Gallery and a larger selection of the photos will be published in the form of a coffee table book for release in the fall of 2010 through the University of Manitoba Press. A selection of the photos is available for viewing on Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's website, at http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ach/ac/aga/cata-eng.asp.

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MOBILITY AND MIGRATION PATTERNS OF ABORIGINAL POPULATIONS IN CANADA: 2001-2006

Stewart Clatworthy is the owner and principal researcher of Four Directions Project Consultants. Mr. Clatworthy has been active in Aboriginal research, completing numerous studies on demography and migration, population projections, and socioeconomic conditions.

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Understanding the bases of population growth and change is important as it can inform the policy and program development process and provide a stronger basis for forecasting future population changes which often serve as key factors shaping service demand. Data from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Canada reveal quite high rates of Aboriginal population growth, especially in eastern Canada and in off-reserve urban areas. Within the context of census data, regional and location-specific population changes can result from four key factors: natural increase (i.e. the excess of births over deaths), changes over successive censuses in levels of non-enumeration and survey under-coverage, changes in individuals' propensity to report Aboriginal identity (commonly referred to as ethnic mobility), and migration. This study provides a preliminary examination of the contribution of migration to Aboriginal population growth at the provincial/regional level and in on-and off-reserve areas during the 2001 to 2006 time period.

Il est important de comprendre les bases de l'accroissement et des changements démographiques, puisque cela permet d'éclairer le processus d'élaboration des politiques et des programmes et de donner une base plus solide aux prévisions démographiques qui sont souvent les principaux facteurs sur lesquels on se fonde pour établir la demande de services. Les données des recensements de 2001 et de 2006 au Canada ont révélé des taux très élevés de croissance démographique chez les Autochtones, particulièrement dans l'Est du Canada et à l'extérieur des réserves, en milieu urbain. Dans le contexte des données du recensement, les changements démographiques se produisant dans des régions et dans des endroits particuliers peuvent résulter des quatre principaux facteurs suivants : l'accroissement naturel (lorsqu'il y a davantage de naissances que de décès), les fluctuations des niveaux de non-recensement et de sous-dénombrement lors de recensements successifs, les changements dans la propension des personnes à déclarer leur identité autochtone (que l'on appelle couramment la mobilité ethnique) et la migration. Cette étude fournit un examen préliminaire de la contribution de la migration à la croissance de la population autochtone aux niveaux provincial et régional, ainsi qu'à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des réserves durant la période de 2001 à 2006.

INTRODUCTION

A considerable body of existing research has explored various aspects of the mobility and migration patterns of Aboriginal peoples in Canada over the course of the past 35 years (Siggner 1977; Norris 1985; 1990, 2002; Clatworthy 1995; Clatworthy and Cooke 2001; Clatworthy and Norris 2007). This paper extends upon this research by exploring some of the key dimensions of Aboriginal mobility and migration for the period spanning 2001 to 2006, as identified by the 2006 Census of Canada. In addition to providing estimates of mobility and migration rates, the paper identifies the scale and direction of Aboriginal population movements among provinces and regions, and between reserves, and off-reserve rural and urban areas. Migration patterns for the 2001 to 2006 time period are presented within the context of longer-term trends observed for previous census time intervals.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

ABORIGINAL POPULATION

The Census of Canada collects data that allows one to define Aboriginal populations according to several criteria, including ethnic origin (ancestry), identity (self-reported affiliation with an Aboriginal group), Indian registration status and membership in an Indian band. For purposes of this study, the Aboriginal population is defined on the basis of the latter three criteria and includes all those who reported at least one Aboriginal identity (North American Indian, Métis, Inuit), as well as all those who reported Indian registration or band membership (regardless of Aboriginal identity). Data and analysis are presented in this study for four Aboriginal sub-groups, including:

- *Registered Indians* – those who reported being registered under the Indian Act, regardless of self-reported identity;
- *Non-registered Indians* – those who reported North American Indian identity (only) and who did not report Indian registration;[1]
- Non-registered *Métis*, including those who reported Métis identity (only) and who did not report Indian registration;
- Non-registered *Inuit*, including those who reported Inuit identity (only) and who did not report Indian registration.

In addition to these discrete population sub-groups, a small number of individuals reported more than one Aboriginal identity or a non-Aboriginal identity but membership in an Indian band. Although results are not presented separately these individuals have been included in the estimates presented for the total Aboriginal population. For purposes of comparison, several aspects of the analysis are also presented for the non-Aboriginal population.

MOBILITY AND MIGRATION CONCEPTS

Mobility and migration data are collected by the Census of Canada using two questions:

- Where did you live 5 years ago?
- Where did you live 1 year ago?

Responses to these questions can be configured to identify three main population sub-groups, including:

- *Non-movers*, or those who reported living at the same address at the outset of the 1 or 5 year reference period;
- *Non-migrant movers*, or those who lived at a different address in the same community at the outset of the 1 or 5 year reference period;
- *Migrants*, or those who lived in a different community at the outset of the 1 or 5 year reference period.

The migration components presented in this paper are derived from analysis of data collected using the 5 year question.[2] Crude migration rates (i.e. the proportion of individuals that reported migration) are presented for the 5 year period. Estimates of in-, out-, and net migration rates are also calculated from the 5 year data, but are presented in this paper as average annual estimates.

GEOGRAPHY

As noted above, the migration components of the study explore both inter-provincial/regional moves and moves between Indian reserves and off-reserve rural and urban areas. In the case of inter-provincial/regional moves, estimates are provided for all provinces and territories, with the exception of the Atlantic provinces (which have been grouped to form an Atlantic region). Analysis of moves between reserves, rural and urban areas distinguish among four discrete types of geographic areas, including:

- Indian reserves and settlements;
- rural areas;
- urban non-census metropolitan areas (non-CMAs);
- urban census metropolitan areas (CMAs).[3]

DISTRIBUTION AND GROWTH OF THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION

Unadjusted census estimates of the size and geographic distribution of Aboriginal populations need to be interpreted with some caution, as they are biased as a consequence of non-enumeration and survey-coverage. In general, the effect of this bias is to significantly understate the size of the population residing on reserves. As

Registered Indians form a very large majority of reserve populations, the census estimates for this sub-group of the Aboriginal population are also understated.[4]

In 2006, the Aboriginal population (as defined for this paper) was estimated by the census to total about 1,172,290 and included 623,780 Registered Indians, 355,505 (non-registered) Métis, 133,155 non-registered Indians and 49,115 (non-registered) Inuit. An additional 11,235 individuals reported either multiple Aboriginal identities or a non-Aboriginal identity but band membership.

Many earlier studies of Aboriginal migration (e.g. Norris and Clatworthy 2003) have noted pronounced differences in the distribution of Aboriginal sub-groups by type of residence location. These differences have also been linked to quite pronounced differences in the patterns of mobility and migration of specific Aboriginal sub-groups.

The general nature of differences in the location distribution of Aboriginal population sub-groups is illustrated in Figure 1. In 2006, most (about 52%) Registered Indians lived on reserve although large segments of the population (about 37%) lived in urban areas. A large majority of both the Métis and non-registered Indian populations resided in urban areas, most commonly in large cities (CMAs). More than 60% of the Inuit population lived in rural areas, although a significant minority (about 37%) also lived in urban areas. In relation to Aboriginal populations, the non-Aboriginal population was much more heavily concentrated in urban areas (81%), especially large urban areas (65%).

Figure 2 presents unadjusted census estimates of Aboriginal population growth reported for each of the four geographic areas during the 2001 to 2006 time period. Population growth during the period totaled about 196,500 individuals or 20%. The Aboriginal population increased at all four locations, although most growth during the period (about 90%) occurred off-reserve in urban areas. As illustrated in Figure 3, the Aboriginal population also increased in all provinces/regions between 2001 and 2006. Regional-level growth was most pronounced (in percentage terms) in eastern Canada and in the province of Alberta.

Regional and location-specific growth in Aboriginal populations (as measured using census data) can result from a variety of factors, including natural increase (i.e. the excess of births over deaths), changes between census periods in levels of non-enumeration and under-coverage, changes in the population's propensity to report Aboriginal identity (commonly referred to as ethnic mobility), as well as migration. While data necessary to isolate all of the components of Aboriginal population growth during the 2001 to 2006 time period are not yet available, it is possible to explore the role played by migration in contributing to

FIGURE 1: Distribution of Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Populations by Type of Residence Location, Canada, 2006.
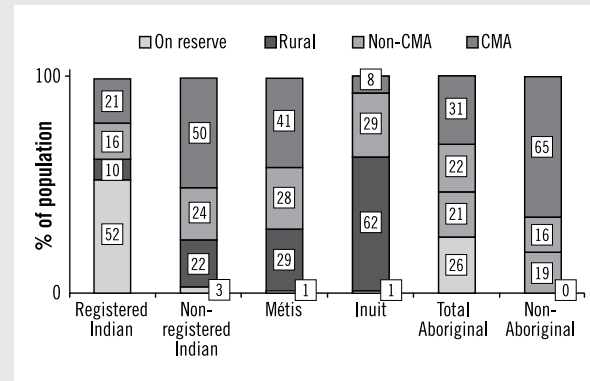
Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

FIGURE 2: Estimated Growth in the Aboriginal Population by Type of Residence Location, Canada, 2001-2006.
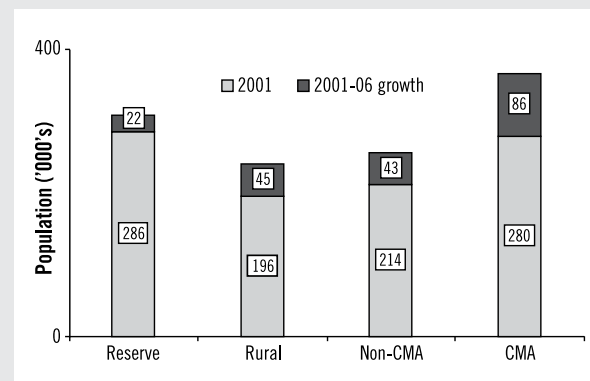
Source: 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

regional growth, and to growth in populations living on reserve and in rural and urban areas off-reserve. In this regard, the study's results will hopefully provide some initial insights into the relative contribution of migration vis-à-vis other factors affecting Aboriginal population changes observed during this time period.

MOBILITY AND MIGRATION RATES

Earlier research (Clatworthy and Norris 2007) has revealed that overall levels of mobility and migration among Aboriginal populations have exceeded those of the non-Aboriginal population for several census time intervals.

Estimates of crude mobility rates (i.e. the proportion of the population that moved) are presented in Figure 4 for each of the Aboriginal sub-groups for the 2001 to 2006 period and the previous 5 year period. In general, the

FIGURE 3: Estimated Growth in the Aboriginal Population by Province/Region, Canada, 2001-2006.

Source: 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)
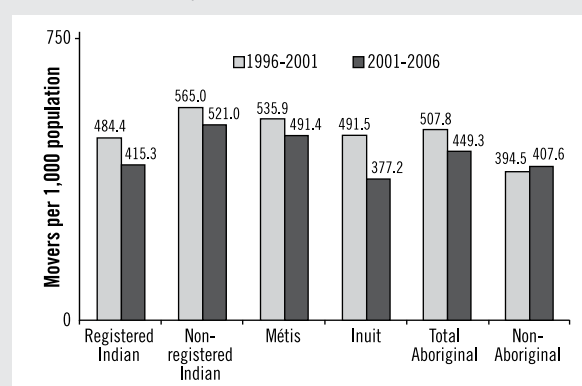

FIGURE 4: Five Year Crude Mobility Rates for Population Aged 5 or More Years by Aboriginal Sub-group, Canada, 1996-2001 and 2001-2006.
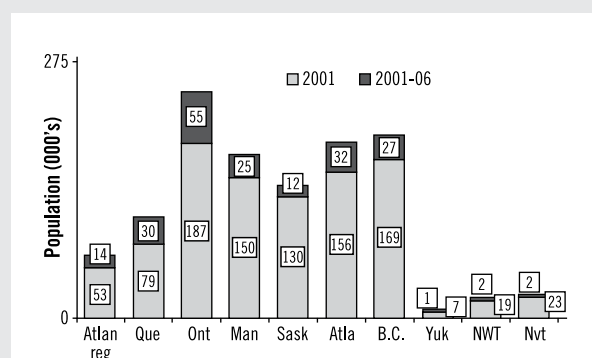
Source: 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

pattern of mobility among Aboriginal sub-groups was quite similar for both time periods. Crude mobility rates were highest among non-registered Indians (about 521 per 1,000 population) and Métis (about 491 per 1,000) and significantly lower among Registered Indians (about 415 per 1,000) and Inuit (about 377 per 1,000). The figure also reveals that crude mobility rates among all Aboriginal sub-groups declined during the 2001 to 2006 period. These declines were most pronounced among Inuit (23% lower) and Registered Indians (14% lower). Mobility among non-registered Indians and Métis fell by about 8% during the period.

To some extent, the mobility estimates for Aboriginal sub-groups presented in Figure 4 mask the true extent of movement differentials between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. As revealed in Table 1, the lower aggregate rates of mobility identified for Inuit and Registered Indians result from the higher concentrations of these populations in locations (on reserve in the case of Registered Indians and in rural areas in the case of Inuit) which tend to have quite low rates of mobility.[5] Mobility rates among these sub-groups were significantly higher in

urban areas and exceeded those of other sub-groups in large urban areas. The table also reveals that in relation to the non-Aboriginal population, crude mobility rates among all Aboriginal sub-groups were much higher in off-reserve locations, and especially so in urban areas where Aboriginal mobility rates were 35% to 40% higher than non-Aboriginal rates.

Between 2001 and 2006, about 203,450 Aboriginal people changed their community of residence, representing a crude migration rate of about 191 per 1,000 population. As illustrated in Figure 5, the pattern of crude migration rates among Aboriginal sub-groups was quite similar to that observed for mobility rates.

Migration during the 2001 to 2006 period was highest among non-registered Indians (about 221 per 1,000 population) and Métis (about 210 per 1,000). Migration rates among Registered Indians (179 per 1,000) and Inuit (125 per 1,000) were sharply lower and below the migration rates observed for the non-Aboriginal population. As in the case of broader mobility, crude migration rates among all Aboriginal sub-groups declined during the 2001 to 2006 time period.

TABLE 1: Five Year Crude Mobility Rates for Population Aged 5 or More Years by Aboriginal Sub-group and Location of Residence, Canada, 2001-2006.

LOCATION	REGISTERED INDIAN	NON-REGISTERED INDIAN	MÉTIS	INUIT	TOTAL ABORIGINAL	NON-ABORIGINAL
On Reserve	237.4	–	–	–	242.0	–
Rural	374.1	379.5	329.9	302.3	345.6	284.3
Non-CMA	624.2	577.9	556.9	467.1	582.4	419.5
CMA	639.7	567.0	565.6	634.9	595.7	440.6
All Locations	415.3	521.0	491.5	377.1	449.4	407.6

Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

FIGURE 5: Five Year Crude Migration Rates for Population Aged 5 or More Years by Aboriginal Sub-group, Canada, 1996-2001 and 2001-2006

Source: 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

registered Indians (47 per 1,000). Rates among Inuit and Registered Indians were estimated to be about 44 and 36 per 1,000, respectively.

Among the total Aboriginal population, the inter-provincial/regional migration rate was 44 per 1,000 population, roughly 1.5 times higher than that reported by the non-Aboriginal population (30 per 1,000).

Although sizable numbers of Aboriginal people changed their province or region of residence between 2001 and 2006, net changes during the period numbered only 12,500 or about 1.2% of the total population, suggesting that this dimension of migration had only a minor impact on the geographic distribution of Aboriginal populations. Figure 6 provides a summary of 2001 to 2006 Aboriginal net migration rates for Canada's provinces/regions as well as estimates prepared previously by Clatworthy and Norris (2007) for the previous census time interval. The rates are expressed as average annual rates per 1,000 population.

Data presented in the figure suggest that relatively few changes occurred in the pattern of Aboriginal inter-provincial/regional migration between the 1996 to 2001 and 2001 to 2006 periods. For the 2001 to 2006 period, only Alberta and Yukon recorded net inflows of Aboriginal migrants, although in the case of Yukon, the absolute number of net in-migrants was quite small (about 250). All remaining provinces/regions recorded quite small net outflows of Aboriginal migrants during the 2001 to 2006 period. In relation to the previous time period, reversals in the direction of net migration were recorded in Yukon (from a net outflow to inflow), Nunavut, Saskatchewan, and Ontario (from net inflows to net outflows).

The contribution of migration during the 2001 to 2006 period to changes in the size of provincial/regional Aboriginal populations was significant only in Alberta, Yukon and Saskatchewan. Net migration accounted for about 29% and 24% of the 2001 to 2006 growth in the Aboriginal populations of Alberta and Yukon, respectively. Net out-migration from Saskatchewan reduced Aboriginal population growth in that province by about

As revealed in Table 2, crude migration rates among all Aboriginal sub-groups varied widely by residence location, being substantially higher among all sub-groups in urban areas as opposed to reserves and rural areas. With the exception of Inuit residing in rural areas and smaller urban centres, Aboriginal migration rates in off-reserve locations were substantially higher than those of the non-Aboriginal population. In relation to the non-Aboriginal population, migration rates were especially high among Registered Indians in urban areas and among Inuit living in large urban centres (CMAs).

INTER-PROVINCIAL/REGIONAL MIGRATION

Between 2001 and 2006, roughly 46,200 Aboriginal people relocated to a different province or region, representing a 5 year migration rate of about 44 per 1,000 population. Rates of inter-provincial/regional migration were structured among Aboriginal sub-groups in much the same fashion as crude migration rates, being highest among Métis (55 per 1,000 population) and non-

TABLE 2: Five Year Crude Migration Rates for Population Aged 5 or More Years by Aboriginal Sub-group and Location of Residence, Canada, 2001-2006.

LOCATION	REGISTERED INDIAN	NON-REGISTERED INDIAN	MÉTIS	INUIT	TOTAL ABORIGINAL	NON-ABORIGINAL
On Reserve	94.1	–	–	–	97.5	–
Rural	223.1	218.3	192.2	76.3	190.3	174.6
Non-CMA	294.1	254.0	249.9	174.0	265.0	196.9
CMA	243.6	207.7	192.7	323.4	217.5	190.6
All Locations	179.1	220.8	209.1	125.3	191.2	188.8

Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

FIGURE 6: Average Annual Net Migration Rates for Aboriginal Population Aged 5 or More Years by Province/Region, Canada, 1996-2001 and 2001-2006.
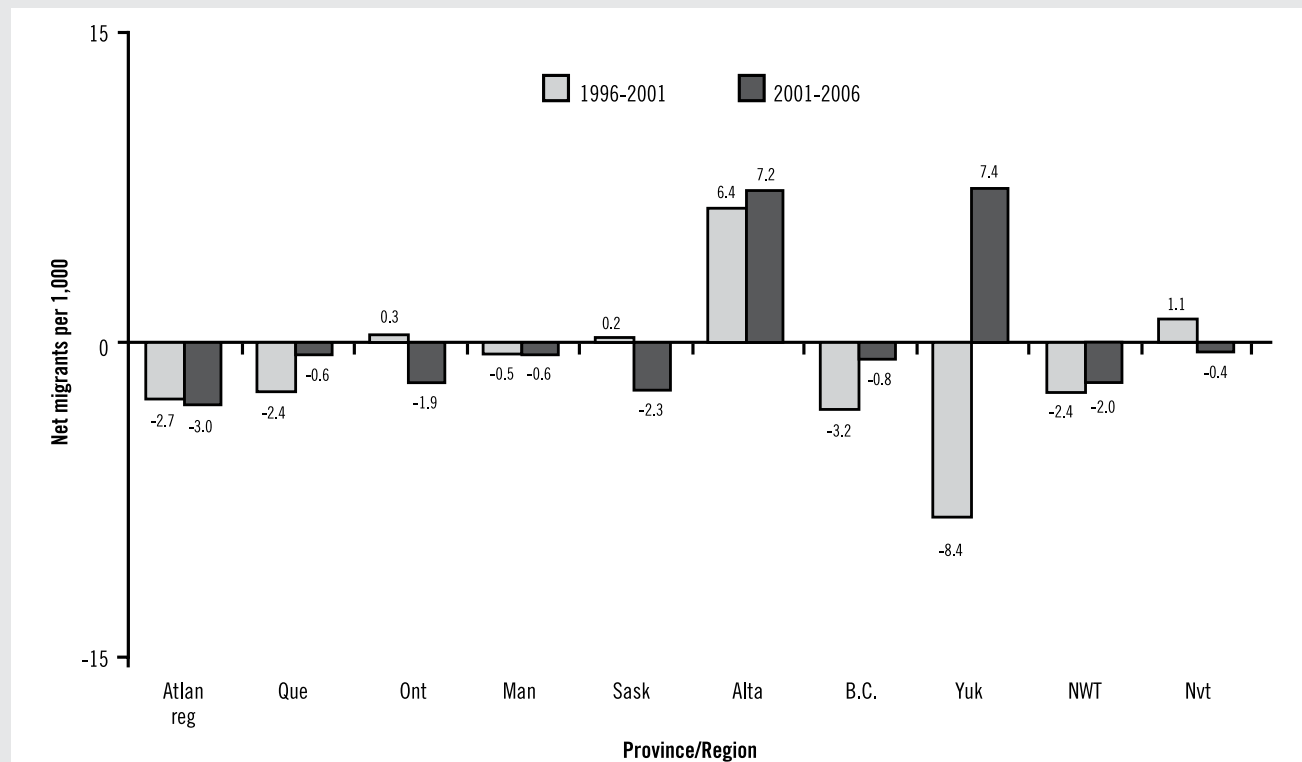
Source: 2001 and 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

17%. The impacts of inter-provincial moves on the size of Aboriginal populations in all other provinces/regions were considerably smaller.

MIGRATION BETWEEN RESERVES, RURAL AND URBAN AREAS

Many aspects of the migration patterns of Aboriginal people between reserves and off-reserve rural and urban areas have been examined by several researchers over the course of the past 35 years (Siggner 1977; Norris 1985, 1990, 2002; Clatworthy 1995; Clatworthy and Cooke 2001; Clatworthy and Norris 2007). Although much of the earliest research in this regard focused on Registered Indians, more recent work has also included other sub-groups of the Aboriginal population.

Excluding migrants from abroad, about 199,450 Aboriginal people relocated to a different community between 2001 and 2006. Internal migrants represented about 18.8% of the population aged 5 or more years, about 1.1 percentage points lower than that observed for the previous census time interval. Although large numbers

FIGURE 7: Aboriginal Net Migration Flows Between Reserves and Off-Reserve Rural and Urban Areas, Canada, 2001-2006.
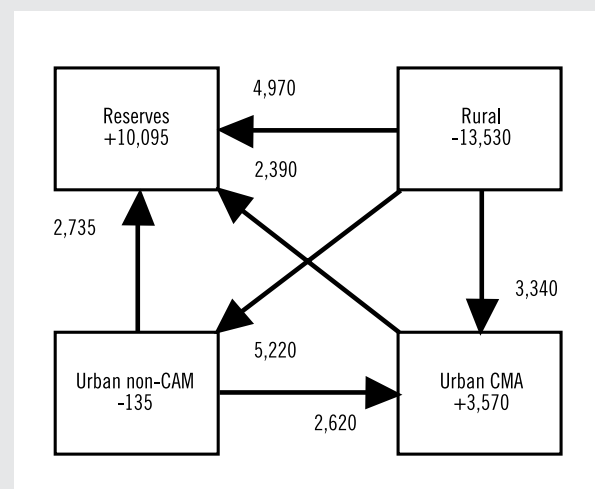
Note: Numbers in italics denote reversal of the pattern observed during the 1996 to 2001 time period.
Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

TABLE 3: Volume of Aboriginal Net Migration by Location and Aboriginal Sub-group, Canada, 2001-2006.

ABORIGINAL SUB-GROUP	RESERVES	RURAL	NON-CMA	CMA	TOTAL RELOCATIONS
Registered Indians	9,645	-12,755	115	2,995	25,510
Non-Registered Indians	305	-760	60	395	1,520
Métis	130	590	-775	55	1,550
Inuit	-10	-820	765	65	1,660

Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

of Aboriginal people changed communities between 2001 and 2006, the net effect of migration on the geographic distribution of the population was considerably smaller. Net movers among reserves and off-reserve rural and urban areas numbered about 27,300 or about 2.6% of the total population.

Figure 7 provides a summary of the 2001 to 2006 net flows of Aboriginal migrants for reserves, rural areas, non-CMAs and CMAs. Net migrants to reserves totaled about 10,095 and resulted from net inflows from rural areas, as well as from urban non-CMAs and CMAs. Rural areas recorded a net loss of 13,530 migrants during the period through net outflows to reserves and urban areas.

Although smaller urban centres (i.e. non-CMAs) recorded net inflows from rural areas, these were offset by out-migration to reserves and larger urban areas. The net effect of migration on the size of the Aboriginal population residing in smaller urban areas (a loss of 135 individuals) was quite small. Larger urban areas (CMAs) gained about 3,570 migrants during the period, as net outflows to reserves were offset by larger inflows of migrants from rural areas and smaller urban centres.

The vast majority (about 93%) of the net migration observed among reserves and off-reserve rural and urban areas was associated with Registered Indians. As revealed in Table 3, in relation to the impacts of migration observed for Registered Indians, the effects of migration on the geographic distribution of all non-registered sub-groups of the Aboriginal population were quite modest.

In general, the patterns of net migration observed for the 2001 to 2006 period were quite similar to those identified for the 1996 to 2001 time period. Reserves continued to gain population through net in-migration from off-reserve rural and urban areas. Rural areas experienced a small net inflow of Métis migrants but this was offset by much larger net outflows of Registered Indians. Smaller urban areas experienced modest net inflows of Inuit, Registered Indian and non-registered Indian migrants, but these inflows were offset by net out-migration of Métis. In contrast with other geographic locations, the pattern of net migration for large urban areas (CMAs) observed for the 2001 to 2006 period differed from that of the 1996 to 2001 period. Large urban areas recorded

net migration gains from all Aboriginal sub-groups. Most of these gains were associated with Registered Indians.

AGE STRUCTURE OF MIGRANTS

Although reserves recorded small population gains through migration and rural areas recorded sizable outflows of migrants, migration did not contribute in a significant way to changes in the size of Aboriginal populations living in urban areas. Migration, however, can contribute to other population changes including changes to the age structure of the population. Figures 8, 9 and 10 provide a summary of Aboriginal in-, out- and net- migration rates by age group for reserves, rural and urban areas, respectively.

In the case of reserves (Figure 8), the structure of in- and out-migration rates over age groups was quite similar, with the highest rates of migration associated with children, youth and young adults. In-migration rates, however, exceeded out-migration rates for all age groups resulting in net inflows to reserves among all age groups. Net migration rates did not vary widely among age

FIGURE 8: In-, Out-, and Net Migration Rates Among Aboriginal Population Aged 5 or More Years by Age Group, Indian Reserves and Settlements, Canada, 2001-2006.
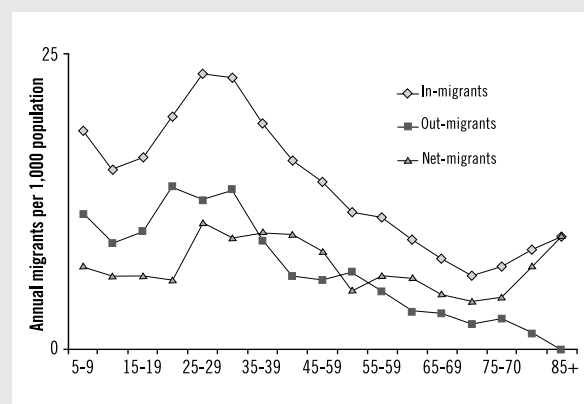
Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

FIGURE 9: In-, Out-, and Net Migration Rates Among Aboriginal Population Aged 5 or More Years by Age Group, Off-reserve Rural Areas, Canada, 2001-2006.

Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

FIGURE 10: In-, Out-, and Net Migration Rates Among Aboriginal Population Aged 5 or More Years by Age Group, Off-reserve Urban Areas, Canada, 2001-2006.
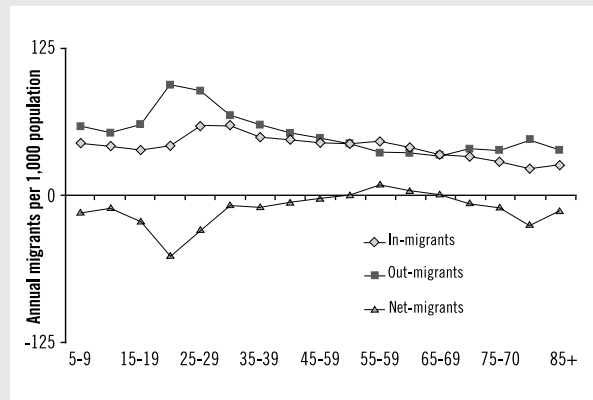
Source: 2006 Census of Canada (unadjusted data)

groups, suggesting that migration during the 2001 to 2006 time period had little impact on the age composition of reserve populations.

Similar data for rural areas (Figure 9) and urban areas (Figure 10) reveal quite different patterns of migration among age groups. In the case of rural areas, out- migration rates exceeded in-migration rates for all age cohorts, except those aged 50 to 69 years. Net outflows of migrants from rural areas occurred among all age groups under 50 years and those 70 or more years of age and were largest among youth and young adults (15 to 29 years).

In urban areas, the pattern of net-migration over age groups was nearly the exact opposite of that observed for rural areas. Inflows of migrants occurred among all age groups under 50 years as well as those 70 or more years of age.

The analyses of age-specific rates suggests that the effects of migration on the age composition of Aboriginal populations during the 2001 to 2006 time period were limited to off-reserve locations. In the case of rural areas migration appears to be contributing to a shift in the age structure of the population to older cohorts. In urban areas, net inflows of younger cohorts appear to be contributing to the maintenance of more youthful age structures.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Analyses reported in this paper reveal that high rates of mobility and migration continue to characterize Aboriginal populations in Canada. Although mobility and migration rates among Aboriginal populations appear to be declining, they remain much higher than those of the
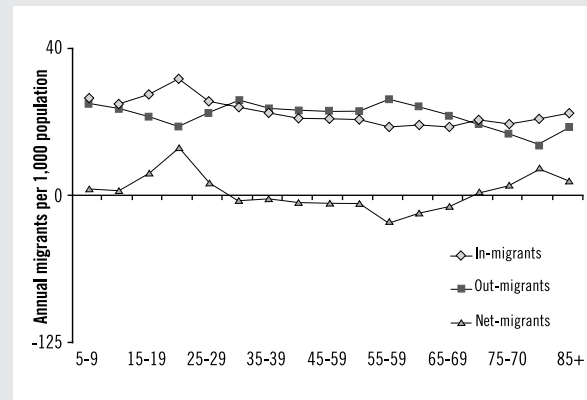
non-Aboriginal population in off-reserve areas, especially in urban areas.

In spite of large volumes of movements, the effects of migration during the 2001 to 2006 time period on the geographic distribution of Aboriginal populations were relatively small. Migration was a significant (although not the major) component of population change in only three provinces/regions: Alberta, Yukon and Saskatchewan. Moves between reserves and rural and urban off-reserve areas also had relatively small impacts on the distribution of Aboriginal populations, contributing modestly to growth on reserve (among Registered Indians) and more significantly, to reduced levels of growth in rural areas. With respect to population growth in urban areas, the direct effects of migration were quite small.

Migration, however, may be having a significant indirect effect on some of the population changes observed in off-reserve rural and urban areas. Significant net outflows of younger age cohorts can be expected to have the effect of lowering the rate of natural increase in rural areas. The reverse situation appears to be occurring in urban areas which experienced net inflows of young cohorts. Migration appears to be accelerating the shift of the age structure of Aboriginal populations to older age cohorts in rural areas, while maintaining a more youthful age structure among urban Aboriginal populations.

The high levels of population growth observed in all provinces/regions, on reserve, and in off-reserve rural and urban areas cannot be accounted for by migration patterns. Research conducted for prior census periods (Guimond 1999; Clatworthy 2007) has revealed that the majority of Aboriginal population growth in all locations

resulted not from migration, but from natural increase and changes in the reporting of identity (ethnic mobility). In several regions and in several specific urban areas, ethnic mobility was identified as the largest factor in population growth. Given the scale of Aboriginal population growth observed for the 2001 to 2006 time period in some regions and in off-reserve areas and the relatively small role played by migration in this regard, the study's results strongly suggest that that natural increase and changes in reporting of identity have continued to be the main drivers of change in the distribution and growth of Aboriginal populations.

While much is presently known about Aboriginal migration patterns and the factors affecting natural increase (i.e. fertility and mortality), our understanding of the process of ethnic mobility and its contribution to Aboriginal population growth remains poorly developed. As a consequence, our ability to accurately forecast Aboriginal population growth and change remains limited, a situation which also detracts from our ability to accurately inform the policy and program development process about changes in the nature and scale of the future service needs of Aboriginal populations.

NOTES

[1] This population has often been referred to as "non-status" Indians in earlier research.

[2] The migration analyses exclude individuals who migrated to Canada from abroad, as well as individuals who migrated from an Indian reserve that was not enumerated by the Census. These groups have been excluded as the reverse migration flows (i.e. from Canada to abroad and from enumerated to non-enumerated Indian reserves) are unknown.

[3] The concepts of reserve/off-reserve residency used in this study are those developed by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The INAC construct includes as reserves some Indian settlements and communities which are not legally defined as reserves under the Indian Act. Census metropolitan areas are urban agglomerations with a minimum core population of 100,000. Urban non-CMAs include all smaller urban centres with a minimum population of 10,000. As configured for this study, the CMA and non-CMA geographies exclude Indian reserves and rural fringe areas that are located within the broader urban area boundaries. Rural areas located with the boundaries of the CMAs and non-CMAs have been included in the rural geography category.

[4] In addition to people missed by the census through non-enumeration, census population estimates are also subject to error due to under-coverage (people missed in areas that were enumerated by the census). Although details of the extent of under-coverage for the 2006 census were not available at the time of the preparation of this paper, past experience suggests that under-coverage in off-reserve areas is the range of 2% to 3%. Under-coverage on reserves has historically been estimated to be significantly higher (in the 8% to 10% range). Variations in under-coverage between successive censuses can also confound estimates of population growth based on the unadjusted census data.

[5] Low rates of mobility on reserve and in rural areas are likely to be linked in part to the housing contexts in these locations. As residential moves form the largest component of mobility, overall mobility rates can be affected by the availability of housing alternatives. In the case of reserves and rural areas, more limited housing opportunities appear to result in lower overall levels of population movement.

[6] Past research has also noted gender differences in location-specific migration rates. Gender- specific estimates calculated for this study for the 2001 to 2006 time period revealed only minor differences in the net migration rates of males and females for all locations.

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MEASURING CHANGING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN FIRST NATIONS POPULATIONS: PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE 1981-2006 REGISTERED INDIAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

In previous research we have used the United Nations Human Development framework to examine the changing conditions of Aboriginal populations, and the changing gaps in health, education and income between Aboriginal populations and other Canadians. In general, that research found improvements in Aboriginal conditions between 1981 and 2001, but that improvement had slowed by the end of the period. This paper uses data from the recently released 2006 Census to investigate whether improvement continued between 2001 and 2006 for Status First Nations ("Registered Indians"). Our preliminary findings are that educational attainment continued to increase, but not enough to reduce the gap with other Canadians. Differences in average income also widened over the period, particularly because of continuing low income of on-reserve men. Although the overall Human Development Index scores improved, progress in decreasing the gap between Registered Indians and other Canadians appears to have stalled.

Au cours de recherches précédentes, nous avons utilisé le cadre relatif au développement humain des Nations Unies pour examiner les conditions changeantes des populations autochtones, ainsi que les changements dans les écarts en matière de santé, d'éducation et de revenus entre les populations autochtones et les autres Canadiens. En général, les résultats de ces recherches ont révélé des améliorations dans les conditions de vie des Autochtones entre 1981 et 2001, mais cette progression a ralenti avant la fin de cette période. Le présent document porte sur une enquête s'appuyant sur les données du recensement de 2006 récemment publiées pour déterminer si l'amélioration des conditions des membres inscrits des Premières nations (« Indiens inscrits ») s'est poursuivie entre 2001 et 2006. Nos résultats préliminaires indiquent que le niveau d'instruction continue d'augmenter, mais que cela ne suffit pas pour combler l'écart avec les autres Canadiens. L'écart relatif au revenu moyen s'est également élargi au cours de cette période, principalement à cause du maintien des faibles revenus des hommes vivant dans les réserves. Bien que dans l'ensemble l'indice du développement humain se soit amélioré, les progrès en matière de réduction de l'écart entre les Indiens inscrits et les autres Canadiens semblent stagner.

INTRODUCTION

Reducing disparities between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians requires an understanding of how these disparities have been changing. For some time we have been using population-level measures to assess changes in the overall health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Using indices adapted from the United Nations Development Programme, we have tried to understand whether the broad conditions for Aboriginal populations are improving, in terms of income levels, health, and educational attainment. With our colleagues, we have examined the changing well-being of Registered Indians[1] (Cooke, Beavon, and McHardy 2004) and Inuit (Sénécal and O'Sullivan 2006) and compared Canadian Aboriginal populations to those in the US, Australia and New Zealand (Cooke et al. 2007). We have also applied the framework to examine the changing conditions of older Registered Indians and Registered Indian youth (Cooke, Guimond, McWhirter 2008; Guimond, Cooke 2008).

The picture produced by these measures has been mixed. Indeed, the overall levels of well-being of Canadian Registered Indians improved between the 1980s and the 2000s, as has been true for most of the Aboriginal populations we have studied. In particular, the differences between the Registered Indian population and the general Canadian population on the Registered Indian Human Development Index have declined (Cooke, Beavon, and McHardy 2004). This indicates progress in "closing the gaps" in human development, between Aboriginal populations and other Canadians.

Despite these positive findings, we see some worrying signs in the Canadian data. The improvements made in the Registered Indian population have mainly been seen in the educational attainment measures we have used, and there has been less progress on the health and income dimensions. Income has been especially resistant to improvement, and we have found that the income difference between Registered Indians and other Canadians actually increased slightly in the late 1990s (Cooke, Beavon, and McHardy 2004). As well, the improvements that were made in closing the gap in relative well-being from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s appeared to have slowed in later periods, casting doubt on continued progress in reducing disparities on these indicators.

The release of the 2006 Census data provided an opportunity to see how the overall well-being of Registered Indians has recently changed, and whether the improvements we had previously found continued to be made into the 2000s. In this paper we present a preliminary update to the Registered Indian Human Development Index and use these indicators to examine how the broad health status, educational attainment, and income of Registered Indians and other Canadians have changed between 1981 and 2006.

WELL-BEING AS EXPANDING CHOICES

The framework we have been using to measure well-being is based on that presented in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report* (United Nations 2003). The goal of the human development paradigm has been to broaden the definition of development to include aspects beyond the purely economic dimension, recognizing that rising GDP per capita does not always result in higher quality of life. Human development is defined as a more general "expansion of choices," which does require rising material standards of living, but also long and healthy lives and access to knowledge. These are critical for political participation and citizenship and are therefore important for societies, as well as for the well-being of individuals (ul Haq 2005).

In the international context, the UNDP uses the Human Development Index (HDI) as a summary measure of progress in human development, combining life expectancy, adult literacy and school enrolment, and per capita GDP. Our previous adaptations of the HDI to the Canadian context, the Registered Indian Human Development Index, have used life expectancy estimates calculated from the Indian Register, and education and income data from the Canadian Census of population. We used the proportions 15 and older with grade nine or higher as a proxy for adult literacy, and the proportion 19 and older with high school or higher as a measure of higher education. Material well-being is measured using total per capita individual income, which is discounted using a log formula. These measures are scaled and combined as a single HDI score, following the UNDP's methodology (Cooke 2007). Of course, there are important limitations to the HDI as a framework for measuring the well-being of Aboriginal populations. It can be argued that no set of quantitative, population-level measures can realistically capture the complexity of "well-being" or "quality of life" in individual lives. Perhaps more importantly, the Registered Indian HDI has been criticized as a Western-centric framework that does not represent Aboriginal conceptions of well-being (Salée 2006; Ten Fingers 2005). Important aspects such as traditional language maintenance or access to traditional lands or activities are not part of the Human Development paradigm, which was certainly developed in a non-Aboriginal context. As well, the education measures available in the Census data capture only formal schooling, and money income ignores the importance of traditional activities such as hunting and trapping, or the sharing of resources within communities, for material well-being.

Recognizing these limitations, we nonetheless think the HDI framework is a useful one. The popularity of the international HDI as a way of ranking countries has made the Registered Indian HDI easily interpretable as an overall measure of well-being. Canada's justified pride in our continued high ranking on the international HDI puts the gap in well-being between Aboriginal populations and other Canadians into sharp contrast (Webster 2006; Assembly of First Nations 2005). Although there may be additional indicators of well-being that are specific to Aboriginal peoples, the comparative aspect of the HDI provides a useful perspective on how conditions are changing. And, despite some criticism, there are probably few who disagree that rising income, longer life expectancy, and higher educational attainment are desirable outcomes and important policy goals.

THE REGISTERED INDIAN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS, 1981-2006

The release of the 2006 Census data allows the extension of our time series of indicators, but it also requires some changes from our previous methodology because of changes to the education portion of the 2006 Census questionnaire. The new education data are collected using slightly different questions with a stronger focus on certification, and no longer capture partially-completed qualifications (Canada 2008). The proportion with grade nine or higher is also no longer available, on the grounds that high school completion is increasingly the lowest level of certification recognized in the Canadian labour market. As a result, we are now relying on two new education indicators: (1) the proportion of the population 20 and higher with high school or any higher certification as a measure a minimal level of education; and (2) the proportion 25 and older with a university degree as a measure higher educational attainment. These measures are combined and weighted in the same way as the previous education measures (Cooke 2007).

Below, we present preliminary estimates of the revised Registered Indian Human Development Index, extended to 2006. We use these measures to ask whether the overall well-being of Registered Indians has indeed continued to improve, and whether the gaps in well-being have continued to narrow.

FIGURE 1: Proportion 20 and Older with Secondary School or Higher Certification and 25 and Older with University Degree, Registered Indian and Other Canadian 1996-2006.
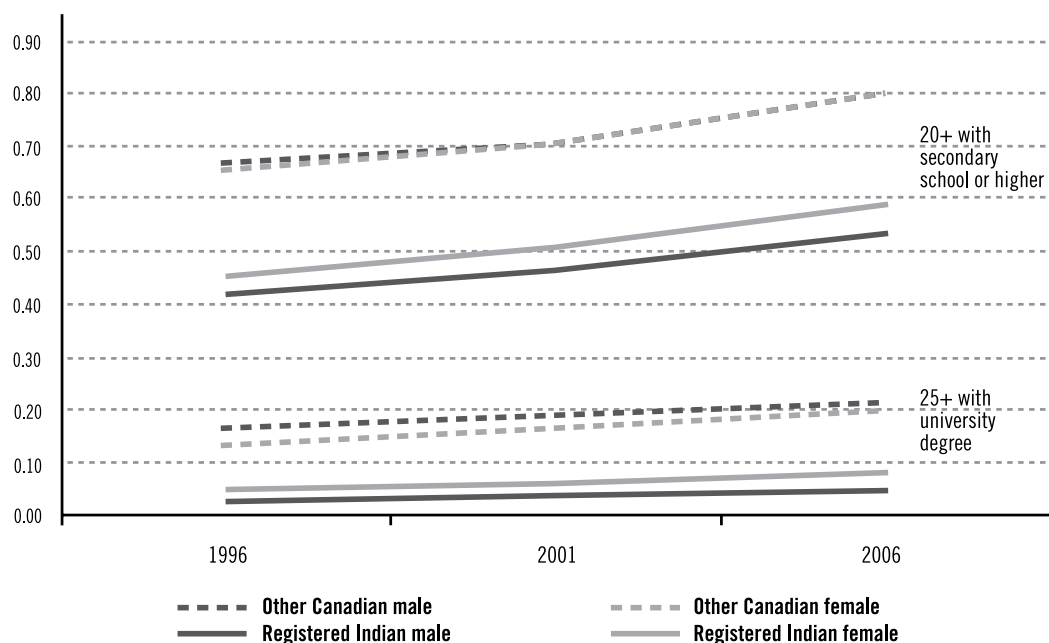
Source: Custom tabulations of 1981-2006 Census of Canada data, authors' calculations.

FIGURE 2: Per Capita Annual Income, Registered Indian and Other Canadian Males and Females, 1980-2005 (2005 dollars).
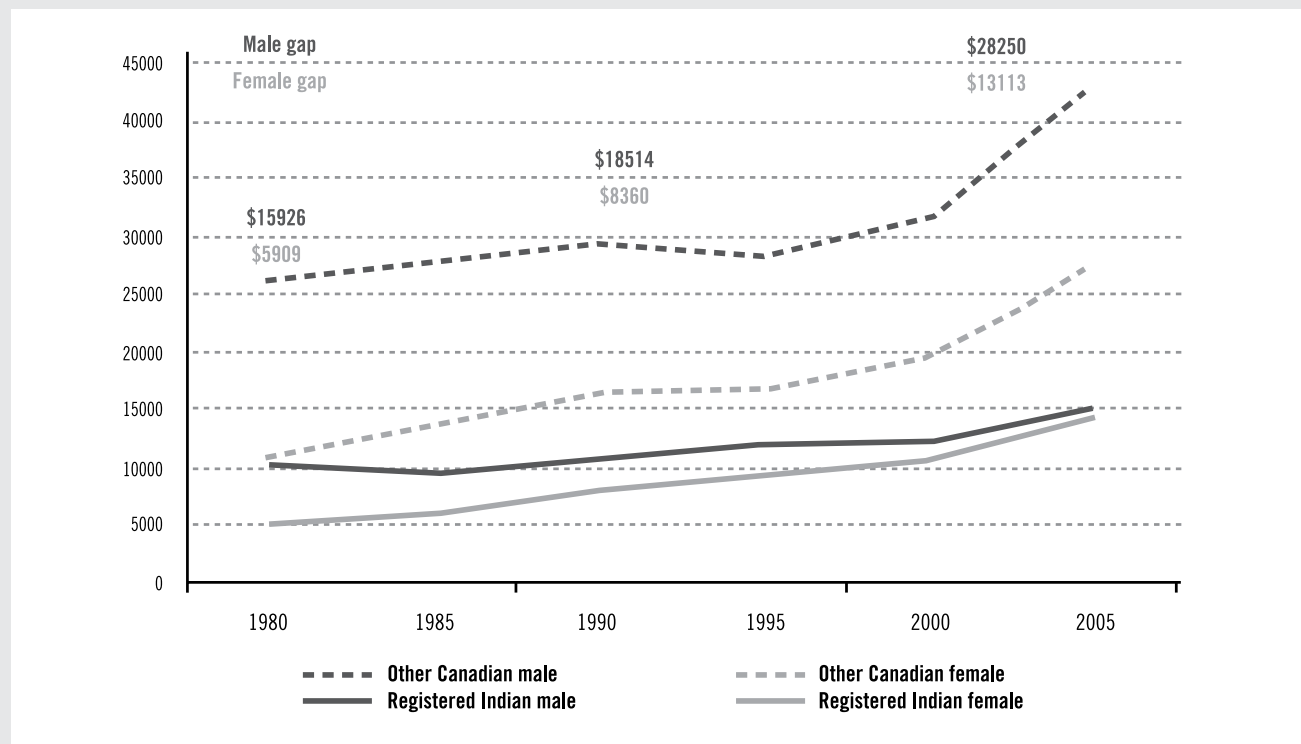
Source: Custom tabulations of 1981-2006 Census of Canada data, authors' calculations.

FIGURE 3: Per Capita Annual Income, Registered Indian Males and Females by Residence, 1980-2005 (2005 dollars).
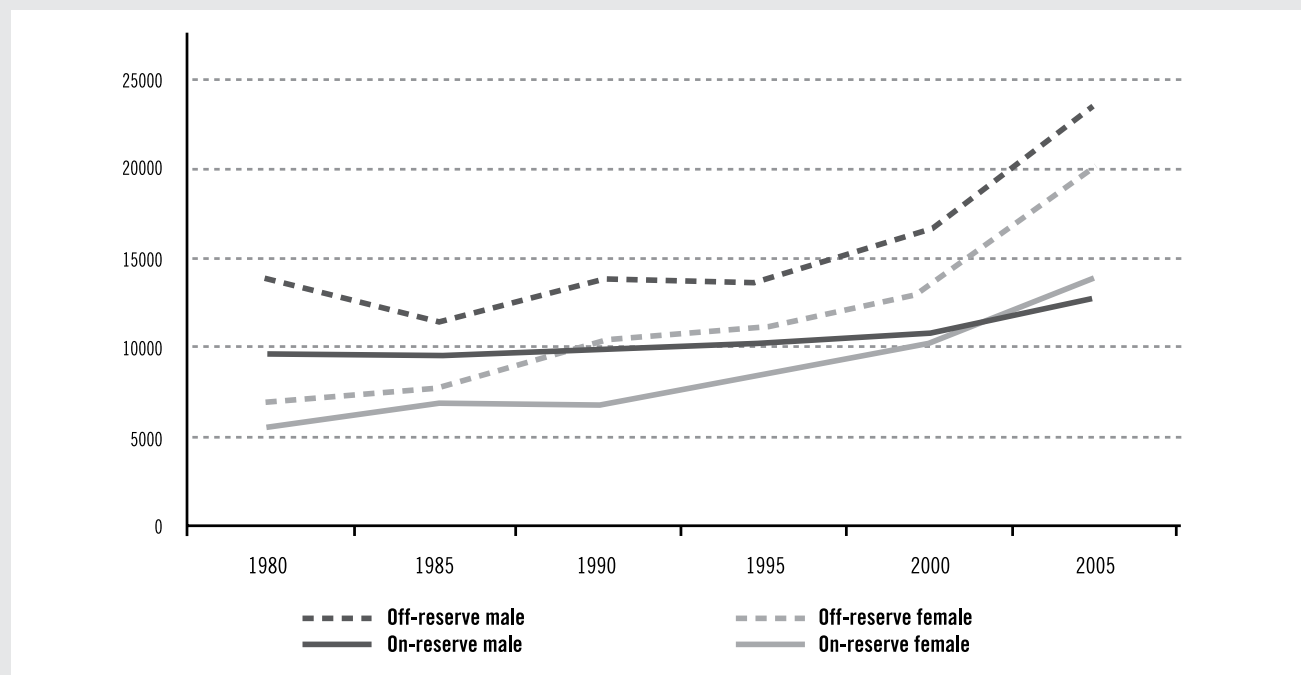
Source: Custom tabulations of 1981-2006 Census of Canada data, authors' calculations.

RISING EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ESPECIALLY FOR WOMEN

Figure 1 presents the two new HDI educational attainment indicators and shows how these educational attainment measures have changed in the most recent census periods for Registered Indians and other Canadians. Registered Indian scores on both education indicators increased between 1996 and 2006, so that nearly 60% of Registered Indians aged 20 and older had high school or higher and about 5% of those 25 and older had a university degree by 2006. This is compared to 80% of other Canadians with high school or higher and 20% of other Canadians with a university degree. Importantly, Registered Indian women's educational advantage over Registered Indian men continued to widen between 2001 and 2006.

It appears from Figure 1 that the difference between Registered Indians and other Canadians on educational attainment had also widened, rather than decreased, between 1996 and 2006. However, it is possible that some of the sharp increase in high school attainment for the general Canadian population was related to changes in the census questions and their interpretation. This

requires further investigation, but it does seem clear that the increase in university attainment in the Registered Indian population was slightly less than that in the general Canadian population, resulting in a slight widening of the university gap.

WIDENING INCOME GAPS, CHANGING GENDER PATTERNS

We had previously observed that the increase in educational attainment by Registered Indians had not been reflected in higher per capita income. The 2006 income data show a greater improvement over previous census periods, but also that Registered Indian income fell further behind that of other Canadians. In 2005 constant dollars, the per capita income of Registered Indian men rose from $7,850 to $8,870 between 1980 and 2000, but jumped to $10,460 in 2005 (Figure 2). However, the average income of other Canadian men rose much more rapidly, resulting in an average difference that widened from about $16,000 in 1980 to more than $28,000 in 2005. The per capita income of Registered Indian women increased more consistently over the entire period, partly reflecting a general increase in labour force participation among women. By 2006, Registered Indian women had an

FIGURE 4: Estimated Life Expectancy at Birth, Registered Indians and Other Canadian Males and Females, 1981-2001.
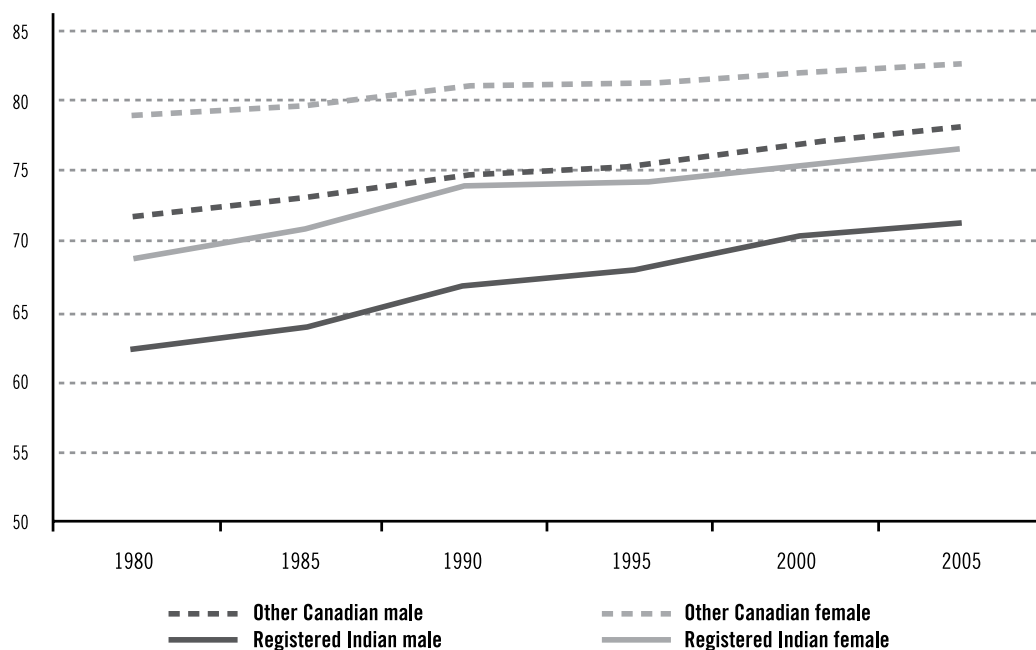
Source: Registered Indian mortality estimates are taken from estimates produced by Statistics Canada for the purpose of Registered Indian population projections. Life expectancies for other Canadians are calculated from Statistics Canada (Canada 2006). See Cooke (2007) for details.

FIGURE 5: Registered Indian Human Development Scores for Registered Indians On- and Off-reserve and Other Canadians by Province/Region, 2006.
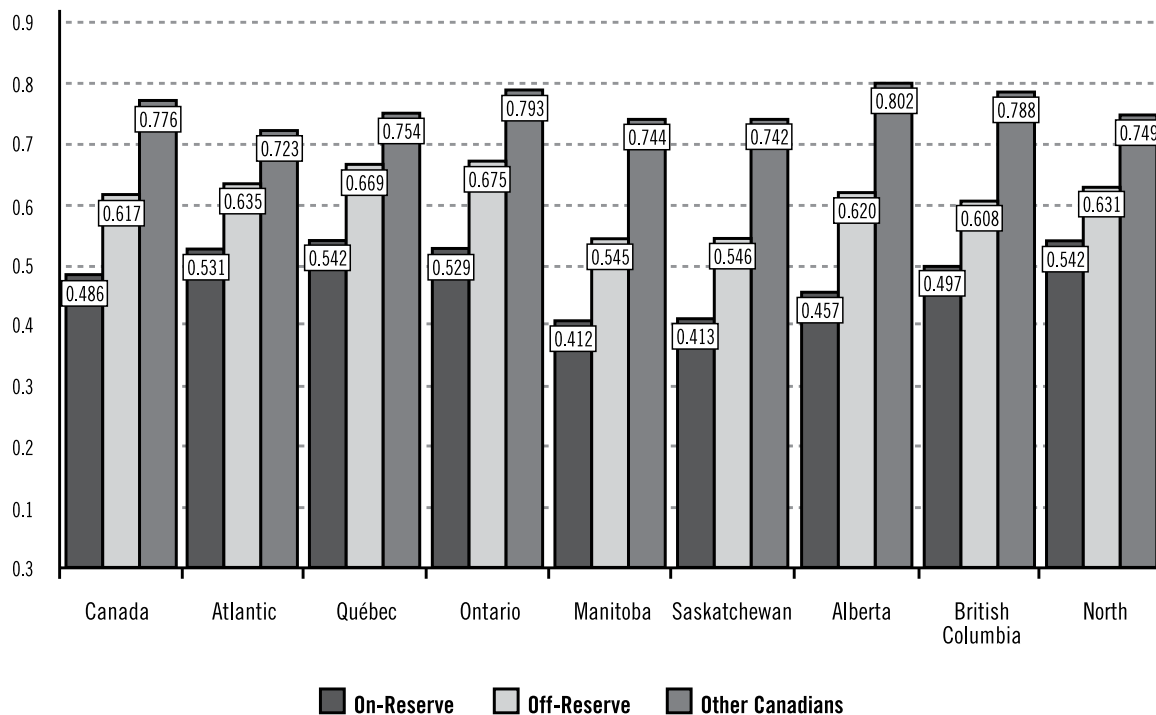
Source: Custom tabulations of 2006 Census of Canada data, Registered Indian and Canadian life expectancy estimates. Authors' calculations.

average income that was virtually equal to that of Registered Indian men. But although Registered Indian women closed the income gap with men, the average difference between theirs and other Canadian women's income increased to more than $13,000 in 2005, as other Canadian women's incomes also rose more rapidly (Figure 2).

Geography is clearly important, and the lack of progress in closing the income gap has been due largely to the stagnant incomes of Registered Indian men living on-reserve, between 1980 and 2000. Although on-reserve men's average income rose from $10,800 in 2000 to nearly $13,000 in 2005, there was much greater improvement in the average income of off-reserve men, who had a per capita income of $23,500 in 2005 (Figure 3).

The average income of women living on-reserve rose more consistently than that of men. The new Census data show that on-reserve women's income again improved between 2000 and 2005, and was higher than those of men in 2005 for the first time since 1981 (Figure 3). Nonetheless, on-reserve women's income remained considerably lower than that of off-reserve women, and this gap widened between 2000 and 2005.

RISING LIFE EXPECTANCY

Issues relating to the late- and under-reporting of events (i.e., births, deaths) in the Indian Register make the calculation of life expectancy at birth for Registered Indians most challenging (Cooke 2007). As we have shown for the previous HDI time series, the current best estimates of life expectancy show a continuing gradual improvement in Registered Indian life expectancy. For Registered Indian men, estimated life expectancy at birth has increased from 62.4 years in 1981 to 71.3 years in 2006. For women, the improvement over that period was from 68.9 years to 76.5 years. This has resulted in a reduction in the gap between Registered Indians and other Canadians from about 10 years in 1981 to just over six years in 2006 (Figure 4). As in the general Canadian population, the advantage in longevity that women have over men declined slightly in the Registered Indian population, to about five years in 2006.

REGISTERED INDIAN HDI TRENDS

Although it may be that the changes in the individual indicators tell us more information about the

FIGURE 6: Registered Indian Human Development Index Scores for Registered Indians and Other Canadians, 1981-2001 and 1996-2006.
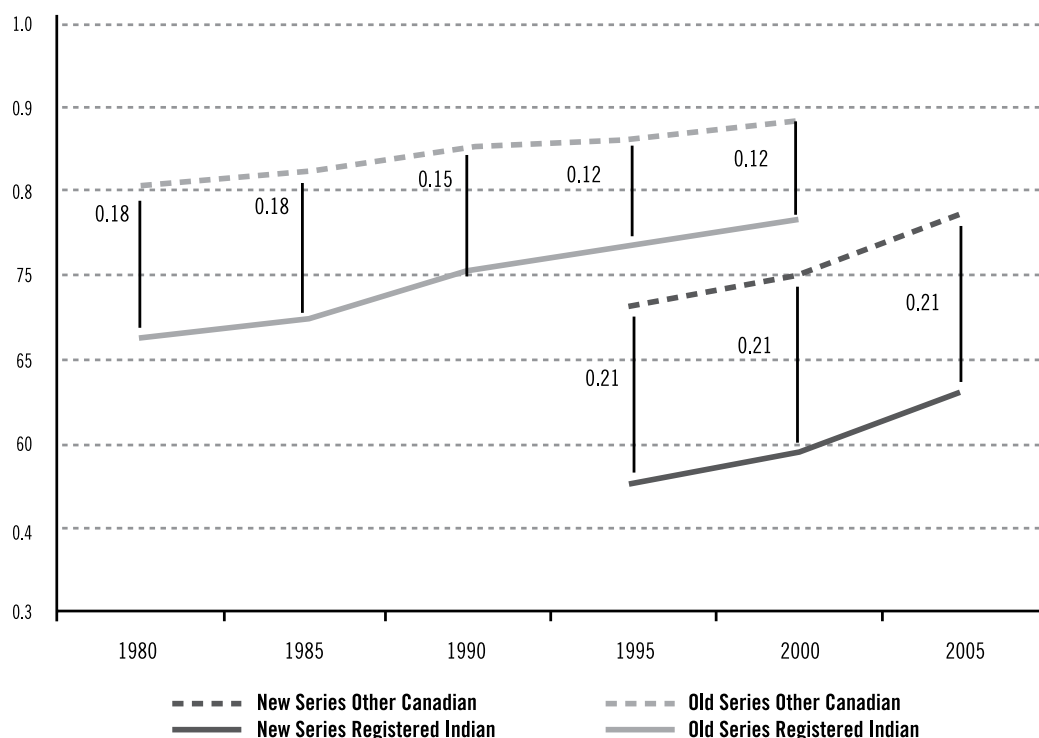
Source: Custom tabulations of 2006 Census of Canada data, Registered Indian and Canadian life expectancy estimates. Authors' calculations.

current conditions of Registered Indians, the combined HDI scores provide a snapshot of overall well-being that is useful for comparisons. Figure 5 presents the 2006 HDI scores by on- and off-reserve residence for provinces and regions. Registered Indians living on-reserve communities had lower scores on all indicators, in all regions. As we had found previously, this was particularly the case on the prairies, where the on-reserve HDI scores were lowest. On-reserve HDI scores were the highest in Ontario and Québec, as were off-reserve HDI scores.

As described at the outset, the pattern observed between 1981 and 2001 was one of improving well-being of Registered Indians, but that this improvement had slowed by the end of the period. The addition of the 2006 data confirms that, while the Registered Indian HDI scores continued to improve, the gap with other Canadians did not appreciably narrow. Figure 6 presents the previously published 1981-2001 HDI trends, as well as the new HDI series from 1996 to 2001[2], calculated with the new education indicators. Notwithstanding the comparability issues with the 2006 high school indicator, the

widening gaps in income and university attainment lead us to conclude that there was no meaningful closure of the HDI gap between 2001 and 2006 (Figure 6).

CONCLUSIONS: CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE?

In this paper we have presented estimates of the Registered Indian Human Development Index, extending the previous time series to 2006. The estimates we have presented here are preliminary, and future work will include revised estimates of life expectancy. However, the general picture seems to be fairly clear, confirming some of the concerns raised by the 1981-2001 series. The per capita income and educational attainment of the Registered Indian population continued to improve between 2001 and 2006, but not enough to close the gap with other Canadians on these measures.

The measures presented here raise further concerns, not only that the disparities between Registered Indians and other Canadians have not been reduced in recent years, but

that there may be growing inequalities between segments of the Registered Indian population. Men's educational attainment continues to fall behind that of women and on-reserve women's average incomes are now higher than those of men. The income advantage of those living off-reserve, compared to those on-reserve, continued to grow.

We have been careful to note that the picture presented by these population-level measures do not give a comprehensive image of well-being in First Nations populations and communities. They do, however, reflect changing patterns in formal schooling, money income and life expectancy. These are important measures even if the picture they present is partial. Although one could argue for additional measures of Aboriginal well-being, we argue that the disparities between First Nations populations and other Canadians on these measures are important indicators of the general progress that has been made in improving the social, economic, and health conditions for First Nations. Other indicators of well-being may also be important, but certainly the gaps in education, life expectancy, and income should be closing.

The reasons for these continuing gaps, and for the lack of improvement in the most recent period, are of course extremely difficult to ascertain and well beyond the scope of this paper. They are likely related to a large number of diverse policy areas, including education and training, public health and health care, economic development, and others. What these results do tell us, though, is that the relatively good economic conditions Canada experienced in the early 2000s have not appeared to result in significantly improved conditions for First Nations, relative to the Canadian average. Moreover, they direct us to consider the structural conditions and relationships that underlie the ongoing disparity between Aboriginal populations and other Canadians, as well as those within Aboriginal populations.

NOTE

* The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not reflect those of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada or the Government of Canada.

FOOTNOTES

[1] The Registered Indian population is legally defined as people who are registered under the Indian Act of Canada, and is also known as the "Status" *First Nations population.*
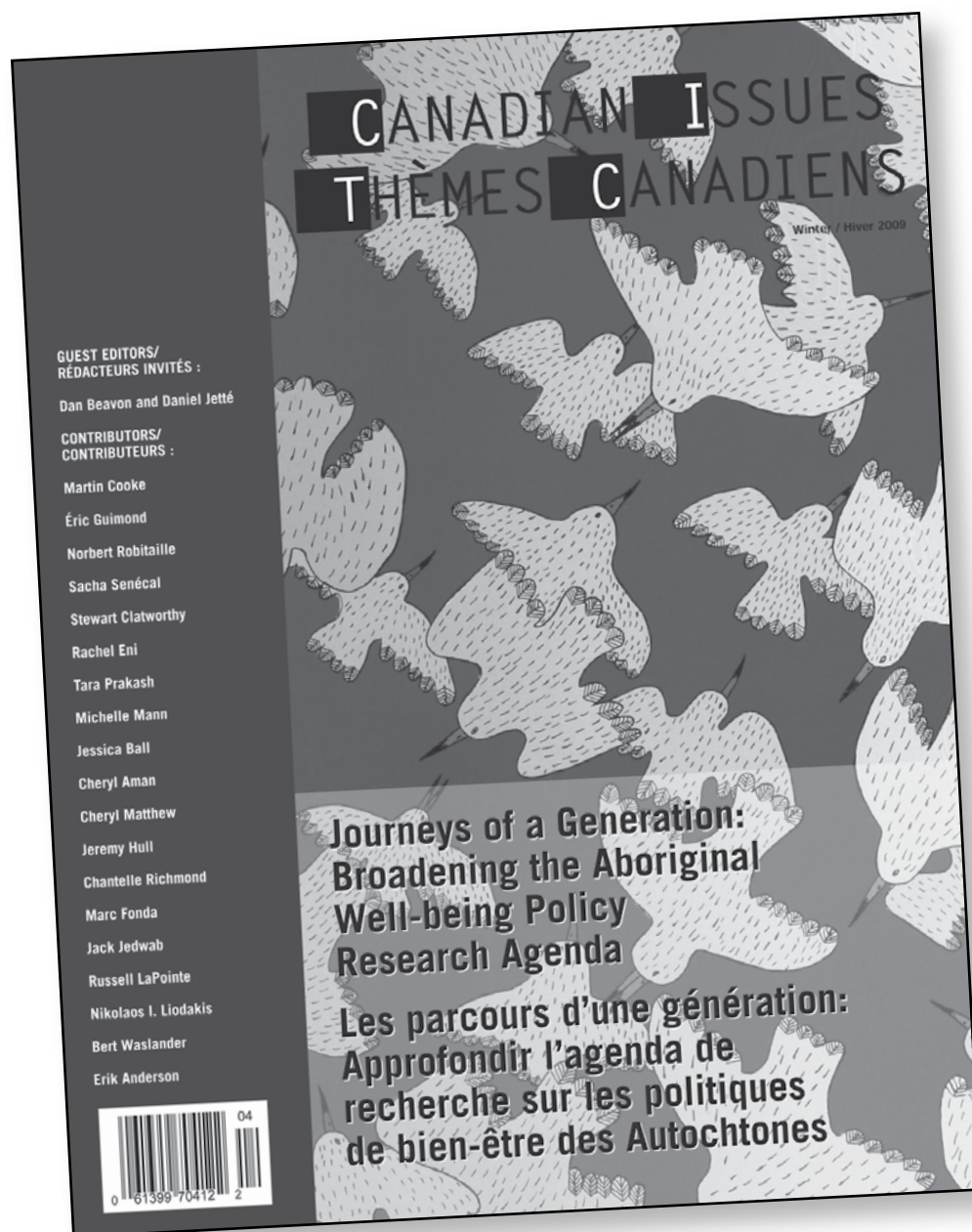
[2] Readers may suspect that the 1986-1991 improvement was due to additions to the Registered Indian population because of Bill C-31. An analysis using the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey has confirmed that only part of this improvement was due to C-31 (Cooke and Lesar, forthcoming).

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Edited by Dan Beavon and Daniel Jetté

CANADIAN ISSUES
THÈMES CANADIENS

Winter / Hiver 2009

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DEVELOPING A FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY WELL-BEING PARTNERSHIP ON-SITE DIALOGUE PROJECT: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM A VALIDATION STUDY OF THE FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY WELL-BEING INDEX IN KITIGAN ZIBI ANISHINABEG, QUÉBEC[1]

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

The First Nations Community Well-being Index (FNCWB), developed by the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), provides community-level measures of socioeconomic well-being based on Canadian census data. Since its publication in 2004, the FNCWB has been recognized as an important analytical tool. However, well-being is also inherently subjective, and community-level perspectives about well-being will not always conform to the parameters of the FNCWB. Thisarticle discusses preliminary findings from a validation study of the FNCWB currently being undertaken in partnership with a number of First Nations across Canada; findings presented here are drawn from focus group discussions held in the Fall of 2008 at Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg.

L'indice de bien-être des collectivités (IBC) a été mis au point par la Direction de la recherche stratégique et de l'analyse d'Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada (AINC) afin d'offrir un moyen de mesurer le bien être socioéconomique des collectivités basé sur les données du recensement canadien. Depuis sa publication en 2004, l'IBC a été reconnu comme un important outil d'analyse. Toutefois, le bien-être est également un concept subjectif par définition et le point de vue des collectivités à ce propos n'est pas toujours en accord avec les résultats de l'IBC. Cet article examine les résultats préliminaires d'une étude de validation de l'IBC actuellement en cours en partenariat avec un certain nombre de Premières nations dans l'ensemble du Canada; les résultats présentés ici sont tirés des discussions d'un groupe de consultation tenues à l'automne 2008 à Kitigan Zibi (Anishinabeg).

BACKGROUND

Since 1998, the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has conducted national population-level and community-level well-being research in First Nations using Census data, including education, housing (crowding level and extent of disrepair), income and labour market participation (O'Sullivan and McHardy 2004).

Analyses of well-being of First Nations based on the FNCWB have been widely published (White, Beavon, and Spence 2007; Guimond and Cooke 2008; Cooke, Guimond, and McWhirter 2008), and the FNCWB methodology has been applied to analyses of Inuit (Senécal and O'Sullivan 2006) and Métis (LaPointe, Senécal, and Guimond 2009) communities as well. At the same time, researchers continue to analyze the FNCWB itself to validate the methodology and to identify ways of improving it.

This paper discusses findings to date from one stream of research undertaken to improve the FNCWB: the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue Project. Findings are drawn from the first case study completed for this project – the First Nation of Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg, in western Québec.

THE FNCWB PARTNERSHIPS ON-SITE DIALOGUE PROJECT

The First Nations Community Well-Being Partnerships On-Site Dialogue Project is modeled on the belief that "participation as [a] permeating theme" is an important starting point in analyzing First Nations' community well-being (White, Beavon, and Spence 2007). First Nations must be partners in analyzing their own well-being and on-site participatory research discussions must take place within First Nations communities.

The objectives of the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue project are threefold. First, working in partnership with moderate- and high-scoring First Nations, the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue seeks to determine whether relatively high FNCWB scores accurately reflect perceived quality of life in those communities: do community members agree with the rankings, are there concerns with some elements of the analysis or the underlying data; is the FNCWB framework an appropriate tool to measure well-being in a First Nations context. Second, to the extent the FNCWB scores are perceived as accurate, the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue hopes to work with community members to identify factors that have affected their quality of life: can they provide examples of programs which contribute to their well-being success; what are some challenges and community-level future goals that will affect their future well-being. Lastly,

the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue hopes to establish positive relations with First Nations whereby communities would be willing to act as role models to other First Nations through the publication of a case study showcasing their successes and challenges.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue Project methodology consists of a series of focus groups and interviews organized in partnership with selected medium- and high-scoring First Nations[2] from all regions of Canada. Focus groups were arranged according to community sector organization: for the Kitigan Zibi case study, a total of seven, two to three hour focus groups were held with various sectors of the community (Elders/seniors, grades 9-12 students, youth aged 17-35, teachers, Directors, Chief and Council) for a total of over 100 participants over a two month period. Prior permission was obtained from Chief Gilbert Whiteduck and council to convene these focus groups.

Each focus group consisted of a facilitated introduction of focus group participants, a discussion on the focus group objectives (including a presentation on the FNCWB, with special discussion of the community's score), approval of the focus group format, and an open discussion on the FNCWB's findings, including inviting participants to share their own thoughts about their successes as a community. Participants were also given a list of questions and a table of potential well-being indicators (see Figures 1 and 2) to help spur discussion.

Everything said during focus groups was written down publicly on flip charts, mostly using direct quotations; in cases where a comment was paraphrased, verification was solicited. It must be noted that the use of tape recorders has been avoided to address privacy concerns of interviewees, to encourage them to speak openly and to ensure their confidence in the research process.

Further to the partnered approach of this research, draft case studies are shared with the First Nation's Chief and Council for validation, editorial changes made at the request of the community and follow-up meetings, including sharing of second and/or third drafts, were held to ensure community acceptance of the final draft.

Two additional points are worth noting with respect to methodology. First is the importance of keeping the focus group discussions and interviews positive in nature: this was extremely important for participants in the Kitigan Zibi case study because of fear a negative focus would cause participants to be critical of one another within the focus groups; focussing on positive factors became key to the agreed upon format for the focus

groups. Second, INAC has sought to make clear to participants that this project is not being undertaken for evaluative purposes. Although this research could feed into policy understanding and development at a later date, it was clarified that it was not the main goal of the research at this time.

KITIGAN ZIBI ANISHINABEG

Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg is located in western Québec, 130 kilometres north of Ottawa-Gatineau and adjacent to the town of Maniwaki. The community is sparsely populated (1524 on-reserve members for a land base of 18,000 hectares). Community members speak predominately English, some Algonquin and French. With an overall FNCWB index score of 74, it is considered to be at the upper end of the "medium-score" range of 64-75. Sub-index scores range from a high of 89 (housing), to 72 and 71 (education and labour market activity, respectively), to a low of 64 (income).

Focus groups in Kitigan Zibi were conducted in December 2008. Findings presented here have been organized under two themes: on-site observations regarding the validity of the FNCWB framework and of the community's FNCWB sub-index scores; and observations regarding Kitigan Zibi's track record in promoting community well-being.

OBSERVATIONS REGARDING VALIDITY OF THE FNCWB

Kitigan Zibi focus group participants expressed concern that Census data from their community was incomplete and would therefore impact the validity of the FNCWB score. Some noted that they never met with Census enumerators, and/or did not fill out the Census questionnaire because they were at work. Some participants explicitly noted that their low income sub-index score of 64 may be partly due to a high incidence of unreported income caused by incomplete enumeration and other related problems. Incomplete enumeration in some First Nations has been previously noted as an ongoing challenge (Guimond, Kerr, and Beaujot 2004); it will therefore be important to track whether other case studies produced through the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue project yield similar findings with respect to community-level concerns regarding Census enumeration or other limitations inherent to Census data.

Focus groups were not surprised to learn that their highest FNCWB sub-index score was for housing; according to one comment, "one only has to take a drive around to see the houses in the community." There was similarly little surprise with the lower scores in income

and labour market activity; some participants suggested these scores may be partly attributable to high rates of seasonal employment, as many of the industries in the region – tourism and forestry were cited in particular – employ people for only six months out of the year.

Following the presentation of the FNCWB framework and community scores, some focus group participants expressed interest in understanding how different indicators could be expected to interact. For example, while Kitigan Zibi scored relatively well in education, its score for income was much lower. This runs counter to expectations that education and income should correlate positively (Clement 2009). Some focus group participants expressed interest in conducting future studies on the relationship between post-secondary attainment rates and income levels in their community.

Administrative, institutional development and the development of social capital are two other well-researched fields of well-being indicators (see Chandler 1998; Chattaway 2002; Mignone et al. 2004) that emerged from the focus group as being important to Kitigan Zibi's approach to well-being. The community has its own police force; some participants also noted that the community's stable governance model has enabled Kitigan Zibi to entice skilled community members to return to live and work in the community. Finally, the community has undertaken steps to ensure ongoing analysis of how community programs assist those in need. When one participant of the Director Focus Group stated: "we have a strong management regime and are internally self-reliant, we do not rely on contractors or consultants, we train our own people," the entire focus group unanimously agreed. They also stated, "we have a strong work ethic dedicated to community advancement." They also acknowledged however, that "what comes with stability are that public community expectations are high by our community members which can be stressful at times."

WORKING ON WELL-BEING

Overall, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg has worked very hard to achieve some measure of well-being success – an effort spanning over thirty years, according to some community members. Focus group participants were eager to discuss well-being and to identify factors that have contributed to their successes in terms of well-being and community development.

The community has put a great deal of effort into addressing health by ensuring availability of a wide range of services – doctors, nurses, dieticians, and psychologists, plus programs such as ongoing diabetes workshops, Seniors' (Endong) luncheons, nursing care programs, home care and visits, social events for seniors, youth

recreation programs (on and off reserve), and healthy baby programs at the health care center.

In terms of housing, "we have the Certificates of Possession system in the community which allows people to internally own the land… and as a result, people take pride in their homes. We have private lots under the C.P. system and no slum development."[3] Participants also cited the community's creative Revolving Loan fund system, developed over twenty years ago, which allows members to borrow from the First Nation order to invest in expanding or improving Kitigan Zibi. They also invested in social housing units in 2000, using monies earned from the community-owned forestry company Mitigog Incorporated. Participants noted that, on average, there are about three persons per unit and that there is no overcrowding generally. Repairs are dealt with every year.

In terms of investing in education, a number of initiatives have been implemented in Kitigan Zibi that target both early childhood development, K-11 and post-secondary success; such as the Aboriginal Head Start Program, which targets pre-K children. There are also a number of programs in place that are not funded by the federal government, including the hot lunch program; snack programs; the cereal program; and the cultural immersion program – "Mokasige" is a half day of Algonquin immersion language teaching every afternoon for children enrolled in the program. Promoting Anishinabeg heritage is a priority, with activities such as hand drumming, summer camps, picnics, powwows, family days, trips to traditional lands, cultural days, dancing and canoe making. There are also a number of on-site programs established through partnerships with community colleges and universities in the region. These include programs in social work, teaching, high school upgrading and various trades including heavy equipment, construction and trucking.

Focus group participants felt strongly that these programs provide children in the community with a healthy outlook on life. Overall, participants expressed satisfaction with the community's approach to education, noting that teachers and staff are caring, parents recognize the value of education, and "family and culture is put first."

In terms of economic development, Kitigan Zibi has negotiated partnerships with local regional authorities and the Québec government, as well as forestry companies such as Abitibi-Bowater, to develop training programs in brush cutting and sylviculture in order to stimulate employment within the community. They have a C.A.F. (Contrat d'aménagement forestière) agreement with the Québec government to be paid for cutting timber on traditional lands.[4] Local First Nation contractors are also paid for cutting on their lands via the administration office for local timber which is sold to local forestry companies. Kitigan Zibi also have an agreement with a regional fire fighting service (SOPFEU) to hire and train firefighters every year. In addition to the aforementioned Mitigog Incorporated, Kitigan Zibi owns and operates a maple sugar production facility. They also have a Home Hardware (Pasahigun), a printing business (Anishinabeg Printing) and a number of service-oriented operations.

Leadership and good governance is viewed as important. One focus group participant stated: "there is a delegation of responsibilities via directors that is not seen in other communities. They have contracts, job descriptions, financial transparency and ongoing policy development… Kitigan Zibi is a financially transparent community." Another noted that "policies are being put into place to make it easier for directors to make decisions which will equal less political lobbying or interference in decision-making which results in fairness."

The First Nation's administrative sector employs approximately 150 employees full-time and an additional 50-60 employees seasonally in general labour positions such as tree maintenance, brush cutting, cutting grass, and wood cutting, which take place in the summer time.

When participants were asked how they felt about chronic seasonal employment in their community, they replied that it was not necessarily "a bad thing" because it does allow them to recapture their culture of hunting and fishing while providing for their families, which they felt was important. In fact, they felt that the survival of their culture was very important to their future identity and well-being as Algonquin peoples.

CONCLUSION

First, it will be interesting to hear perspectives of residents of other First Nations regarding the FNCWB framework, the Census, and other measures of well-being. Kitigan Zibi is a strong believer in promoting traditional culture and language through education and cultural programs, and focus group participants stressed the importance of culture and language in assessing community well-being. The lack of a place for culture in the FNCWB has been debated extensively (Chandler and Lalonde 2000; O'Sullivan 2003; Ten Fingers 2005; Salée 2006; Cooke 2007; Cornell and Jorgenson 2009); the debate will likely continue during the course of this project.

Second, it is important to note that for a First Nation with a moderate FNCWB score of 74, the evidence shows that Kitigan Zibi has invested a great deal of effort in improving the quality of community life over a long period of time, seeking to provide members with every service possible to ameliorate their well-being. Focus

group participants attribute their successes to dedicated and stable leadership; a commitment to self-reliance; a strong labour force, and strong governance practices and policies. They view this track record with pride, even as they acknowledge ongoing challenges. The level of effort required to achieve a high standard of community well-being is not always appreciated in either research literature or policy discourse; based on this case study, it may become necessary to explore what constitutes a "role model" community in greater depth as this project proceeds.

Finally, it is evident from this study that while the FNCWB provides a useful preliminary indicator of well-being, it remains important, if one wishes to acquire a full understanding of well-being in First Nations, to actually visit First Nation communities and talk to community members. The Kitigan Zibi case study reveals just how many factors have an effect on community well-being. Through the FNCWB Partnerships On-Site Dialogue Project, First Nations will have the opportunity to provide their own perspectives on well-being, and will be able to share important lessons about improving well-being with other First Nations.

NOTES

[1] The Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg maintain a website at http://www.kza.qc.ca/. This case study and further case studies will soon be available on the INAC website, http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/.

[2] Of the 541 First Nations communities analyzed in 2001, 356 received a medium-level score of between 60 and 75 (out of 100); 89 received an above-average score between 75 and 100, and 96 communities received a score of below 60, which classified them as having socio-economic difficulties (McHardy and O'Sullivan 2004).

[3] Certificates of Possession are the closest form of inter-member ownership of land under section 20(2) of the Indian Act (Imai 2007). An individual member can own the land individually and can sell it to members but this land cannot be mortgaged, seized or used as collateral by an outside agency.

[4] Kitigan Zibi maintains that it is unceded territory and has submitted a comprehensive land claim in 1988 which has yet to be negotiated.

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VOICES OF MANITOBA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLES: LINKS TO PERCEPTIONS ON HEALTH, ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND MOBILITY*

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This article focuses on how Aboriginal people in Manitoba perceive the quality of their local community conditions, including drinking water, housing, local public schools, recreation facilities, and access to medical services. Tested is the extent to which these perceptions are associated to three measures of well-being: self-assessed personal health, reported improvements in family finances, and optimism regarding the community's economy. Included in the analysis are breakouts according to specific population segments, including those who identify as being a First Nation person (including on- and off-reserve), Métis, Winnipeg and non-Winnipeg, gender, having children in the household, and likelihood of moving in the next twelve months. The analysis is based on telephone surveys conducted between 2005 and 2008 by Probe Research with a representative sample of over 1,000 self-identified Aboriginal respondents.

Cet article porte sur la manière dont le peuple autochtone du Manitoba perçoit la qualité de ses conditions de vie communautaires locales, notamment concernant l'eau potable, le logement, les écoles publiques locales, les installations de loisirs et l'accès aux services médicaux. Il examine la mesure dans laquelle ces perceptions sont associées aux trois mesures du bien-être : autoévaluation de la santé personnelle, améliorations déclarées des finances familiales et optimisme concernant l'économie communautaire. L'analyse comprend des divisions en fonction de certains segments de population particuliers, déterminés notamment selon l'appartenance à une Première nation (vivant dans une réserve ou à l'extérieur) ou à la Nation métisse, le fait de vivre à Winnipeg ou à l'extérieur, le sexe, la présence d'enfants à la maison ou la probabilité d'un déménagement au cours des douze prochains mois. L'analyse est basée sur des sondages téléphoniques menés entre 2005 et 2008 par Probe Research à partir d'un échantillon représentatif de plus de 1 000 répondants autochtones déclarés.

INTRODUCTION

On January 27, 2009, Canada's Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, stood up in the House of Commons to give his Budget Statement to the nation. Included was a commitment that "over the next two years" the federal government "will make major, new investments in Aboriginal communities, to build and renovate schools and health services facilities, to improve wastewater treatment, and to provide safe drinking water" (Flaherty 2009). The response by the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, was quick yet positive: "Today's federal budget provides a fair and helpful response in terms of First Nations infrastructure because we need to build houses and schools." He qualified his support by raising concerns about poverty and the future of young Aboriginal people (AFN 2009).

This article focuses on perceptions of Aboriginal people in Manitoba about their local community conditions and how they connect to well-being, both in terms of personal health, family finances, and economic outlook. Furthermore, it provides an assessment on how perceptions about these specific community conditions vary significantly within specific segments of the Aboriginal population; and might be linked also to mobility among Aboriginal people.

**TABLE 1: Manitoba's Aboriginal Population –
Based on Self-identification.**

	WINNIPEG	MANITOBA
North American Indian	25,900	101,815
On-Reserve	–	51,965
Off-Reserve	–	49,850
Métis	40,980	71,810
Inuit	350	560
Other/Multiple Identity	1,150	2,375
Total Aboriginal Identity	68,380	175,390
Total Provincial Population	694,668	1,148,401
% Identify as Aboriginal	9.8%	15.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a survey database compiled by Probe Research. From March 2005 to December 2008, a total of 12,000 Manitoban adults were randomly contacted by Probe Research via telephone and asked whether or not they would identify themselves as Aboriginal, and if so, they were then asked if they would be identified as being Métis, Status Indian (off- or on-reserve) or something else. Those who qualified to be interviewed were then asked a number of questions regarding local community conditions as well as how they rate their own well-being along a number of dimensions. For remote First Nations communities, where residential telephones are far less prevalent, the research team augmented the random outbound telephoning methodology by implementing an extensive print and radio campaign asking on-reserve residents to "call in" to do the survey, with a compensation of 15 dollars per household.[2] Using this combined methodology of telephone-based probability random sampling and on-reserve quota sampling,[3] a total of 1,019 self-identified Aboriginal people were interviewed.[4] For reference purposes, Table 1 provides a snapshot, based on the 2006 Census, of the actual size of these Aboriginal populations for both Winnipeg and Manitoba, and as a percent of the general population.

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

Attitudes about seven specific community conditions are studied here:
1. Quality of household drinking water
2. Condition of housing in the community
3. Condition of community's streets and roads
4. Local public schools and quality of education
5. Access to recreational facilities such as swimming pools and arenas
6. Safety of citizens in the community at night
7. Ability to access local medical services in the community

With regard to Aboriginal people, four of the above seven attributes were specifically mentioned by Finance Minister Flaherty in the aforementioned 2009 Budget Speech: housing, drinking water, schools, and healthcare access. With regard to the general population, streets and roads, as well as recreational facilities were also mentioned, which of course would have some impact on a number of neighbourhoods where Aboriginal people reside. This leaves public safety as the only item not mentioned in the budget speech, yet this too has been articulated as a priority at other times by the current government.[5]

How do Aboriginal people in Manitoba rate these seven community attributes? Table 2 breaks out the results according to those who score high levels of satisfaction (8, 9, 10 out of 10) and those who score low levels of satisfaction (1, 2, 3 out of 10).[6] Shown also are these results as they arise from the total Aboriginal population surveyed, and according to the following three

TABLE 2: Ratings for Community Conditions.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTE	RATINGS	ABORIGINAL TOTAL (1019) %	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (302) %	OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (290) %	MÉTIS (415) %
Household drinking water	High ratings (8,9,10)	42	34	42	49
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	18	30	15	11
Housing in the community	High ratings (8,9,10)	34	15	34	47
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	22	40	21	9
Condition of streets and roads	High ratings (8,9,10)	23	17	29	23
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	27	37	27	21
Local public schools and education	High ratings (8,9,10)	42	33	42	48
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	13	23	11	7
Access to recreational facilities	High ratings (8,9,10)	35	17	35	48
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	28	47	25	15
Safety in the community at night	High ratings (8,9,10)	35	24	30	46
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	22	27	27	15
Access to local medical services	High ratings (8,9,10)	45	36	46	52
	Low ratings (1,2,3)	18	24	16	15

populations: on-reserve First Nations, off-reserve First Nations and Métis.[7] Among the conditions that are rated especially poorly by First Nations people who live on a reserve are: access to recreational facilities (47% give very poor ratings), housing (40%), streets and roads (37%) and household drinking water (30%). As shown in the two columns on the right, very low ratings are less prevalent among off-reserve First Nations people and Métis.

PERCEPTIONS REGARDING WELL-BEING

Three indicators of well-being are used in this study: how individuals rate their personal health, the extent to which one's family finances have improved and perceptions about the local community's economic future. The first indicator, personal health, can be measured in a number of ways (Canada 2002). For this article, it is measured simply by asking respondents the following question: "In general, and on a scale of 1 to 10, with

1 being very poor health and a 10 being very good health, how would you rate your own physical health today?" The second indicator is based on the following question: "Would you say that you and your family are better off, worse off, or just the same financially as you were a year ago?" The third indicator is measured by asking respondents to report their perceptions about their local community's economic future: "Are you optimistic or pessimistic about the economic future of your community?"[9]

Table 3 below provides an overall picture of perceptions of Aboriginal people regarding these three measures. Generally speaking, Métis respondents are more likely to rate their health as good compared to First Nations respondents, with only small differences between those who reside on- or off-reserve. At the same time, First Nations individuals who reside off-reserve are more likely to report improving family finances when compared to the other population groupings, and Métis respondents

TABLE 3: Indicators of Personal Well-being.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTE	RATINGS	ABORIGINAL TOTAL (1019)	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (302)	OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (290)	MÉTIS (415)
Personal health	Good health (8,9,10)	45	42	42	49
	Poor health (1,2,3)	7	6	9	5
Family finances compared to last year	Better off	33	30	37	32
	Worse off	17	17	16	18
Optimism regarding community's economy	Very/Somewhat optimistic	67	61	65	72
	Very/Somewhat pessimistic	27	29	31	23

are more optimistic than the two other populations about the economic future of their local community.

CORRELATIONS: WELL-BEING AND COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

No doubt one can be critical of a community's condition without personally suffering from its effects, yet it is worthwhile to see if there are specific community conditions that are linked to how respondents rate the three indicators of well-being. Using correlations,[8] here we explore the extent to which each of the seven community attributes may be linked to personal well-being, and whether or not such linkages appear within each of the three major population groupings. Table 4 provides the survey results for only those with a confidence level of 95% shown (p<.05), and highlighted are those correlations that exceed the .1 level.

Overall, small yet statistically significant associations are found within the overall Aboriginal population (column 3) when examining indicators of well-being and most of the community attributes, with the strongest link appearing between how one views the economic outlook for the local community and the condition of local public schools (.205). Among on-reserve First Nations respondents (column 4), the link between economic outlook for the local community and ratings for the condition of local public schools strengthens to .292. At the same time, a small yet statistically significant link among on-reserve residents also appears with this community economic outlook variable and access to recreational facilities (.174). A link also appears among on-reserve respondents with regards to the association between how individuals rate improvements in their own family's financial well-being and the quality of local schools (.170).

Among First Nations people who reside off-reserve (column 5), the strongest associations appear with regard to community conditions and access to local medical services (.259) and the condition of roads and streets (.241). Associations also exist between community outlook and safety at night (.175) and the quality of local public schools (.164). Few links are found for personal health and how people rate community conditions among First Nations people, keeping in mind that one does not have to be ill to recognize the existence of unhealthy conditions.

Among Métis people (column 6) there are a number of community attributes that correlate in a statistically

TABLE 4: Correlations of Community Conditions and Well-being.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTE	RATINGS	ABORIGINAL TOTAL (1019)	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (302)	OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (290)	MÉTIS (415)
Household drinking water	Family finances	.065			.105
	Community outlook	.067			
	Personal health	.137		.131	.214
Housing in the community	Family finances	.093			.116
	Community outlook	.137			.147
	Personal health	.106			.149
Condition of streets and roads	Family finances	.131		.125	.173
	Community outlook	.134		.241	.145
	Personal health	.105			.118
Local public schools and education	Family finances	.126	.170		.113
	Community outlook	.205	.292	.164	.103
	Personal health	.079			
Access to recreational facilities	Family finances				.153
	Community outlook	.121	.174		
	Personal health	.078			.138
Safety in the community at night	Family finances				
	Community outlook	.117		.175	
	Personal health	.091		.131	
Access to local medical services	Family finances				.101
	Community outlook	.163		.259	.134
	Personal health				

**TABLE 5: Aboriginal Manitobans –
Household Income Distributions.**

ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD	TOTAL ABORIGINAL %	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS %	OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS %	MÉTIS %
<10k	19	35	19	5
10k-29k	30	35	39	20
30k-59k	28	19	22	39
60-79k	10	6	9	14
80k+	14	6	11	22

Source: Probe Research, Indigenous Voices database, 2005-2008 (N=1019).
Column totals may exceed 100% due to rounding.

significant way with how individuals rated their personal health. This includes household drinking water (.214), housing (.149), street and roads (.118), and access to recreation facilities (.138). One explanation for these more numerous statistically significant correlations for Métis people is that First Nation people, especially those who reside on-reserve, overwhelmingly live in comparably low income households and poor living conditions which do not vary significantly across the population, whereas Métis people tend to live in a wide range of community conditions, both in low-income and higher-income communities, which should therefore translate into a wider variability for well-being. This is demonstrated by the survey results in Table 5 below which show how household income disparities exist between the different population groups (with chi square <.05 when comparing First Nations to Métis). A majority of adult First Nations people operate with less than $30,000 in household income, while over one-third of on-reserve First Nations people report living with less than $10,000 in household income. At the same time, Métis people tend to be more evenly spread across all five income categories, with very few at the under $10,000 household income level.

CORRELATIONS AND WINNIPEG COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

Of its 694,668 residents, roughly 60% of the total provincial population, Winnipeg's Aboriginal population consists of 68,380 individuals.[10] Provided here is a focused examination regarding how Aboriginal people residing in Winnipeg rate their local community conditions and how these might be linked to their economic or personal well-being. Within the Probe Research survey data,

TABLE 6: Correlations of Community Conditions and Well-being in Winnipeg.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTE	RATINGS	NON-WPG (649)	WINNIPEG (370)	CORE AREA (119)
Household drinking water	Family finances		.181	.315
	Community outlook			.287
	Personal health	.090	.238	.326
Housing in the community	Family finances		.122	.221
	Community outlook	.104	.162	
	Personal health	.094	.119	.201
Condition of streets and roads	Family finances	.104	.179	.294
	Community outlook	.080	.241	.281
	Personal health	.099	.113	
Local public schools and education	Family finances	.107	.162	.187
	Community outlook	.203	.181	.220
	Personal health		.126	
Access to recreational facilities	Family finances			
	Community outlook	.103	.105	
	Personal health	.120		-.229
Safety in the community at night	Family finances			
	Community outlook	.091	.170	.279
	Personal health		.166	
Access to local medical services	Family finances			
	Community outlook	.131	.204	
	Personal health	.101		

370 respondents claimed Winnipeg to be their main location of residence. And, of those, 119 reported residing in the city's downtown "core area," an area chiefly marked by low-income rental properties, including rooming houses (Silver 2008).[11]

Results shown in Table 6 reveal a number of small yet statistically significant relationships between how respondents rate each of the seven community attributes and their own personal well-being. Among core area respondents many of these links increase in strength. This includes links between ratings for the quality of household drinking water and personal health (.326), road conditions and family finances (.294) as well as with community's economic outlook (.281) and safety in the community and community outlook (.279). A curiosity is the negative association that appears between having access to recreational facilities and personal health (-.229). This is probably due to the fact that Winnipeg's downtown includes a large number of local parks, wading pools, river front bike paths, a YMCA, as well as skateboarding and ice skating facilities at the Forks. This author believes that having access to these facilities and making use of them may be two different things, and are therefore worth exploring in another study.[12]

MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

To what extent might each of the seven community conditions be linked to Aboriginal mobility in Manitoba? To measure mobility-related issues, respondents were asked the following question: "Thinking about the next twelve months, how likely is it that you will be moving to a different neighbourhood or community?" The results show that one-quarter of Aboriginal adults report that they are likely to move, with off-reserve First Nations being the most likely to move (with one-third saying they are likely) and Métis respondents being the least likely to move.

TABLE 7: Likelihood of Moving in Next 12 Months.

	TOTAL ABORIGINAL (1019) %	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (302) %	OFF-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (290) %	MÉTIS (415) %
Likely	25	28	33	16
Not likely	75	72	67	84

Source: Probe Research, Indigenous Voices database, 2005-2008.

In order to assess the link between community conditions and mobility, Table 8 provides correlations by which the "likelihood to move" variable was converted into a "dummy variable" (with those reporting likelihood

of moving coded with a "1" and those who are not likely to move coded as "2"). A correlation analysis was then used to see if satisfaction scores with community attributes might be connected to not being likely to move. That is, as satisfaction increases, does the likelihood of *not* moving also increase?

The results show that there is a small yet statistically significant association between how Aboriginal people in Winnipeg rate each of the seven community conditions and their likelihood to move, whereas the only statistically significant association that appears among on-reserve First Nations residents is with the quality of local schools.

Because respondents who do not have children in their homes might be unconcerned about the condition of their local schools, a second data processing step was taken to see if Aboriginal people who have children in their household exhibit a statistical link between how they rate their community conditions and their likelihood to move. The results, which appear in the right hand column of Table 8, reveal a statistically significant association between *all* community conditions and the likelihood to move for respondents who have children under the age of 15 in the household, with safety at night (.130), housing (.180) and water quality (.113) having the strongest associations. Oddly, these are all stronger than the link between mobility and quality of schools (.082), access to medical services (.041) and recreational facilities (.032). Unfortunately, the age of children in the household was not asked, signifying an inability to differentiate between those who have school-age children and those who only have pre-school aged children (furthermore, many respondents might reside in a household with children, but may not have childcare-related responsibilities).

CONCLUSION

In his "Message to Canadians," the Commissioner of the Task Force on Future of Health Care in Canada, Roy Romanow asserted that improvements to Canada's healthcare system necessitate that we go beyond discussions of doctors, nurses, and hospitals and adopt a broad understanding of community well-being. That is, healthy living requires a sufficiently developed community infrastructure that involves safe housing, clean water, quality schools, access to employment, physical recreation, as well as access to medical practitioners and healthcare facilities (Canada 2002). Using survey data based on interviews with Aboriginal people residing in communities across Manitoba, this article has provided an exploratory examination of measures of well-being, both economic and health-related, and how these might be linked to how each of seven community conditions is rated. While the measures of association did not reveal any strong

TABLE 8: Correlations of "Not Being Likely to Move" with Community Conditions.

COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTE	ABORIGINAL TOTAL (1019)	ON-RESERVE FIRST NATIONS (302)	WINNIPEG (370)	CHILDREN AGED <15 IN THE HOUSEHOLD (513)
Household drinking water	**.100**		**.127**	**.113**
Housing in the community	**.162**		**.128**	**.180**
Condition of streets and roads	.090		.041	.041
Local public schools and education	.092	.126	.073	.082
Access to recreational facilities	.059		.087	.032
Safety in the community at night	**.136**		.082	**.130**
Access to local medical services	.052		**.115**	.041

associations (that is, higher than .6 at the 95% confidence level), there were many small yet statistically significant associations found, most of which were around the +.1 level. These results indicate that further research might prove fruitful, such as in-depth analyses on a specific community condition, such as the quality of local housing, and such characteristics as gender, employment status and age. The author of this article and his colleagues at Probe Research continue to conduct surveys with Aboriginal people in Manitoba, and by 2010 will have compiled over 1,500 interviews with Aboriginal people.

NOTE

FOOTNOTES

1 Respondents had to reside in a First Nations community to qualify for the interview. Only one respondent per household could qualify for an interview (with only one cheque issued per mailing address), with limits also placed on the number of calls that would be received from each community.

2 For a discussion of quota samples and probability sampling methods, see Adams (2008).

3 Of the 1,019 individuals interviewed, 592 were First Nations, 415 Métis, 3 Inuit, 6 Non-Status, and 3 respondents said they were of "no category."

4 See, for example, the Speech from the Throne, November 2008 (Canada 2008). Regarding the importance of housing conditions as an important influence on health, see Bryant (2003).

5 The question is introduced in the following manner: "I'd like to ask you about the quality and condition of certain things in your community. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means you are very dissatisfied and a 10 means you are very satisfied, how would you rate the following features of your community?"

6 Of course, there are First Nations individuals who move between locations. Individuals are asked to identify themselves as being either "on-reserve" or "off-reserve." Of the 415 Métis interviewed, 217 reside in Winnipeg, and 198 reside somewhere else in the province. Of the First Nations who reside "off-reserve," 149 reside in Winnipeg and 140 live somewhere else in the province.

7 For Winnipeg respondents the phrase "of Winnipeg" was inserted into the question to replace "of your community."

8 Pearson's r is used here, in which a perfect positive association between the two variables would produce a +1.0 score, and a perfect negative association would produce a -1.0 score.

9 For a discussion of Aboriginal peoples within the Canadian urban context, the reader is referred to Loxley and Wien (2003) and Norris and Clatworthy (2003).

10 The following postal forward sorting areas (FSAs) were used to categorize Core Area respondents in the analysis: R3G, R3E, R2X, R3C, R3B, R3A, R2W. Admittedly, the downtown region also includes a few small pockets of upper income condominium development as well as the neighbourhood of Wolseley, which has a mixture of income groups including large pockets of upper income professionals.

11 The survey does include questions about recreational activities, exercise and

team sports. Work with regard to personal access to recreational facilities, lifestyle and personal health is left here for a later date.

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THE EFFECT OF COMMUNITY-LEVEL FACTORS ON SUICIDE IN INUIT NUNANGAT*

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Suicide is an area of great concern to Inuit in Canada, yet there are no national statistical data to highlight this issue. Using a geographical approach, we look at suicide rates in Inuit regions over a fifteen-year period from 1989 to 2003. We then analyse these data to compare suicide rates between groups of communities based on a variety of community-level factors. Results indicate that suicide rates in these regions are over eleven times higher than the Canadian average throughout this period. Factors relating to social connections and networks appear to be associated with lower suicide rates.

Le suicide est un sujet très préoccupant pour les Inuits du Canada, bien qu'il n'y ait aucune donnée statistique nationale soulignant ce problème. Le présent article utilise une approche géographique pour examiner les taux de suicide dans les régions inuites sur une période de 15 ans allant de 1989 à 2003. On analyse ensuite ces données afin de comparer les taux de suicide des groupes de collectivités d'après divers facteurs au niveau de la collectivité. Les résultats indiquent que les taux de suicide dans ces régions sont plus de 11 fois plus élevés que la moyenne canadienne durant la même période. Les facteurs concernant les connexions et les réseaux sociaux semblent être associés à des taux de suicide plus faibles.

INTRODUCTION

Inuit live primarily in remote, northern communities in regions across Canada's Arctic, known collectively as Inuit Nunangat. In 2001, there were some 45,000 Inuit in Canada according to the Census, most of whom lived in one of 53 communities in four regions: Inuvialuit in the Northwest Territories, the Territory of Nunavut, Nunavik, in northern Québec, and Nunatsiavut, on the north coast of Labrador. All four of these regions have settled land claims, and three have formal agreements for Inuit-controlled government.

Recent research shows that suicide rates among Inuit in Canada are much higher than average. Various regional studies have found rates from around 3.5 to 11 times higher than the national average (Canada 1995; Hicks 2007a; Bobet 2004). Despite this, there is no consistent measurement of suicide rates across the four regions inhabited by Inuit, owing largely to the difficulty of separating the mortality data for Inuit from those of non-Inuit residents of the same areas. Differences in surveillance between provinces and territories make it difficult to produce a national suicide rate, or compare mortality patterns across regions.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, in conjunction with Statistics Canada and Health Canada, explored the feasibility of producing suicide statistics for Inuit-inhabited regions of Canada, following the methodology developed by Wilkins et al. (2008). This method uses a geographic coding methodology to calculate statistics for communities that have a high proportion of Inuit residents, as identified from the Census of Population, conducted by Statistics Canada.

Following the calculation of suicide rates for the period from 1989 to 2003, we compare suicide rates between groups of communities divided by differences in socio-cultural characteristics taken from the Census and the companion Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) conducted by Statistics Canada, in order to identify community characteristics that may be associated with higher and lower suicide rates.

RISK FACTORS AND THE EXPLANATION OF HIGH SUICIDE RATES

Risk factors for Inuit suicide might be divided into two general categories: mainstream risk factors that tend to be prevalent in Inuit society, and risk factors specific to Inuit (or more broadly Aboriginal) populations, such as colonization and acculturation. Many mainstream risk factors seen in non-aboriginal societies are also prevalent in Inuit communities, including childhood separation and loss, alcohol abuse, personal mental health problems, domestic dysfunction and exposure to other people's self-destructive behaviour (Boothroyd et al. 2001).

Besides these factors, there are potential risk factors that are specific to Aboriginal communities in general and Inuit communities in particular. Many researchers point to the rapid social and cultural change, social and economic marginalization, cultural suppression, political disempowerment and discrimination that come with a history of colonization and acculturation by Western European powers as risk factors specific to Inuit (Boothroyd et al. 2001; Kirmayer, Brass, and Tait 2000). Examples of this include forced relocation, the adoption of western-style goods (housing, food, clothing) which require Inuit to work for wages, and attendance at school which cuts Inuit youth off from the traditional teaching role of their parents/elders. Researchers link this loss of culture and its accompanying negative effects with loss of individual self-esteem, ultimately leading to disconnect with an individual's culture and community to the point where life can be seen as meaningless (Chandler and Proulx 2006). The effect of cultural change may also explain the higher rates of suicide among males, as some have suggested that the traditional domestic role of women is more easily transferred to the southern wage-based service economy, than the male role of hunting and fishing (Henderson 2003; Canada 2003a; Hunter and Milroy 2006).

Recently, researchers have been investigating the link between community characteristics and suicide rates. In one study, researchers found that rates of suicide in a group of First Nations communities in British Columbia varied widely, ranging from having many more suicides than expected, to having none during the study period. These communities with low or no suicide were those that were actively pursuing control of their own lands, including control over health, policing and education. The more examples of self-determination the community had, the lower the suicide rates (Chandler and Lalonde 1998).

Although these findings have helped shift the discussion to one of community characteristics and the local environment, it is not clear to what degree this paradigm applies to Inuit communities. All of the Inuit regions have settled land claims, some dating back as far as 1976, and retention of traditional language is strong, with Inuit languages remaining dominant in some regions, especially Nunavik and Nunavut. In addition, most Inuit regions now have a substantial amount of local government[1] (although this is a recent development in most cases). These factors would lead us to predict low suicide rates based on these findings, yet, as we will see below, the Inuit rates are far above Canadian levels, and rising.

THE GEOZONE METHODOLOGY

The methodology for extracting vital statistics for Inuit-inhabited areas was developed and described by Wilkins et al. (2008). Most Inuit live in isolated northern communities which can be identified by geographic codes present on the vital statistics records of all provinces and territories. This coding reflects the person's usual place of residence, making it possible to produce routine surveillance data for Inuit-inhabited areas – that is, for **all** residents of communities that have substantial Inuit populations, regardless of the place of occurrence of the death.

To determine Inuit-inhabited communities, we used a cut-off of 33% Inuit inhabitants according to the 2001 Census of Population, following Wilkins et al. (2008). While this sounds low, most communities above this cut-off had a much higher proportion of Inuit inhabitants, and it included all 53 communities within the Inuit land claim areas.[2] The final list included:
- 6 communities in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region;
- 28 communities in Nunavut (plus 2 "unorganized areas" around the communities that shared the same postal codes);
- 14 communities in Nunavik;
- 6 communities in Labrador/Nunatsiavut.

In the parts of the study that involved combining mortality data with explanatory variables from the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS), this list had to be reduced slightly, since five of these communities were missing from the APS sample.

As a consequence of using a geographic-based approach, about 21% of the total population covered is non-Inuit, though this proportion varies from region to region (see Table 1). Importantly, though, this method captured nearly 80% of the total Inuit population in Canada.

Most non-Inuit living in the North tend to be better educated, employed, paid and housed than their Inuit neighbours (see Table 2). It would be expected that the non-Inuit population would also have better health outcomes than the local Inuit population. Hicks (2007a)

reported that of 221 suicides in Nunavut from 1999 to 2006, only 3 involved non-Inuit. As a result of this, we believe that our estimates of suicide rates in these communities underestimate the actual Inuit suicide rates. It is also possible, however, that Census under coverage of the population could lead to overestimation, but on the whole, we feel that the suicide rates presented here are conservative. Additionally, this geographic method misses about 20% of the Inuit population, who live outside the land claim areas.

METHODS FOR THE ANALYTICAL PORTION OF THE STUDY

In the analytical portion of this study, we grouped communities according to explanatory variables, and then calculated suicide rates for these groupings. For example, we compared suicide rates in the group of communities in which school attendance was high to rates in the group of communities where attendance was low. Explanatory variables were drawn from two sources: the 1996 Census and the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) with the choice of variables being based on the literature. The final list included basic socio-demographic variables, measures of tradition and language, and measures of community function and well-being.

The data covered the 15 years from 1989 to 2003, with suicide rates standardized to the age distribution of the Inuit population in 2001. Census data on community characteristics were drawn from the 1996 Census, the midpoint of the 15-year period studied. There was no Aboriginal Peoples Survey in 1996, but the 2001 version contained an Arctic Supplement that provided valuable information on participation in traditional activities and community conditions.[4] In both cases, data were extracted for the population who reported Inuit identity. This means that although the suicide rates are for the entire population, both Inuit and non-Inuit, of the selected communities, the explanatory variables are based only on people who identified as Inuit. The rationale for this decision was to identify possible explanatory variables for Inuit suicide rates, since other

TABLE 1: Inuit-inhabited Areas, 1996[3] Population by Stated Identity

	INUIT SINGLE-IDENTITY		ALL OTHER IDENTITIES		TOTAL POPULATION
	NUMBER	%	NUMBER	%	
Nunatsiavut (Lab)	2,309	68.1	1,080	31.9	3,389
Nunavik (QC)	7,628	88.0	1,069	12.0	8,697
Nunavut	20,489	83.1	4,176	16.9	24,665
Inuvialuit (NWT)	3,199	55.5	2,561	44.5	5,760
Total	33,625	79.1	8,886	20.9	42,511

TABLE 2: Population Characteristics Compared: Canada, Inuit-inhabited Areas, and Inuit Living in Inuit Areas, 2001 Census Data

CHARACTERISTIC	CANADA	INUIT-INHABITED AREAS	INUIT-IDENTITY POPULATION OF THESE AREAS (SINGLE OR MULTIPLE IDENTITY)
% under 15 years	19.4	36.6	40.3
% < high school diploma	31.1	51.4	62.0
% with some university	25.8	12.2	3.2
% unemployed	7.3	16.9	22.4
Avg household size	3.6	5.1	5.4
Avg income per person	$23K	$15K	$11K

Reproduced from Wilkins et al. 2007

sources suggest that up to 98% of the suicides in these areas occur among Inuit.

Since the absolute numbers of suicides involved are fairly small, the explanatory variables were simply dichotomized, in order to preserve confidentiality. For purposes of this analysis, we compared communities that were notably "strong" on a given characteristic to all the remaining ones, rather than dividing at some point such as the median. Thus we typically compared communities in the top quartile (e.g., the quarter that had the highest proportions of youth in school) to the communities in the remaining three quarters. Some exceptions were made if there was an analytical reason to cut at a different point, or if cutting at the top quartile resulted in too small a group.

PATTERNS OF SUICIDE IN INUIT-INHABITED AREAS

Even slightly understated, the geographic-based figures still show that the Inuit suicide rate, at 112 per 100,000 from 1999 to 2003, is many times the Canadian average of 10 deaths per 100,000 population. As seen in Figure 1 below, suicide rates are highest in Nunavik, followed by Nunatsiavut, Nunavut and then Inuvialuit.

A look at the trends over time confirms for all four Inuit-inhabited areas what studies in Nunavut and Nunavik had already observed: suicide rates have increased over the past 15 years. Judging by the figures for all regions combined, the increase from the 1994 to 1998 to the 1999 to 2003 period was particularly pronounced. All four regions saw statistically significant increases between the beginning and end points of the entire 15 year period.

Looking at differences by age and sex, these estimates show that young males make up the majority of deaths by suicide in the Inuit-inhabited areas. Over the 15 years covered in this study, over 80% of suicides were males and almost two thirds (65%) involved people under the age of 25.

FIGURE 1: Suicide Rates in Inuit Nunaat, 1989 to 2003
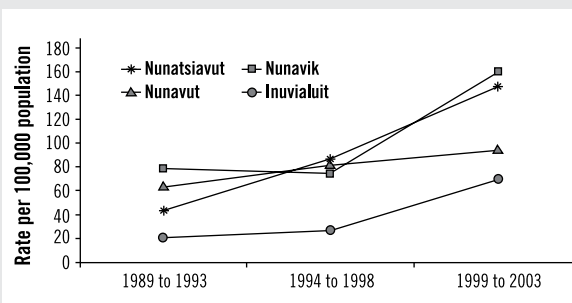
FIGURE 2: Suicides by Sex and Age Group, Inuit-inhabited Regions of Canada, 1989 to 2003
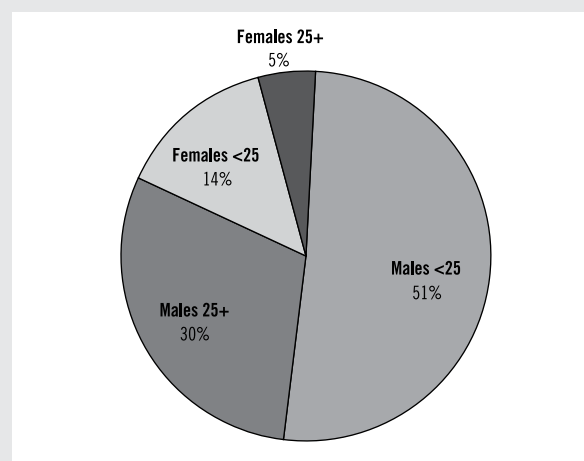
FACTORS RELATED TO SUICIDE IN INUIT-INHABITED AREAS

As mentioned above, our objective for this study was to see whether groups of communities classified by various community characteristics revealed variations in suicide

TABLE 3: Inuit Suicide Rates (Age-Standardized) by Region and Time Period, 1989 to 2003

		RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION		
		RATE	LOWER CI	UPPER CI
Nunatsiavut (Lab)	1989-1993	44.8 [1]	16.9	72.6
	1994-1998	87.5	41.7	133.4
	1999-2003	**147.7 [1]**	**89.4**	**206.0**
Nunavik (QC)	1989-1993	79.0 [3]	52.2	105.7
	1994-1998	76.0 [2]	50.8	101.2
	1999-2003	**159.8 [2,3]**	**125.0**	**194.6**
Nunavut	1989-1993	64.2 [4]	49.3	79.1
	1994-1998	80.7	64.9	96.5
	1999-2003	**95.6 [4]**	**78.9**	**112.3**
Inuvialuit (NWT)	1989-1993	21.7 [6]	5.4	38.0
	1994-1998	26.8 [5]	8.1	45.5
	1999-2003	**69.9 [5,6]**	**38.5**	**101.2**
All regions	1989-1993	59.6 [8]	49.0	70.1
	1994-1998	73.2 [7]	61.7	84.6
	1999-2003	**112.3 [7,8]**	**98.4**	**126.1**

Superscripts indicate that a number is significantly different from the second figure with the same superscript. All rates standardized to the Inuit population

rates. The choice of variables was inspired by the literature, tempered by the indicators available on the Aboriginal Peoples Survey and Census. Topics covered included education, employment, tradition, culture, social and civic activities and perceptions of community problems.

Comparative suicide rates for these community groupings produced a variety of results. In some cases, differences in suicide rates indicated what we would logically expect based on the literature, as well as based on common perceptions of the causes of suicide. In other cases the results yielded no statistically significant differences between the two groups. For a third group of variables, however, our results indicated an association between community factors and suicide rates in the opposite direction to what one might expect.

ASSOCIATED VARIABLES

As one might expect in relatively small towns and hamlets, one of the lowest suicide rates was in communities where a high proportion of residents reported having close ties to family members in their community. This suggests an affirmation of the value of social support networks. Further to this, suicide was lower in communities with a high proportion of youth school attendance, and lower in communities with a higher employment rate, which is similar to what one might expect to see in the general population (Daniel et al. 2006; Kirmayer et al. 2007). Additionally, rates were lower in communities with

a high proportion of residents who spent at least one month a year out on the land. These three activities each provide the means or the opportunity for individuals to be productive members of the economy, either traditional or modern, but they also provide social support networks that we might expect to act as a protective factor.

Suicide rates were higher in two other groups of communities- those where more people reported unemployment to be a problem in their community, and where people reported suicide to be a problem in their community (the latter association being one of the strongest in the analysis). While it seems logical and expected that respondents were seemingly aware of these issues and accurately reported them to interviewers, other questions on perceived problems in the community produced some rather unexpected results (see below).

UNASSOCIATED VARIABLES

There were several variables for which the difference in suicide rates was not statistically significant. One of these was frequent heavy drinking. Alcohol use has been associated with increased suicide risk, and it is surprising that we found no link between frequent binge drinking and suicide. Additionally, there was no link between suicide and communities where people considered either drug use or sexual abuse to be problems.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS

For some community variables, results ran counter to what one might expect. Suicide rates were lower in communities where family violence was identified as a problem, as well as in communities where alcohol use was reported as a problem (all differences were statistically significant). These results contradict risk factors mentioned in the literature, as well as our reasonable expectation. One might argue that these results cast doubt on the reliability of the information on perceived community problems, but respondents reliably reported on suicide as an issue in communities where rates were indeed notably higher.

Two other factors that were unusually associated with higher suicide rates involve cultural practice factors generally considered protective factors for suicide. Rates were higher in communities with a high proportion of Inuktitut speakers, as well as in communities with a high proportion of people reporting having harvested country food in the past year. It is not possible within the scope of the present study to explain these intriguing results, but one should note that those individuals committing suicide are not necessarily those that speak Inuktitut or harvest country food. One might speculate that not speaking the traditional language or participating in traditional Inuit activities in a community where such things are common may actually be associated with suicidal behaviour.

DISCUSSION

This study has demonstrated that it is possible to extract suicide data for communities with substantial Inuit populations based on a geographic methodology. The rates calculated from these data may be considered conservative because of the number of non-Inuit included in the numbers. Nonetheless, we can see suicide rates many times that of the general Canadian population, rates which have increased dramatically over the 15-year period of study.

As demonstrated in the present study, one of the advantages of extracting data by this method is the potential to link to other data sources, thus opening up many possibilities for analysis. We have taken advantage of the common geographic approach to group communities

according to variables on the Census and the Aboriginal Peoples Survey, and to compare the suicide rates by different groupings of communities.

The results of this study indicate that some of the relationships between suicide risk and explanatory variables are more complex than they appear. Although a number of factors were associated with lower or higher suicide rates in ways that we might expect, there were others that showed the opposite association.

Suicide is influenced by social factors, yet it is ultimately an individual decision. This is seen clearly in a number of the community variables studied here, none more so than the inconsistent results from the questions of perceived community problems. The differing results yielded by these variables highlight the limits of such a geographic approach in looking at suicide, while other variables, such as family connections and time spent out on the land would appear to indicate the protective value of these community characteristics. The ambiguous links between suicide rates and measures of tradition argue for a more nuanced view of acculturation, as reflected in recent theories that postulate that suicide is linked to cultural transition rather than to acculturation *per se* (Hicks 2007b). According to these theories, communities that are either soundly *traditional* or soundly *westernized* would have less suicide than a culture in flux, where the stress of coping with change leads to more suicidal behaviour.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that, in the absence of a Canada-wide Inuit identifier on vital statistics or a data linkage program, it is still possible to obtain meaningful mortality data on suicide in Inuit communities. This study showed elevated and rising suicide rates in all Inuit regions of Canada, thus corroborating past studies in specific regions. This study has also helped to identify a number of community factors related to suicide which are worth further investigation.

All of the results have to be interpreted with caution; these suicide rates must be considered conservative in comparison to the suicide rate of the Inuit population. An analysis restricted to data for Inuit alone might produce somewhat different results, but this is not feasible with the geography-based method. Based on the results of this initial exploration, further studies could focus on indicators of social networks, employment, schooling, and tradition. They could also take a closer look at the role of such indicators as the retention of traditional language and way of life, which, contrary to expectation, do not appear to be associated with lower suicide rates in a community.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Nunatsiavut (Labrador) has had formal-recognized local government since December 1, 2005, and has had substantial Inuit influence through institutions such as the Labrador Inuit Health Commission for many years before that. Nunavik has had Inuit regional government since the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1976; while the Government of Nunavut officially came into being on April 1, 1999.

[2] The 33% cut-off also led to the inclusion of one community, Northwest River, NL, from outside of the Inuit land claim areas.

[3] The 1996 Census is the mid-point of the time-period covered in this study.

[4] The 2001 APS sample contained some 10,755 Inuit, of whom 8,943 responded to the survey, for a response rate of 83% (Canada 2003b).

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PATHWAYS TO FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)-related stigma refers to discrimination directed at substance abusing pregnant women and their affected children throughout the lifespan. Despite a lack of information on the prevalence of FASD in Canadian Aboriginal communities, much of this discrimination is targeted at Aboriginal people and communities. This paper describes the knowledge base surrounding the topic of FASD in an effort to target the causes of understanding and misunderstanding, specifically those that give rise to FASD-related stigma targeted at Aboriginal people and communities. Discussion includes: epidemiology, cost to society and individuals, and evidence of the extent of government commitment to programming and prevention. Risk factors and the relationship between drinking in pregnancy and alcoholism in general are examined. The concepts of compromising environments and socio-economic inequities are introduced as the broader environments within which FASD emerges in Aboriginal communities. Recommendations for policy and practice based on interviews and focus groups from community-based research are provided.

L'expression « stigmatisation liée à l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisation fœtale (ETCAF) » fait référence à la discrimination à l'égard des femmes faisant un abus de substances durant leur grossesse et de leurs enfants touchés ensuite par ces troubles durant toute leur vie. Malgré un manque d'information sur la prévalence de l'ETCAF dans les collectivités autochtones canadiennes, cette discrimination est dirigée surtout vers les collectivités autochtones. Cette communication décrit la base de connaissances concernant l'ETCAF afin de saisir les raisons de la compréhension ou la méprise, notamment celles à l'origine de la stigmatisation des peuples et communautés autochtones liée à l'ensemble des troubles causés par l'alcoolisme fœtale. Sujets analysés, entre autres : l'épidémiologie, ce qui en coûte à la société et aux particuliers, la preuve de la mesure dans laquelle les gouvernements s'intéressent à la prévention et offrent des programmes. Les facteurs de risque et la relation entre l'alcoolisme durant la grossesse et l'alcoolisme en général sont également examinés. Les notions d'environnements à risque et d'inégalités socioéconomiques sont présentées comme des facteurs généraux favorisant l'apparition de l'ETCAF dans les collectivités autochtones. Les auteurs formulent également des recommandations en matière de politiques et de pratiques basées sur des entrevues et des réunions de groupes de consultation tenues lors de recherches dans les collectivités.

INTRODUCTION

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD)-related stigma refers to discrimination directed at substance abusing pregnant women and their affected children throughout the lifespan. Despite a lack of information on the prevalence of FASD in Canadian Aboriginal communities, much of this discrimination is targeted at Aboriginal people and communities. An article in the *Globe and Mail* published August 3, 2009, quoted University of Toronto law professor Kent Roach on his concern that this discrimination leads to the imprisonment of a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people, for whom alcohol consumption is a problem (Makin 2009). In Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2007, media attention centred on the behaviours of FASD-affected youth when a group of teenagers jumped into stolen vehicles and played a game of "try-and-hit-pedestrians;" quickly the youth became persons feared by the public and subsequent discussion transgressed towards the need for stricter legal penalties for misconduct by FASD-afflicted individuals. The outcome of this phenomenon is that as a society we tend to miss opportunities to improve a total population's health and safety: shared spaces and responsibilities are disregarded and those most vulnerable to societal inequities are blamed for its consequences.

This paper describes the knowledge base surrounding the topic of FASD in an effort to target the causes of understanding and misunderstanding, specifically those that give rise to FASD-related stigma targeted at Aboriginal people and communities. Discussion includes: epidemiology, cost to society and individuals, and evidence of the extent of government commitment to programming and prevention. Risk factors and the relationship between drinking in pregnancy and alcoholism in general are examined. We introduce the notion of compromising environments and socio-economic inequities as the broader environments within which FASD emerges in Aboriginal communities. Recommendations for policy and practice based on interviews and focus groups from community-based research are provided.

RESEARCHING FASD

Stigmatization of the disorder has attracted scientific and political controversy. Recently, epidemiologists began to abandon population-level diagnostic studies in favour of qualitative, community-led research methods (e.g. Massotti et al. 2006). Diagnosticians began to worry that their efforts were further victimizing those who needed diagnosis the most. Mary Cox-Millar, program director of the Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Exposed Children, Children's Hospital of Winnipeg stated that the risk of the

diagnostic research was that it presented a power imbalance that could contradict the value of the work. What was necessary prior to the diagnosis of children at a population level was research to raise a community's readiness to study the problem. Ms. Cox-Millar is particularly interested in issues that *surround* effective diagnosis including community partnership development and mother-centred approaches to diagnosis and care (pers. comm., December 2007).

Issues pertaining to FASD in Aboriginal communities relate back to historical and perpetual colonization – a way of thinking that is replayed in Western scientific methodologies (Tuhiwai Smith 1999). FASD is intergenerationally linked back to residential school experiences, encompassing Canadian child welfare policies and practices:

> The residential school system was a central tool of the colonialist government to achieve their goals, however, their assault did not end with the closure of the last school. Removal of Aboriginal children from their parents has continued to present day, with Aboriginal children being over-represented throughout Canadian child welfare systems... At the centre of this issue are Aboriginal parents, particularly mothers, who are deemed by welfare agencies to be unable to "adequately" care for their children. (Tait 2003, 85)

METHODOLOGY

This paper is a review of data collected through interviews and focus groups with participants of Manitoba First Nation maternal and child health programs (Aboriginal Head Start, Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program and Maternal Child Health) from 1998-2009. The studies focused on various maternal and child health topics and did not focus directly on FASD. All information pertaining to FASD in the communities was analyzed for content and discussed here as an investigatory or preliminary research. The goal of such a method is to bring research to the level of community experience as a powerful strategy for social change.

DESCRIPTION OF FASD

FASD is a serious health and social concern to Canadians (Chudley et al. 2005). While it encompasses several diagnostic terms, it is not, in itself, a diagnosis but an umbrella term used to refer to the spectrum of impairments that can be caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol

including physical, mental, behavioural, and learning disabilities (Abel 1995; Streissguth et al. 2004; Streissguth et al. 1996). Research focuses on understanding the nature and extent of impact that the disorder has on lifespan development. Notwithstanding the large amount of activity surrounding clinical work, understanding deficits and disturbances associated with FASD is far from complete (Bertrand 2009).

Of concern are the cognitive, social, and behavioural impairments that often lead to adverse life outcomes known as the *secondary symptoms of FASD*, including mental health issues, trouble with the law, and disrupted education. "Secondary symptoms" perpetuate similar circumstances familiar to individuals suffering from the post-traumatic stress syndrome of residential schools. Life circumstances, societal injustices, institutional, and familial abuses are linked to causes and outcomes of FASD. For example:

> In relationship to intergenerational links to substance abuse and pregnancy, and FAS/ARBEs [FASD], it is clear that the residential school system contributed to… substance abuse, but also to factors shown to be linked to alcohol abuse, such as child and adult physical, emotional and sexual abuse, mental health problems and family dysfunction. The impact of residential schools can also be linked to risk factors for poor pregnancy outcomes among women who abuse alcohol, such as poor health, low levels of education and chronic poverty. (Tait 2003, xviii)

It makes sense that negative experiences at the residential schools followed by severe interferences of the child welfare system would be linked to the kind of issues connected with FASD. The question is: by what mechanism(s) are they related? The link between social climates and health; interactions between human and ecological systems; and the effects of historical and political processes on local environments and the structuring of health inequities are relevant to understanding the nature and extent of FASD in Aboriginal communities. Abel, writing on social inequities and fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) in the United States, believes that FAS is not an equal opportunity disorder and has made the connection between racism and FAS. He maintains that poverty, "provides the kind of host environment that exacerbates alcohol's toxic actions" (1995). Governance structures, social relations, economic and political agendas that underlie social programming affect health, manifesting upon the body as FASD.

EPIDEMIOLOGY

Notwithstanding ongoing prevention and education efforts targeting alcohol-exposed pregnancies, babies with FASD continue to be born. On prevalence, Bertrand writes:

> FASDs are not as rare as generally thought and studies of particularly vulnerable populations have yielded prevalence estimates that exceed those of other, more widely recognized developmental disabilities. (2009, 987)

Worldwide incidence rates for FAS and FASD are estimated at 1.9 and 3-5 per 1000 live births respectively. Corresponding rates for Canada are 1-3 and 3-9 per 1000 live births (Thanh and Jonsson 2009). In Ontario, population 12.8 million, the estimated prevalence of FASD is 116,480 cases, of which 11% are severe cases and 89% are mild cases (Hopkins et al. 2008). Health practitioners working in First Nation communities consider FASD a significant problem. According to Dr. Hall, former obstetrician and director of the northern obstetric outreach program, "Fetal alcohol is a huge problem and a fundamental cause of the elevated risk in First Nation communities" (Eni 2005). Few prevalence rates are recorded in Aboriginal populations. What statistics are available are limited (i.e. they lack generalizability and are dated). The studies are, however, oft quoted however due to their alarming prevalence rates (see Assante and Nelms-Matzke 1985; Robinson et al. 1987; Square 1997; Williams et al. 1999).

COST AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT

Prevalence rates are alarming for two main reasons. First, FASD is entirely preventable and second, it is very expensive. Expenses are incurred by individuals in lifetime opportunity losses and to society in general. A Canadian study by Stade and colleagues (2006) estimated the cost of FASD through inclusion of six cost components: medical, education, social services, direct costs to the patient/family, productivity losses, and externalizing behaviours (e.g. acts of violence and stealing). Results indicated a profound economic burden of prenatal exposure to alcohol. In the year the study was conducted, the adjusted average annual costs per child with FASD between the ages of 1 to 21 years was estimated at CA$14,342. Cost determination included severity of condition, age and geographical setting. The annual cost of FASD to Canada of individuals up to 21 years of age was $344,208,000 (based on a rate of 3/1000 population and an overall population of 8 million). Hutson (2006) went further, extrapolating to age 65, determining a 3-4 billion dollar annual cost.

Addressing FASD is a Canadian government priority. FASD programming for First Nation and Inuit communities is delivered through the Health Canada, First Nation Inuit Health Branch Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FNIHB FASD) Program. Its focus is on reducing the number of FASD births and improving the quality of life of those affected. Goals are believed to be achievable through education to increase awareness and community readiness to deal with FASD-targeted initiatives for those at-risk of having a child affected with FASD, and collaborative initiatives with partners on issues such as early identification, assessment and diagnosis (Public Health

(FNIHB, CPNP Framework Document 2000, 17-18: qtd. in Eni 2005, 179).

The program linkage requirement is troublesome, particularly to smaller communities. These communities often lack adequate resources. A programmer in the Manitoba Interlake explains, "The communities have nothing. There are no other programs other than CPNP. And with the amount of money allotted they can't seriously offer any kind of programming to moms or their babies" (Eni 2005). In another Manitoba First Nation community, the health director said:

> "FASD is more than a health problem and requires multiple levels of government to effect meaningful, broad social change. A model that includes interconnections between individual psychologies, community history, Aboriginal self-governance and societal responsibility, is appropriate policy and practice. Universal programs that promote overall health, targeted programs to assist individuals with FASD throughout the lifespan, support women in taking back control over their lives, and build opportunities, should be encouraged"

Agency of Canada 2007). On-reserve, programs focusing on FASD include: *Maternal Child Health*, *Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program* (SF-MCH), *Stop FASD*, and *Aboriginal Head Start*. Additionally, services are offered through health and social services and schools that focus on assessment and diagnostics.

FASD service/program requirements often direct programmers towards integration with related services inside and outside local communities (Eni 2005). Integration program "linkage" was a value that received popular recognition beginning in the late 1990s.

> The concept of "linkages" is an integral part of both this program framework and the First Nation and Inuit Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects. The implementation of both CPNP and FAS/FAE Frameworks in First Nation and Inuit communities will require extensive linkages, coordination with and referrals to other community-based and external health, social and educational services...

Our CPNP program receives 15,000 dollars. The program employs a coordinator and she is responsible to develop and deliver both the CPNP and the diabetes prevention program. She has no other staff to support her or help her to develop the programs... (Eni 2005, 180).

RISK FACTORS

Several risk factors are associated with an increased likelihood of alcohol/substance abuse in pregnancy. Biological indicators include: advanced maternal age, lower maternal education, greater parity and maternal lifestyle variables, i.e. smoking and substance use (Olsen et al. 1997). Psychological profiles of the mother are studied (May and Gossage 2001). Environmental risk factors include child custody, lower socioeconomic status, paternal drinking, binge drinking during pregnancy, reduced access to perinatal care, inadequate access to perinatal care, inadequate nutrition and a poor develop-

mental environment (Chudley et al. 2005). Eni (2009) discovered a contradictory finding in her research pertaining to maternal age, finding a high incidence of binge drinking among pregnant teens and preteens. Violence in pregnancy, dire poverty, school failure, and perceptions of lacking opportunities "to do anything else" were associated.

Current research typically focuses on maternal behaviours and characteristics, neglecting contextual factors, i.e., social and physical environments. A paper for the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP 1996) identified past policies and practices of the Canadian governments, i.e. residential schools and child welfare "scoops," as primary determinants of physical and psychological illness among Aboriginal people. If prenatal programming, and specifically programming for FASD, was to adhere to this theory, then programming would be developed to mitigate the effects of these and related colonizing events *directly*.

ALCOHOL IN PREGNANCY VS. ALCOHOL IN GENERAL

Alcohol, particularly, binge drinking, is a major concern to Aboriginal communities, affecting individuals throughout the lifespan. In many communities, drinking begins at a young age and the use of substances is increasing among children and teens (interviews with community residents from two northern Manitoba First Nation communities: 2008 transcripts). The National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs originated in the 1970s as part of the federal government's goal to address alcohol and drug abuse in Aboriginal communities. The program received permanent funding in 1982 due to the "urgent and visible nature of alcohol and drug abuse among First Nations people and Inuit" (Canada 2006).

Whereas alcoholism in general is believed to have largely social underpinnings (e.g. stress of lack of employment, poverty, overcrowding, violence in the home, or social learning and modeling behaviours), alcoholism *in pregnancy* is commonly attributed to a lack of educational awareness regarding the detrimental impact of alcohol upon the foetus. Consequently, there is confusion among programmers regarding appropriate intervention. A prenatal worker stated:

> Pregnant women who are drinking are not treated in the same way as other community members who are alcoholics. Now the worry is about the baby more so than the person doing the drinking. (Eni 2005, 201)

COMPROMISING ENVIRONMENTS

Two narratives define Aboriginal women and healthy living: hard evidence documents our poor health status while soft logic passes us off as primary health guardians. Understanding this tension requires an insight into the health and social disparities we experience and a description of the linkages between these realities and healthy living policies. Key demographics, biological indicators, lifestyle behavioural issues and social conditions that aggravate Aboriginal women's health have to be weighed against *the totality of our environments* and our desire and potential to contribute as health guardians. Ultimately, "healthy living" for Aboriginal women depends, to a great extent, on meaningful, appropriate and responsive policies. (Stout 2005: emphasis added)

Within constructed environments that include severe imbalances in the allocation of resources and political power and that result in qualities of life ranging from privileged to dismal; health disparities are produced. Research on gender and racial disparities highlight the marginalization of Aboriginal women (Morrow et al. 2007; Stout 2005). Jin and colleagues compared Aboriginal with non-Aboriginal maternal and newborn health outcomes in Saskatchewan, hypothesizing that *Aboriginal status itself* would influence maternal labour/delivery and neonatal outcomes differently from those of a mainstream low socioeconomic group. The researchers stated if they were correct then policies and programs addressing only those health determinants affected by poverty would be insufficient in addressing the unique needs of Aboriginal women in pregnancy and childbirth (2002). Rather than making reference to genetic differences between populations, the researchers pointed to social inequities between racial groups that were to such an extent in Canada that they could be imprinted upon the physical bodies of pregnant women and their babies.

In SF-MCH (2007-2009) discussion groups, women said that although care giving is a priority, they felt they lacked opportunities for self-sufficiency at home. Women talked of challenges to taking up opportunities to improve quality of life (e.g. family responsibilities, poverty, unavailability of local education and employment opportunities, lack of preparation for motherhood/adulthood, lack of familial support). Some discussed challenges associated with drug and alcohol dependencies (e.g. living in

violent relationships, feeling unsupported to change one's lifestyle, feeling that it would be difficult to change or that there are no available options anyway).

Colonialism and capitalism marginalize Aboriginal women. Violence against women was identified as a serious, underlying cause for women's drug and alcohol dependencies. One woman explained; "I drank to forget, each time I drank something else happened to me, so I drank some more" (45 year old grandmother, July 2000). Questions of socio-economic justice are important in considering poor health or the reasons why women sniff intoxicants, drink alcohol, or consume drugs. Intoxicants are most attractive to us when we are trying to mask pain or cope with hopelessness and not when we are happy, healthy, and able to pursue our dreams. It is no coincidence that women who suffer discrimination, violence, sexual abuse, poverty, and other systemic injustices or abuses of power tend to have very high rates of substance abuse and addiction (Shanner 1998). Seen in this way it is impossible to separate "lifestyles," pregnancy and child health from the broader determinants and circumstances of society.

HEALTH EFFECTS OF STIGMATIZATION

Power imbalances inherent in Canadian social structures seep through research methodologies – even community-based and participatory studies are necessarily conducted within these spaces of inequity where powerful researchers investigate the health problems of marginalized individuals/communities. With this, FASD research is a difficult undertaking. A diagnosis of FASD runs the recipient and mother risks of stigmatization and exclusion. Fear of diagnosis includes the threat that disclosure will lead to apprehension of children. This fear is so great that a mother may decide that it is better for a child to forgo diagnosis and, by extension, program supports. Mothers fear judgment and may avoid situations that may leave them feeling judged. The result is an underreporting of FASD that leads to a lack of diagnosis and programming across the spectrum from drug and alcohol treatment to developmental, educational, and living support.

At a community meeting that involved local and regional health, education and social service representatives we were told that FASD in the community is a "huge problem" but that it is:

> Not actually diagnosed in the most part. This is because parents are the only ones who can take the children to the physicians for diagnosis, we can't, we're not allowed to, and many parents won't do it.

> We know it's a problem but we can't get the resources to do something about it. That's because of the diagnosis. We refer to the children as having "FASD-like symptoms" because of that… it's also because of the stigma that is carried with it as well (young adult male, a programming for children with disabilities committee, June 2009).

In another community, the school FASD program coordinator shared her statistics on prevalence rates saying:

> It is the ones who are in care or who have the least severe form of FASD who we are capturing but the ones with the most risk, they are the ones from the part of the community that suffers the greatest poverty, the non-status ones. They are not bringing their kids in to be diagnosed; those are the ones we worry about. Trust issues and stigma keep people from disclosing; well they feel they have to say, "Yah I drank when I was pregnant" and what would happen to them to admit that. (FASD school program coordinator, August 2004)

AN EMBODIED DISORDER

There is an "embodiment" health disparity in Canadian Aboriginal peoples (Adelson 2005). The embodiment results from a manifestation of external events upon the body much like an unwanted tattoo or a scar; but in this case, the disorder bleeds into the body to impact total human health and lasts through generations. Evidence of an embodiment of FASD, one that forces us to look beyond alcohol consumption as the "cause" of FASD towards inequities, is indicated in the excerpts below.

Example 1: Participants of a prenatal program said some women drank alcohol to relieve stress associated with a lack of adequate housing, turbulent intimate relationships or having reduced employment opportunity (Preventing Violence Against Women Working Group, First Nation Community: September 2005).

Example 2: A young mother of two in her sixth month of pregnancy came into a program one day following a week-long absence saying she was "on a binge." She said, "Really, I didn't want to drink but my friends insisted. When they're at my house banging on the door expecting me to drink, I can't say no or they won't want to

be friends with me anymore" (23 year old woman, Aboriginal Head Start: June 1999).

Example 3: As participants discussed reasons for drinking during pregnancy, one woman said she drank to detach herself from disgust she felt about her own body. Her physical self loathing, she said, stemmed from repeated experiences of sexual abuse. She described a family history that included two generations of care givers raised in residential schools. "I thought of myself as something disgusting and with a baby growing inside me I couldn't stand that feeling" (Aboriginal Head Start, Sharing Circle: October 1998).

Example 4: A mother of four sons and an eight year old daughter told the group, "I couldn't let myself feel a connection with my daughter." Her sons were apprehended by CFS, because they said, "I neglected my children." She was unable to touch her children, "I couldn't even bathe them because I was sexually abused so many times as a child that I wasn't sure how to hold a child" (Sharing Circle Discussions: October 1998).

THE WAY AHEAD

FASD is more than a health problem and requires multiple levels of government to effect meaningful, broad social change. A model that includes interconnections between individual psychologies, community history, Aboriginal self-governance and societal responsibility, is appropriate policy and practice. Universal programs that promote overall health, targeted programs to assist individuals with FASD throughout the lifespan, support women in taking back control over their lives, and build opportunities, should be encouraged. Resources should be provided to communities to develop community-aspired programs that fit with particular interests. Programs should be supported at regional, provincial and national levels. Funding proposals for FASD and substance and alcohol abuse in pregnancy are often developed by communities who use these requests as starting points for community-based programs. This is ideal as it indicates that they are aware of the extent of their problems with particular issues and that they have actively worked through evaluations of health promotion, prevention and intervention strategies. Supporting community self-determination with adequate and sustainable resources is itself a fundamental determinant of maternal and child health.

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SCHOOL CHANGE AND ABORIGINAL STUDENTS IN ELEMENTARY GRADE LEVELS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cheryl Aman has lived in many communities across British Columbia. She has a strong interest in Aboriginal education issues in Kindergarten – Grade 12 contexts. Her research has focused mainly on the issue of school mobility.

ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This study utilizes British Columbia Ministry of Education administrative data associated with the school records of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students province-wide. Three cohorts of kindergarten students – 1996, 1997, 1998 – who attended elementary school in British Columbia[1] are examined. Comparisons include both on-reserve, or band-affiliated, students and non-band affiliated Aboriginal students as well as non-Aboriginal students. The study uses as its outcome variable the achievement of students in reading and mathematics on provincial standardized tests (Foundation Skills Assessments or FSAs) in Grades 4 and 7. School change (or mobility) is treated as a variable of particular interest. A logistic regression model extends the descriptive data with estimates of the odds of meeting FSA expectations while accounting for some individual-level characteristics as well as school mobility in each of the three student groups for the most recent (1998) cohort year.

Cette étude s'appuie sur les données administratives du ministère de l'Éducation de la Colombie-Britannique, ainsi que sur les dossiers scolaires des élèves autochtones et non autochtones à l'échelle de la province. Trois cohortes d'élèves de la maternelle – 1996, 1997, 1998 – ayant fréquenté une école primaire de la Colombie-Britannique[1] y sont examinées. Les comparaisons portent sur des élèves autochtones vivant dans les réserves, donc qui sont affiliés à une bande, des élèves autochtones non affiliés à une bande, de même que des élèves non autochtones. L'étude utilise comme variable de résultat le rendement en lecture et en mathématiques des élèves de 4e et de 7e années lors des tests standardisés provinciaux (Évaluation des habiletés de base). Le changement d'école (ou mobilité) y est traité comme une variable d'intérêt particulier. Un modèle de régression logistique utilise les données descriptives plus avant afin d'estimer la probabilité de répondre aux attentes de l'Évaluation des habiletés de base en tenant compte de certaines caractéristiques au niveau individuel et de la mobilité scolaire dans chacun des trois groupes d'élèves pour la plus récente (1998) année de la cohorte.

THE STUDY

Equity in the school performance of Canadian Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal peers has long been a concern of educators and researchers. A base of research exploring differences in school experiences and pedagogies between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples has been established (see Aman 2006 for a fuller review). This study extends exploration of a demographic factor that may contribute to school success – that of school mobility or changing schools *not* due to grade promotion. The change of schools may involve a move across a school district, or across the province to another community. The underlying causes and prevalence of student mobility are not well documented in Canadian educational contexts, though several researchers have confirmed that migration on and off reserves occurs in Aboriginal populations (see Clatworthy 1995; Cooke 2002; Norris and Clatworthy 2003; Siggner and Costa 2005). Aboriginal mobility has been tied to pursuit of employment availability and higher education opportunities, cultural practices and responsibilities, housing issues, foster care and dynamics in extended families.

Previous research (Aman and Ungerleider 2008) provides evidence that, when Aboriginal secondary school students change schools, their likelihood of graduating is substantially decreased. This study asks the question *is school change for Aboriginal students at elementary school levels similarly associated with negative outcomes?* The study compares the prevalence and possible consequences of changing schools on standardized test results in reading and numeracy at an early grade level (Grade 4) and a later grade level (Grade 7). Approximately 3% of the province's student population in any given year are band-affiliated students, whereas Aboriginal students not affiliated with a band make up 7% of the student population. The student group of non-Aboriginal students comprise 90% of the BC student population.

THE PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL CHANGE

A greater proportion of Aboriginal students in British Columbia change schools than non-Aboriginal students, and Aboriginal students change schools more frequently than non-Aboriginal students. There is little difference in both the proportion and frequency of school change between band[2] students and non-band Aboriginal students. By Grade 4, approximately 50% of Aboriginal students have *not* changed schools, in contrast with 65% of non-Aboriginal students (see Figure 1). Conversely, by Grade 4 approximately 25% of Aboriginal students have changed schools two or more times,

where only 11% of non-Aboriginal students have moved schools this frequently. By Grade 7 approximately 40% of Aboriginal students have changed schools two or more times, in comparison to 22% of non-Aboriginal students (see Figure 2). Students typically have higher rates of school change within districts; however band students frequently are more mobile across school districts than within school districts.

FIGURE 1: Average Number of School Changes by Grade 4 Over Three Cohorts
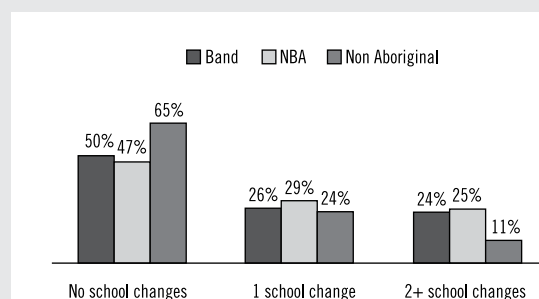
FIGURE 2: Average Number of School Changes by Grade 7 Over Three Cohorts
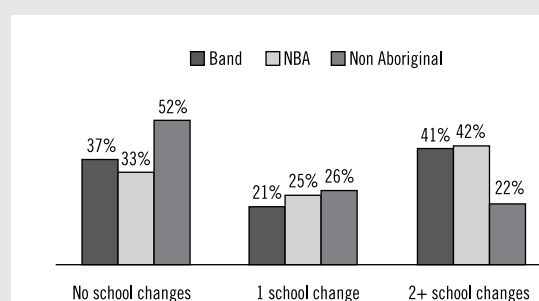
The school change rates presented here do not include the movement of new students to the province of British Columbia or the migration of students out of the province. In-migration rates are approximately 2% each year; equivalently, 2% of the cohort moves away from the province each year. However, there is a spike of new students to the school system enrolling after Kindergarten. These students include in-migrants as well as students who have deferred enrolment until Grade 1[3]. In other words, families of these young students are not registering their children in Kindergarten, legally an option, but waiting an additional year to enrol them in

FIGURE 3: Average Estimated Deferred Enrolment Rate
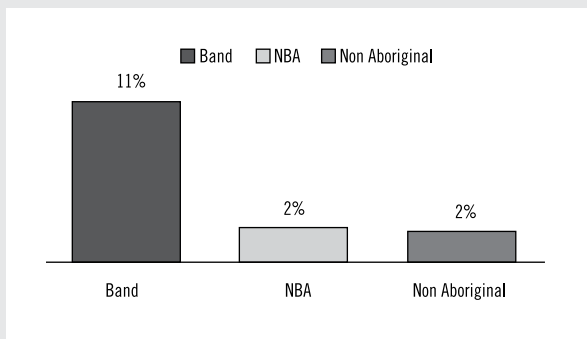
Grade 1[3]. Band students have substantially higher rates of deferred school enrolment than both non-band Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students (see Figure 3). Deferred enrolment (though estimated) is one factor modelled in the second part of the study.

SCHOOL CHANGE AND FSA RESULTS

Foundation Skill Assessments (FSAs) are administered province-wide in British Columbia as a standardized measure of numeracy, reading and writing skills at Grade 4 and Grade 7. Students may be excused from test participation by prior arrangement of school administrators, or may be absent from school on test days. Non-participation rates are very low for non-Aboriginal students, higher for non-band Aboriginal students and highest for band students.[4] This is in part due to the higher rates of students who are not at grade level by Grade 4 or Grade 7 among Aboriginal groups, particularly band students.

When the rate of meeting grade level expectations is calculated for the entire cohort, school change is *typically associated* with lower success rates on Numeracy FSA Grade 4 (see Figure 4) and Numeracy FSA Grade 7[5] (see Figure 5). Yet for band students, school change is not negatively associated with meeting numeracy grade-level expectation rates. Rather, students who move a single time have nearly *equivalent or higher* numeracy success rates than those who never change schools.

Students typically have lower success rates on the Reading FSAs compared to Numeracy FSAs. When results of the Reading FSAs are examined, a similar pattern emerges regarding school change and the band student group. School change in the other student groups is generally associated with a decreased rate of students meeting grade-level expectations. As with the numeracy success rates of band students, school change is associated with *equivalent or marginally improved rates* of meeting

expectations (see Figures 6 and 7)[6] in reading. Frequent school change (two or more changes) is associated with lower success rates for both non-band Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups on both exams at both grade levels. This pattern of decreased success rates associated with *increased* number of school changes is less evident in the band student group.

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT GROUPS

While school mobility does not appear to have the same negative association with success rates on FSAs across student groups, it cannot be overlooked that band success rates on FSAs are profoundly lower than their non-band peers and non-Aboriginal peers. What demographic factors related to the available student administrative data may account for this finding?

As noted above, a large proportion of band students (estimated at 11%) do not attend kindergarten, deferring entry to school until grade one. Band students subsequently have one less year in the system and have substantially lower success rates on both Reading and Numeracy FSA Grade 4 and 7 exams.
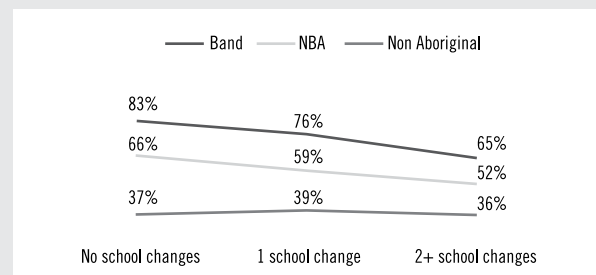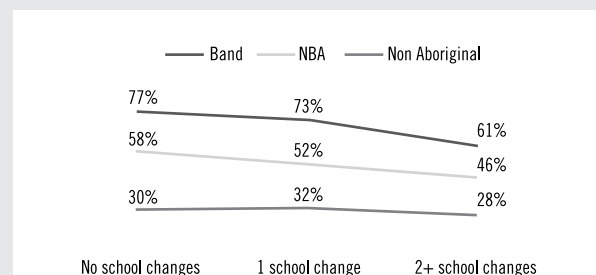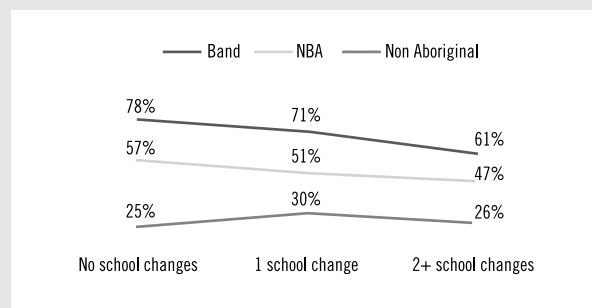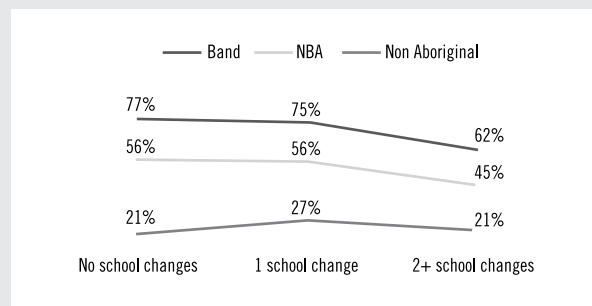
FIGURE 4: Average Cohort Rate of Meeting Expectations on Numeracy FSA Grade 4

FIGURE 5: Average Cohort Rate of Meeting Expectations on Numeracy FSA Grade 7
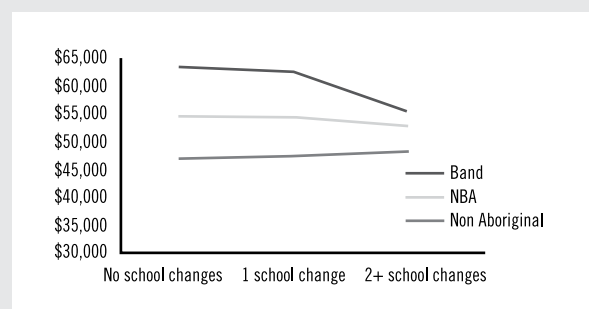
FIGURE 6: Average Cohort Rate of Meeting Expectations on Reading FSA Grade 4

Band — NBA — Non Aboriginal

78% 71% 61%
57% 51% 47%
25% 30% 26%

No school changes   1 school change   2+ school changes

FIGURE 7: Average Cohort Rate of Meeting Expectations on Reading FSA Grade 7

Band — NBA — Non Aboriginal

77% 75% 62%
56% 56% 45%
21% 27% 21%

No school changes   1 school change   2+ school changes

Band students are also unique in that a substantial percentage (approximately 23%) of them has enrolled in band-operated schools at some time in their elementary school trajectory.[7] Comparing band students who have ever enrolled in band schools to band students who have never enrolled in band schools yields mixed findings. Students who have enrolled in a band-operated school have decreased success rates in reading skills on both the Grade 4 and 7 FSAs. Students who have enrolled in band schools at any time have lower success rates on Numeracy Grade 4. However, by Grade 7, when these band students *participate*[8] in the exam, the students have equivalent success rates in Numeracy. Band students who exit band schools (33%) for the public school system have increased success rates on both numeracy and reading compared to peers who remain in band schools. Enrolment in band-operated schools is modeled in the calculation of odds below.

Band students also differ from the other student groups in that school change is associated with change to neighbourhoods with *higher* (on average) income levels[9] (see Figure 8). This differs for non-band and non-Aboriginal students whose school change is associated *with lower* (on average) neighbourhood income levels whether they move a single time or more frequently.[10] This socioeconomic indicator was used in the modelling, though is not explicitly presented in the table below.

School choice is another factor that disproportionately applies to student groups. In British Columbia French immersion programs and independent schools[11] are available options, but do not enrol equivalent shares of the student population. Very few band students have ever enrolled in French immersion programs, for example. The proportion of Aboriginal students to ever enrol in an independent school is half to a quarter that of non-Aboriginal students. Students ever enrolled in independent schools (approximately 16% of the student population) and in French immersion programs (approximately 9% of the student population) have higher success rates on both FSA exams. Students who change schools specifically to enter a French immersion program (approximately 6%) *or* to attend an independent school (approximately 4%) invariably have higher success rates than peers who change schools within the public school system, no matter which student group they belong to. Enrolment in band-operated schools, French immersion programs and independent schools is featured in the model below.

FIGURE 8: Average Neighbourhood Family Income and Number of School Changes by Grade 7

$65,000
$60,000
$55,000
$50,000
$45,000
$40,000
$35,000
$30,000

Band
NBA
Non Aboriginal

No school changes   1 school change   2+ school changes

STUDENT GROUPS AND ODDS OF MEETING FSA EXPECTATIONS

In order to quantify and compare the odds of meeting expectations on FSAs, logistic regression was computed for each student group. The most recent cohort, 1998, was used in the modelling procedure.[12] While the ability of the models to account for individual variance in meeting expectations results is weak,[13] the calculation of

FIGURE 9: Odds of Meeting Expectations on Grade 4 and Grade 7 FSAs

	NUMERACY FSA 4			READING FSA 4			NUMERACY FSA 7			READING FSA 7		
BAND												
		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER
Constant	0.45***			0.28***			0.37***			.14***		
Ever changed schools	1.00ns	0.89	1.12	0.91ns	0.80	1.03	1.00ns	0.92	1.08	1.03ns	0.95	1.13
Gender	1.08ns	0.86	1.35	1.45**	1.13	1.86	1.19ns	0.94	1.50	1.61**	1.23	2.12
Possible deferred Kindergarten	0.81ns	0.58	1.12	0.68**	0.47	0.99	0.81ns	0.57	1.15	0.70*	0.45	1.06
Ever enrolled at an independent school	1.35ns	0.93	1.95	1.17ns	0.79	1.73	1.47**	1.00	2.13	2.00**	1.35	2.98
Ever enrolled at a band-operated school	0.56***	0.41	0.75	0.43***	0.30	0.62	0.83ns	0.62	1.11	0.55**	0.38	0.80
NON-BAND ABORIGINAL												
		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER
Constant	1.34*			0.47***			0.88ns			0.32***		
Ever changed schools	0.77***	0.72	0.82	0.83***	0.78	0.88	0.82**	0.79	0.62	0.85***	0.81	0.89
Gender	0.97ns	0.84	1.11	1.29***	1.13	1.47	1.16ns	1.02	1.33	1.66***	1.45	1.91
Possible deferred Kindergarten	0.68**	0.48	0.96	0.86ns	0.60	1.21	0.78ns	0.54	1.11	0.99ns	0.69	1.42
Ever enrolled in French immersion	1.80***	1.31	2.48	1.61**	1.19	2.15	1.63***	1.26	2.11	2.11**	1.62	2.72
Ever enrolled at an independent school	0.82ns	0.62	1.09	0.91ns	0.69	1.20	1.01ns	0.77	1.33	1.13ns	0.85	1.50
NON-ABORIGINAL												
		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER		CI LOWER	CI UPPER
Constant	2.42***			1.07ns			1.27***			1.02ns		
Ever changed schools	0.68***	0.66	0.70	0.72***	0.70	0.74	0.75***	0.74	0.77	0.78***	0.77	0.80
Gender	1.00ns	0.94	1.05	1.45***	1.38	1.53	1.10***	1.05	1.16	1.48***	1.41	1.55
Possible deferred Kindergarten	0.67***	0.59	0.77	0.77***	0.68	0.88	0.83**	0.72	0.94	0.89*	0.79	1.01
Ever enrolled in French immersion	1.30***	1.17	1.44	1.21***	1.09	1.32	1.58***	1.46	1.72	1.57***	1.47	1.70
Ever enrolled at an independent school	0.80***	0.75	0.86	0.99ns	0.93	1.06	1.30***	1.23	1.38	1.35***	1.27	1.43

Note: *** Significant at < 0.001; ** significant at < 0.05; * significant at < 0.10; ns is non-significant.

odds associated with individual factors and meeting expectations on different FSAs is of great interest. Odds higher than 1.00 indicate a student has a higher than even chance of meeting expectations. Odds lower than 1.00 indicate the reverse – a student has a lower than even chance of meeting expectations. Odds should be interpreted keeping in mind that the success rates differ among the three groups.

There are stark differences between the student groups regarding the odds of meeting expectations on both FSAs at both grade levels (see Figure 9). As evident in the descriptive data, band students have substantially lower success rates than both non-band Aboriginal peers and non-Aboriginal peers. When other student characteristics are considered this does not change. However, there are some variables that have a significant effect on the odds of meeting expectations within student groups.[14] These differ slightly over exams and over grade levels.

School change – the variable of greatest interest in this study – operates differently across the student groups across the elementary grade trajectory. For band students school change is not significant and odds of meeting the expectations on FSAs remain even. This differs from school change within the other two student groups. For non-band Aboriginal students, odds of meeting expectations when school change has occurred are substantially lower at both grade levels and on both exams (more so on

being female does not convey a statistically significant advantage in the odds of meeting expectations for that exam, though the trend is in favour of females. Gender is significant for band students on Reading FSAs however. At Grade 4, band-affiliated females have a greater chance of success than band males (odds are 1.45); at Grade 7, an even higher chance than band males (odds are 1.61). Similarly, in numeracy, non-band Aboriginal females do not have *significantly* higher odds than males at either grade level (though there is a trend for female higher odds on the Grade and Numeracy exam). Yet the odds of success are always significantly higher for females in reading. Again gender is not significant in non-Aboriginal females on the Numeracy Grade 4 FSA. It achieves significance by the Grade 7 exam. Gender is significant on both grade level Reading FSAs. Being female is an advantage again in non-Aboriginal groups.

Descriptive data suggests that students who began at Grade 1 in the British Columbia school system (whether due to migration to the province or to deferred entry to school) have lower success rates. This is especially of interest in the band student population, where over 10% of students fall into this category. A clear negative association exists with deferred enrolment, though the lower odds are not statistically significant across all exams. Band students who have possibly deferred school entry have lower odds of meeting expectation on the Grade 7

"Equity in the school performance of Canadian Aboriginal students compared to non-Aboriginal peers has long been a concern of educators and researchers. A base of research exploring differences in school experiences and pedagogies between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples has been established (see Aman 2006 for a fuller review). […] The underlying causes and prevalence of student mobility is not well documented in Canadian educational contexts, though several researchers have confirmed that migration on and off reserves occurs in Aboriginal populations (see Clatworthy 1995; Cooke 2002; Norris and Clatworthy 2003; Siggner and Costa 2005). Aboriginal mobility has been tied to pursuit of employment availability and higher education opportunities, cultural practices and responsibilities, housing issues, foster care and dynamics in extended families."

Numeracy Grade 4). The odds ratios regarding school change are in accord with the descriptive data.

Gender is another variable represented in the model.[15] For band students, gender is not significant in Numeracy Grade 4 and Grade 7 odds. In other words,

Reading FSA (odds are .70) than band peers who have enrolled at Kindergarten. The same holds true in the non-band Aboriginal population. In the non-Aboriginal population, deferred entry to school is statistically significant and lowers odds of meeting expectations at both

grade levels and on both exams. For all groups, deferred school entry appears to be associated with odds lower in numeracy compared to reading.

There are two school contexts where students generally exhibit higher odds of success. These are French immersion schools[16] and independent schools. The model confirms that for both non-Aboriginal band students (a very small number) and for non-Aboriginal students ever enrolled in French Immersion schools odds are indeed significantly higher at both grade levels and both exams. Enrolment in independent schools always confers higher odds for band students compared to those band students never enrolled in independent schools and achieves significance at the Grade 7 level. Conversely, for non-band Aboriginal students, enrolment in independent schools does not appear to confer a positive effect with the exception of the Grade 7 Reading exam. The association of students and enrolment in independent schools is more ambiguous on Grade 4 exams. At the earlier grade level, results are insignificant for some groups and negative for non-band and non-Aboriginal students.[17]

Finally, for band students there is an additional student context where students exhibit lower odds of meeting expectations. Band students enrolled in band-operated schools have lower odds of meeting expectations on both numeracy and reading exams in both grade levels (though not significantly on Numeracy Grade 7) than band students who have never enrolled in band-operated schools. For example, odds of meeting expectations on Grade 7 Reading FSAs (0.55) are lower than Numeracy FSAs (0.83).

CONCLUSION

This research provides some data-driven information on an issue rarely formally examined in Aboriginal education research. School change – the variable of greatest interest in this study – operates differently across demographic groups across the elementary grade trajectory when provincial student populations are analyzed. Aboriginal student groups more frequently change schools than non-Aboriginal students. Calculation of

odds ratios supports descriptive information regarding school change and meeting FSA expectations while shedding light on the influence of additional demographic/schooling choice factors. The influence of factors that cannot be represented in administrative data such as pedagogy and cultural fit of schooling practices or community history is unknown.

For band students the mobility factor lowered odds on one exam – Reading Grade 4. For all other FSAs, school change is not significant for band students and odds of meeting the expectations on FSAs remain even. For the other Aboriginal group, non-band Aboriginal students, school change – even a single school change—is associated with decreased success rates. This pattern is similar to that evident in non-Aboriginal peers, where mobility appears to be even more sharply associated with lower success rates. The anomalous band student results must be considered within the context of substantially lower success rates exhibited within this student group. Additionally, the possibility that the context of lowered socioeconomic neighbourhoods (on average) for band students and more common deferred enrolment could be important factors in understanding the phenomenon of little effect associated with school change. The association of enrolment in band-operated schools and decreased odds of success of these band students is also of critical concern for band students. This data cannot address the causes of school mobility or directly assess the causes of different school outcome results associated with mobility. Despite this limitation, understanding the extent of student mobility and locations where student mobility rates are high may assist educators and advocates of Aboriginal students in working toward consistently higher graduation rates and achievement in school.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Those students joining the cohort from beyond BC at later grade levels are also included. However, English as Second Language students are not included.

[2] School change rates vary widely across individual bands. Across bands where there are 20 or more students in the cohort, rates of two or more school changes range from 14 to 64% depending on the cohort year.

[3] The impact of deferred enrolment has not been addressed in the school attainment research.

[4] Non-participation rates vary by group. Approximately 27% of band students do not participate in Grade 7 FSAs, compared to 18% of non-band Aboriginal students and 9% of non-Aboriginal students. Band students have three times the excused status, three times the absent on test day rate, and five times the not-at-grade-level rate compared to non-Aboriginal students.

[5] The same holds true when success rates are calculated including only exam participants. In this report, cohort rates are presented. An interesting phenomenon occurs within the band student group.

[6] This is also true when only exam participants are used in the calculation of the success rate.

[7] Negligible numbers of non-band students or non-Aboriginal students are ever enrolled in band schools.

[8] This does not hold true in the examination of the cohort rate.

[9] Average family income at the residential postal code level is used as a proxy indicator of socioeconomic conditions. This data is provided by the Statistics Canada Census 2001 Survey. In this study, average family income is unavailable for a large percentage of band students (10%) in contrast to 1% in non-band Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal groups.

[10] Though studies in education typically rely on proxy measures of individual student SES, the connection between lower SES is widely suggested to be comorbid with decreased education attainment.

[11] In British Columbia, independent schools may be either denominational or traditional, university-preparation styled institutions.

[12] The 1998 Kindergarten cohort is the smallest cohort (n=39,709). The results of band students on Grade 4 FSAs are similar to preceding cohort years. Results of band students on Numeracy Grade 7 show a modest increase from preceding cohorts; and results in Reading Grade 7 a modest decline.

[13] The percentage correct prediction values improve from the empty model to fuller models by 1 to 3% across student groups.

[14] Female advantage is evident in most measures of academic success in elementary grade levels in reported British Columbia results. See for example British Columbia Ministry of Education (2008).

[15] The socioeconomic indicator was positive and highly significant in all groups for both exams and grade levels. However, because of the small incremental differences in family income levels, the increased odds associated with students residing in higher average family income postal codes appears as nearly 1.00. The confidence interval is 1.000-1.000.

[16] Less than thirty band students were enrolled in French immersion schools, so results are not represented here.

[17] In preceding cohort years the pattern of lower success rates on the Numeracy Grade 4 FSA for non-Aboriginal students ever enrolled in independent schools compared to peers in public schools holds true. For non-band Aboriginal students success rates are slightly higher for students ever enrolled in independent schools in preceding cohort years.

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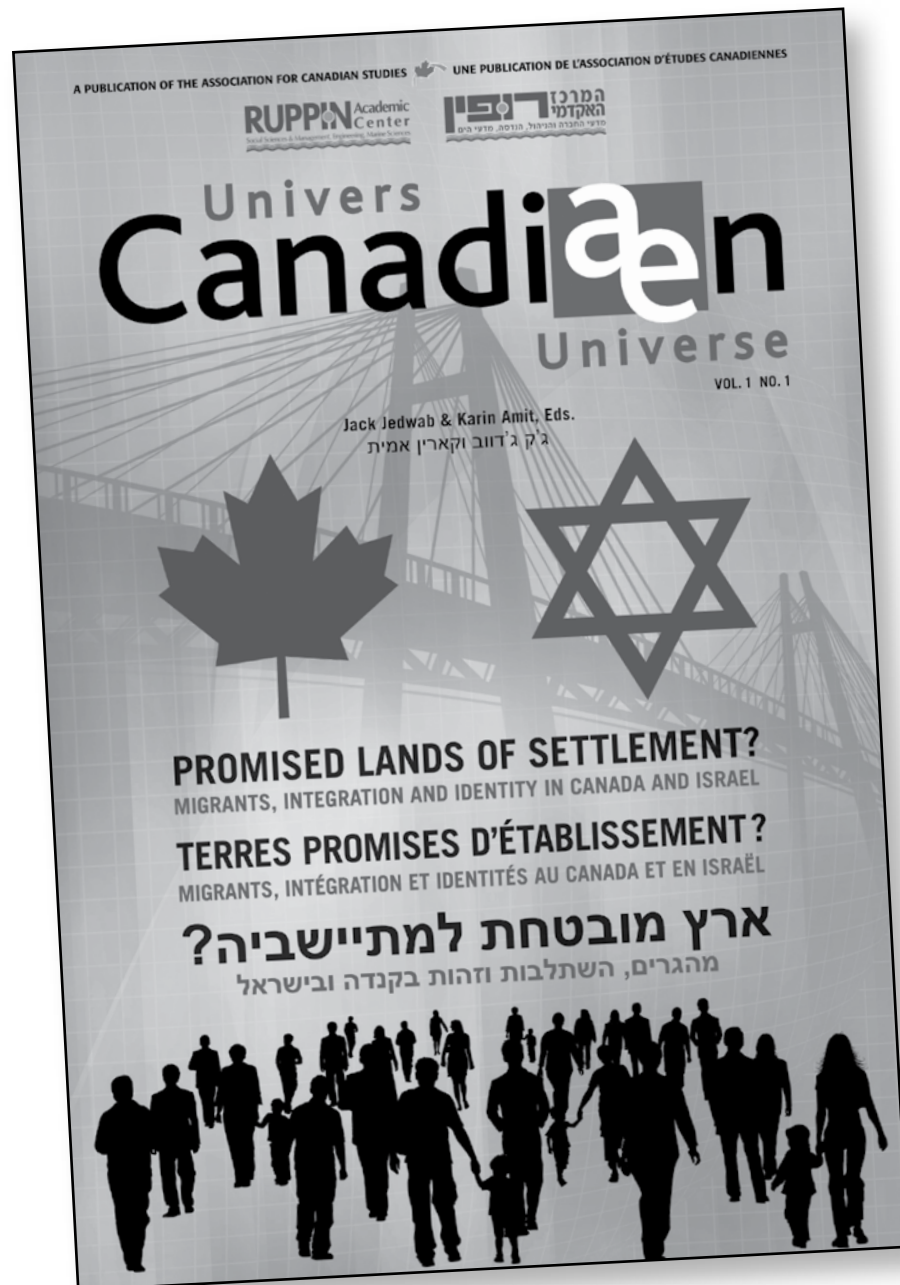
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TWO TIERED PROSTITUTION LAW: ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN THE SEX TRADE

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This article examines Canadian prostitution law and ancillary police approaches and how they might better protect the most vulnerable and overrepresented sex trade workers: Aboriginal women. The article canvasses the broader circumstances that make Aboriginal women particularly vulnerable in and to, the street sex trade. It considers possible legal reforms, including decriminalization and legalization of prostitution, with New Zealand and Sweden presented as case studies. It seeks to facilitate discussion on which approaches might begin to mitigate the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal women and girls and their exposure to sex trade related violence.

Cet article examine les dispositions législatives canadiennes sur la prostitution et les approches auxiliaires de la police dans le but de déterminer comment on pourrait mieux protéger les travailleurs du sexe les plus vulnérables et les plus surreprésentés : les femmes autochtones. Il traite les circonstances générales qui font que les femmes autochtones sont plus particulièrement susceptibles de se livrer à la prostitution de rue et qu'elles sont plus vulnérables dans ce milieu. Il examine les réformes juridiques possibles, notamment la décriminalisation et la légalisation de la prostitution, en s'appuyant sur des études de cas de la Nouvelle-Zélande et de la Suède. Il vise à faciliter la discussion pour trouver des pistes de solutions permettant d'atténuer l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes et des filles autochtones et leur exposition à la violence liée au commerce du sexe.

The legacy of missing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sex trade workers across Canada does not behoove our police agencies or our prostitution laws. The situation cries out for change, yet despite a recent three year parliamentary committee investigation into law reform (Canada 2006), Canada maintains the status quo. Perhaps most urgently, as this paper argues, reforms must address the situation of the most overrepresented and vulnerable sex trade workers: Aboriginal women.

OVERREPRESENTED AND MOST VULNERABLE

That the lives of Canadian sex trade workers are precarious is news to no one, particularly after the conviction of prostitute serial killer Robert Pickton in Vancouver, British Columbia. It is particularly risky for women who solicit on the streets. In a Vancouver study, one-third of the women reported having been attacked while working the street (Cler-Cunningham and Christensen 2001).

It shouldn't go unnoticed that Aboriginal women are disproportionately represented as street sex trade workers and as those murdered or disappeared. A 2001 study carried out in Vancouver found that of 183 women surveyed, 31.1% of street level sex trade workers were Aboriginal, although Aboriginal people then constituted only 1.7% of the greater Vancouver population (Cler-Cunningham and Christensen 2001). It is currently estimated that up to 40% of female and male sexually exploited youth and adults in Vancouver are Aboriginal (City of Vancouver 2007). Aboriginal women constitute at least a third of the more than seventy women who disappeared from Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (Amnesty International 2004). In Winnipeg the police service estimates that Aboriginal women make up 70% of street prostitutes (Canada 2006). In 2007, it was reported that Aboriginal women make up 60% of the long-term, unresolved cases of missing women in Saskatchewan (Amnesty International Canada 2008). In most large Canadian cities, a disproportionately high number of Aboriginal women are involved in street prostitution.

The increased risk of violence faced by women in the sex trade is often particularly acute for Aboriginal women, who are more likely to experience extreme poverty and engage in substance abuse. Amnesty International commented on the high numbers of Aboriginal women in the Canadian sex trade:

> The social and economic marginalisation of Indigenous women, along with a history of government policies that have torn apart Indigenous families and communities, have pushed a disproportionate number of Indigenous women into dangerous situations that include extreme poverty, homelessness and prostitution. (Amnesty International 2004)

Street sex workers are generally working for survival, and are often drug addicted and likely to be unwanted by indoor venues:

> Almost all of Victoria's outdoor sex workers are addicted, skinny and sick. More than half have mental-health diagnoses. Close to a third have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, the life-altering brain damage caused by a woman drinking alcohol during pregnancy. Formal education levels are low – Grade 8 and 9 in many cases. *Aboriginal rates are high: twenty per cent in a region where the rate is two per cent in the overall population.* Some have mental disabilities; many others have

chronic poor health from hepatitis-C, HIV and chronic staph infections. (Paterson 2006, 6)

In addition to poverty and substance abuse, Aboriginal women and girls are overrepresented in the visible sex trade as a consequence of colonization, the impacts of residential schools and general community breakdown (Sikka 2009). Aboriginal women's vulnerability to exploitation and violence is fuelled by social and economic marginalization and a history of colonialist government policies which have disrupted relations between Aboriginal men and women and eroded cultural identity (Mann 2005).

The overrepresentation of Aboriginal women as sex trade workers does not stand-alone; rather it is inextricably interconnected to and indivisible from the systemic and pervasive nature of Aboriginal women's inequality in Canadian society. Aboriginal women face race and gender discrimination, often further compounded by inequity due to poverty, ill-health, involvement in the sex trade, or other factors. Aboriginal women's unequal status in Canadian society results in their increased vulnerability to exploitation and violence.

CANADIAN LAW AND ENFORCEMENT

Prostitution is technically legal in Canada, however *Criminal Code* (1985) prohibitions on certain activities surrounding it create barriers. "Communicating" or negotiating services between sex worker and client is illegal (section 213) as is operating a "bawdy house" (section 210) and "procurement" (including human trafficking) and "living off the avails" of prostitution (section 212), better known as pimping. The result is that the sex trade worker, the pimp and the client are criminalized.

However, as noted in the 2006 federal government report of the Subcommittee on

Solicitation Laws, existing prostitution laws are unequally applied, enabling a:

> 'two tiered sex trade to emerge [where] more expensive licensed off-street prostitutes operate with virtual impunity,' while those already most vulnerable and marginalized — street-level prostitutes, particularly Aboriginal and transsexual/transgendered persons, as well as drug addicts — are routinely arrested. (Canada 2006, 86)

Street prostitution makes up only 5% to 20% of all sex trade related activities, yet has accounted for more than 90% of all prostitution-related incidents reported by

the police, indicating a clear bias in the application of laws (Canada 2006). And while broader socio-economic circumstances render Aboriginal women particularly vulnerable in and to, the sex trade, Canadian police have often failed to provide Aboriginal women with an adequate standard of protection, a situation often referred to as "over policed and under protected." Discrimination and Aboriginal women's inequality in society contribute to a perception that they are easy targets; discriminatory and sexist policing has all too often rendered this perception reality (Mann 2005). Police have been viewed as uncaring and inactive in the disappearances of both sex workers and Aboriginal women. As recently as November 2008, the United Nations called on the Canadian government to investigate why hundreds of deaths and

initiatives have emerged in light of increased awareness of the problem.[1] One significant barrier to improved police/sex trade worker relations is the ongoing criminalization of the prostitute, who may be unwilling to turn to police or social services when they are engaging in criminal activity. Accordingly, calls for prostitution law reform in Canada range from total legalization or decriminalization to decriminalization only of the sex trade worker.

PROSTITUTION LAW REFORM

Debate rages not only in Canada, but internationally about how to best tackle the adult sex trade. Should it be criminalized, decriminalized, legalized? Is it the world's oldest profession or the world's oldest oppression? Yet

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disappearances of Aboriginal women remain unsolved, including whether racism played a role in failures to fully investigate (United Nations 2008).

Nonetheless, there has been progress in policing. In 2006, a resolution passed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police acknowledged the high levels of violence experienced by Aboriginal women and called on all police services across Canada to adopt missing persons policies including specific measures to address the circumstances and needs of Aboriginal people (Amnesty International Canada 2008). Several innovative police/community

despite the gross over-representation of Aboriginal women as street level sex trade workers and among the murdered and disappeared, discussion of prostitution law reform rarely focuses on how to mitigate their sexual exploitation and exposure to related routine violence. Regardless of how one views prostitution – immoral, socially constructed choice or valid career option – the safety and health of sex workers is worthy of protection.

Decriminalization and legalization are generally touted as a route to greater safety for the sex worker. Decriminalization refers to the repeal of adult prostitution-

TABLE 1: Personal Characteristics of Survey Participants by Sector

ETHNICITY	TOTAL % (S.E.)	STREET WORKERS % (S.E.)	MANAGED INDOOR % (S.E.)	PRIVATE INDOOR % (S.E.)
Maori	31.7 (1.9)	63.9 (3.8)	27.9 (2.5)	23.8 (3.7)
NZ European	50.7 (2.1)	21.5 (3.2)	54.5 (2.7)	57.5 (4.4)
Pacific Island	5.1 (0.9)	9.4 (2.2)	5.1 (1.2)	3.0 (1.4)
Other	12.5 (1.5)	5.2 (1.8)	12.5 (1.9)	15.7 (3.4)

Source: Data from Abel, Fitzgerald, and Brunton 2007.

related provisions from criminal law, leaving other laws to apply as they would in any other context, while legalization refers to not only repeal of criminal laws, but also accompanying specific regulation of the sex trade. Allowing prostitutes to work indoors, off the streets, either alone or in group protected environments would render them less vulnerable to predators. Legalization and decriminalization would ostensibly also increase the sex trade worker's access to police, health and social services.

However, countries that have decriminalized and legalized prostitution (New Zealand, Australia, Germany and the Netherlands) have seen an increase in human trafficking, resulting from increased demand (Canada 2006). While both the *Criminal Code* (1985) and the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* (2001) contain provisions dealing with trafficking in persons, domestic trafficking in Aboriginal women and girls is a problem barely on the radar in Canada, interconnected with the drug trade and growth of Aboriginal gangs fed by high Aboriginal incarceration rates. Regardless of legalization/decriminalization, some sex workers will continue to be street-based, particularly those that are the most disadvantaged and/or considered less marketable. In that regard, both New Zealand and Sweden are noteworthy not only for their opposing approaches to prostitution law reform, but also for the impacts of these approaches on the most disadvantaged (streetworkers).

NEW ZEALAND

That Indigenous women are most disadvantaged has been borne out in New Zealand, where adult prostitution was decriminalized in 2003 (Prostitution Reform Act 2003). Impoverished New Zealand Aboriginals make up a disproportionate number of prostitutes working the streets, with the Prostitution Law Review Committee (PLRC)[2], concluding in 2007 that street-based workers were significantly more likely than managed or private workers to report some Maori ethnicity, identify as

transgender, have started working in the sex industry before the age of 18 years and to have lower levels of education. They were also more likely than participants in other sectors to have worked in the industry for more than 10 years. Street-based workers were more likely than managed or private sex workers to report having been physically assaulted by a client, having been threatened by a client with physical violence, having been held against their will and having been raped in the last 12 months. Finally, few participants reported adverse incidents that had happened in the last twelve months to the police (Abel, Fitzgerald, and Brunton 2007).

One-tenth of all sex workers worked the street, with their numbers comparable to on-the-street estimates prior to decriminalization. Overall, half the sample population was New Zealand European, with a further third reporting Maori ethnicity.

While the 2007 government funded evaluation of the impacts of New Zealand's legislation notes the predominance of Maori ethnicity among street workers as indicated in the chart above (63.9%, while 31.7% of the total trade), their ongoing exposure to violence and their trepidation in going to police, little critique emerges pertaining to just who the legislation has benefited. It appears to have been beneficial for those workers who are managed indoor (i.e. a brothel) or private indoor, and those predominantly of New Zealand European descent.

These New Zealand results are an important consideration for Canadian prostitution law reform. Not all women will be "marketable" for indoor venues; even under legalization or decriminalization there will be street workers. Given current statistics we have every reason to believe Aboriginal women will be as vastly overrepresented in this group as are the Maori. Those committed to racial and gender equality might question the probity of a law that may benefit only the more advantaged in a class.

SWEDEN

In contrast, Sweden has taken a different approach to criminalization, being the first country to criminalize only the pimps and buyers of sex rather than sex workers in 1999. Purchasing sex is subject to penalties of a fine and up to six months in prison. Prostitution is officially seen as sexual abuse and an act of violence against women. Proponents of the Swedish legal system hope that by targeting the demand side of the sex industry, they may reduce or eliminate it altogether.

While some prostitution continues underground, advocates say prostitution and human trafficking have been drastically reduced in Sweden. It is estimated that before the law there were 2,500 to 3,000 individuals selling sexual services in Sweden with 650 on the streets.

Today there are approximately 1,500 persons selling sexual services with no more than 350 to 400 involved in street prostitution (in a total population of nine million) (Canada 2006). Due to enforcement, the number of clients has also dropped drastically: 914 males were reported under the law between January 1999 and March 2005, and 234 males were convicted of purchasing sexual services in the first five years of the law's application (Canada 2006).

Decriminalizing the prostitute facilitates the goal of making it more feasible for women to report bad dates and attacks to police, assuming police act and better police/ sex worker relationships are forged. In Sweden, some individuals still selling sexual services indicated that they now feel more comfortable reporting crimes to the police (Canada 2006).

Clearly, at least some sex trade workers are victims; their criminalization only plays into the hands of those who seek to exploit them, while further jeopardizing their health and safety. Given Canadian statistics pertaining to the high and disproportionate percentage of street sex trade workers that are Aboriginal and the two tier enforcement of prostitution laws, it could almost be said that a subclass of criminalized Aboriginal women emerges via current prostitution laws.

In Canada, where both the prostitute and the client are criminalized, justice emerges once again as two tiered with the street worker on the bottom. Statistics on the use of section 213 (communicating) indicate a gender and role (client versus prostitute) imbalance, with respect to both findings of guilt and sentencing. While relatively equal numbers of men (generally clients) and women are charged with section 213 offences, prostitutes ultimately have higher conviction rates and face harsher sentences. In 2003-2004, 68% of women charged were found guilty under section 213, while 70% of charges were stayed or withdrawn for men charged under the same provision (Canada 2006). Further, as noted by the Subcommittee, in 2003-2004, upon conviction just under 40% of women were given prison sentences; whereas, while the prison sentence rate for men was just over 5%. Just under 40% of men convicted were fined; whereas 92% of those sentenced to prison for communicating offences in 2003-2004 were female (Canada 2006).

Resulting from their marginalization, prostitutes often face criminal records and harsher penalties than their clients; they may fail to appear in court, leading to more serious charges. What is not indicated by these statistics is the race or Aboriginality of many of these women.

MOVING FORWARD

The precariousness of sex trade workers' lives and the evident hypocrisy in the enforcement of prostitution laws all point to a society in which some women are deemed less worthy. Systemic racism, historical oppression and inequality have resulted in Aboriginal women sex trade workers being vastly overrepresented on the streets and among the murdered and disappeared. Social and economic marginalization combined with addictions and other factors, has fuelled Aboriginal women's overrepresentation as sex trade workers; racism compounds the threat to safety and security faced by all such workers (Mann 2005).

Statistics indicate that Canada's prostitution laws and their enforcement may be fostering a subclass of endangered and criminalized street sex trade workers; their face is often Aboriginal. Equally, the face of the street sex trade worker in New Zealand remains largely Maori, despite decriminalization. While it is clear that the law alone cannot provide the answer for those who are exploited in the sex trade and that programming expansion and policing reforms are necessary, prostitution law reform discourse in Canada has too often been carried out willfully blind to just who the decriminalization of the trade might benefit.

Decriminalization of the prostitute (as in Sweden) would ostensibly benefit all sex trade workers, and in fact be of greatest assistance to the most vulnerable – those working the streets, most in need of police services and most often convicted. However, decriminalization or legalization of the trade may only serve to benefit the more advantaged in the class of sex trade workers. Indeed, given the likelihood of a spike in demand, decriminalization could serve to fuel the domestic trade in marginalized Aboriginal women. Prostitution law reform is a complicated issue with convincing arguments for differing approaches. However, we must stop to question whether proposed legal reforms will serve and protect the most disadvantaged in an already marginalized class.

NOTES

[1] For example, the Joint Missing Women Task Force in British Columbia, and Project KARE in Edmonton, Alberta.

[2] Set up to evaluate the *Prostitution Reform Act 2003*.

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COMING FULL CIRCLE? RECONCILING ABORIGINAL DIVERSITY AND CANADA'S MULTICULTURAL NARRATIVE

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

The author explores recent efforts to construct an inclusive Canadian historic narrative that makes a link between the contemporary diversity of the country to its Aboriginal origins. It looks at Canadian public opinion on such elements of the narrative as the presence of founding groups and of multiple nations within Canada. It also examines how those more favourable to Aboriginal cultural retention feel about such issues as official languages and multiculturalism. The author maintains that the Canadian narrative has been characterized by ongoing debate between advocates of assimilation of cultural difference and those more favourable to its accommodation. An ongoing challenge for Canadian policy-makers and educators is to relate the multiple stories that reflect Canada's reality and identify the links between them.

L'auteur examine les efforts faits récemment afin de rédiger la trame narrative historique générale établissant le lien entre la diversité contemporaine du Canada et ses origines autochtones. Il étudie l'opinion publique canadienne sur des éléments du récit comme la présence de groupes fondateurs et de nombreuses nations au sein du Canada. Il se penche également sur l'opinion de ceux qui sont les plus favorables à la préservation de la culture autochtone sur des questions telles que les langues officielles et le multiculturalisme. L'auteur soutient que le récit canadien se caractérise par un débat continuel entre les partisans de l'assimilation des différences culturelles et ceux qui privilégient les accommodements. Les responsables des politiques et les éducateurs canadiens doivent relever le défi permanent d'aborder les multiples récits qui reflètent la réalité canadienne et de reconnaître les liens qui les unissent.

INTRODUCTION

The desire to establish some dominant or shared narrative for Canada is deemed to be essential by some observers in defining who we are as a people. The failure to establish a common national story risks leaving the country undefined. Very often advocates of national narratives or official histories seek continuity with the past and thus look for themes that cut across time. A wholesale break with the past does not always fit easily into narratives that seek to create a strong link between

past and present. When it comes to Canada's attitude and approach towards Aboriginal peoples, minority language francophones and ethnic and racial communities, there has been much evolution over time. That which follows contends that Canada's historic narrative has been characterized by ongoing debate between those advocating some form of assimilation of minority cultures and those supporting varying degrees of accommodation of cultural differences. This is reflected by the fact that most of the same people that support the preservation and enhancement of Aboriginal cultures are likely to support

multiculturalism and the vitality of official language minority communities. To support this contention, public opinion surveys will be presented that show how a significant segment of the public makes connections between various issues that might comprise a Canadian narrative. In examining the place of Aboriginals within that narrative, we will briefly consider the following points: (1) public opinion over the meaning of nation; (2) how Canadians react to the idea of "founders" and; (3) how Canadians envision the relationship between Aboriginality and the diversity of the Canadian population. Before proceeding, we will explore how Canadian policymakers have attempted to construct some narrative.

AN OFFICIAL NARRATIVE?

Considerable historic evidence can be offered to support the idea that assimilation of cultural minorities was a tenet of the nation-building process until the end of the second World War. Linked to this has been a failure on the part of the political leadership to extend rights to founding groups (francophones outside of Québec and Aboriginal peoples) to help preserve their languages and cultures. Hence there have been legislative measures introduced in the latter part of the twentieth century aimed at correcting what are widely seen as historic injustices (Taylor 1993). Many contemporary narratives recognize the mistakes of the past and in some instances national apologies have been offered.

In the early 1960s, the establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (RCBB) was appointed to "inquire into and report upon the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada, and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races [later changed to "peoples"]." The RCBB added as part of its mandate the need to take into account the cultural contribution of other ethnic groups and the means of preserving their contribution. The Commission was virtually silent on the place of Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Given the emphasis on an equal partnership for two founding peoples, it is perhaps not surprising that in the 1970s, the country's Aboriginal leadership introduced the term "First Nations." More recent efforts to establish a Canadian identity narrative have aimed for greater inclusion as reflected in the tendency to make newer Canadians aware of the nation-building role of Canada's founding communities.

Such thinking is reflected in a guide prepared by the Government of Canada for new Canadians entitled, "A Look at Canada." It points out that the only people originally from Canada are the Aboriginal peoples. It adds that "…they lived in Canada for thousands of years before the first immigrants came here." The document notes that: "English- and French-speaking people have lived together in Canada for more than 300 years" and stresses that this is an important part of our Canadian identity. As to immigrants, it points out that: "…throughout Canada's history, millions… have helped 'build' our country." "As Canadians," the Guide concludes, "…we are proud that many different cultural and ethnic groups live and work here in harmony" (Canada 2007).

The main elements emerging in the Canadian identity narrative described above are as follows: the Aboriginal peoples as Canada's original settlers, the historic coexistence of English and French (and the importance of the two languages), immigrants contributing to nation-building and pride in the country's intercultural harmony. In short there is something for nearly everyone.

Of course many will point out that this narrative is overly simplistic and fails to document the struggle and challenge communities faced in preserving their identities. Indeed some will undoubtedly maintain that the Canadian story is really about multiple narratives with little connecting them. Some will describe the narratives as competing national stories reflected by intergroup conflict where minority nations describe "cultural survival" as the central theme in their narrative. Others will likely counter that the historic narrative is better defined by a long-term process of reconciliation between peoples and the acknowledgement of mistakes along the way.

CANADA: AN ABORIGINAL NATION?

Alternate narratives have emerged that might be described as working backwards and tracing the origins of what is regarded as the contemporary Canadian accommodation of diversity. Accommodation emerges as a key nation-building theme that reconciles multiple narratives in order to generate a story with which many can presumably identify. In his book, *A fair country: Telling truths about Canada,* John Ralston Saul (2008) proposes just such a vision. He contends that Canada is an Aboriginal nation, and that an unconscious current of Aboriginal ideas of diversity strongly influence the contemporary elements of Canadian identity.

Saul contends that culture and identity in Canada are marked by three pillars, the British, French and Aboriginal cultures, and denying the latter is to deny the very source of the country's national identity. He suggests that the tradition of Aboriginal diversity (the expanded circle) has inspired the accommodation and respect for diversity which traditionally pervades Canadian society. He further contends that métissage – the mix of

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal identities – is quintessentially Canadian and distinguishes us from Americans and Europeans. We are a Métis nation, Saul concludes. Contrary to the idea that our linguistic English-French duality is the precursor to our accommodating diversity, Saul believes that our multicultural empathy comes from our contact with Aboriginals peoples.

Saul is right to remind us of the importance of not neglecting the country's Aboriginal heritage. Yet as Hayday (2009) argues, there is a giant helping of anachronism in how Saul argues the long-term continuities of his thesis. Part of the colonial period of New France did see the intermingling of European settlers and the Aboriginal peoples who taught the former how to survive in Canada. However, as Hayday rightly observes, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have not been a period marked by Euro-Canadians learning from Aboriginal groups and trying to live alongside them, but rather of deliberately isolating First Nations communities and attempting to force them to assimilate into Western models of living. Hayday argues that: "Canada does need to come to terms with its Aboriginal peoples and colonial past, but pretending that Aboriginal ways were always part and parcel of how our government and cultural elites have thought about and organized the country does not square with the historical record."

THE NATION AND ITS FOUNDERS

Canada has invariably described itself as a nation of two founding peoples, a nation of immigrants, a nation of minorities, a bilingual and bicultural society, a multicultural society within a bilingual framework, a federation of many nations and/or a multi-national federation with Aboriginal, Québec and English Canadian nations. The country struggles with articulating collective self-definition and often simply allows people to define the country in the manner they see fit.

One of central elements in the construction of an official or national narrative involves determining who are the "founders" of the nation. Presumably making this determination provides a good "starting point" for the construction of the narrative. During the 2008 commemorations, marking the 400th anniversary of the founding of Québec City, Québec Premier Jean Charest proudly declared that "Québec founded Canada," the leader of the Parti Québecois claimed that rather than marking the founding of Canada, the anniversary was aimed at commemorating the "... founding of the first French settlement in North America." Prime Minister Stephen Harper said "The founding of Québec City is also the founding of the Canadian state." For his part, the leader of the Bloc Québecois proclaimed that "...the

400th anniversary of Québec City is the celebration of the founding of the Québec nation and not of the Canadian nation." (Jedwab 2008). Underlying such observations is a debate about what "founding" a nation entails. Is "founding" a nation an event or a process? Does it incorporate both first settling a nation and participating in its political conception and construction? Being seen as nation founders is not always associated with being seen as a nation builder. Debates about "founding peoples" or founding events are difficult to separate from the potential political ramifications for contemporary political narratives.

The results of a May 2008 survey of 1,500 Canadians commissioned by the Association for Canadian Studies, conducted by Léger Marketing reveal that answers to the question of who founded Canada often diverge on the basis of the language background of the respondent and in particular if they are French or English. It is worth noting that the survey required that one comment separately on the degree to which British, French and Aboriginal peoples founded Canada as opposed to offering the option to say all three groups founded Canada. Correlations of the data are provided to look at the degree to which people said all three did so. As observed in the table below, on the basis of language background, anglophones and allophones were more likely to agree that Aboriginal peoples were founders. Two-thirds of francophones surveyed agree that the French founded Canada in contrast to just over one-third of anglophones and one-half of the allophone population. Anglophones attribute equal weight to the British and Aboriginal peoples in responding to the question on the founding of Canada, while allophones give Aboriginal peoples the highest score. Atlantic Canadians and Albertans score the French lowest in terms of the country's founding. Prairie and Québec residents score Aboriginal peoples lowest. Québecers and Maritimers score the British lowest. Albertans and Maritimers score Aboriginal peoples well above the other groups. On the basis of age, younger Canadians score the British and the French highest when asked about the country's founders.

TABLE 1: Responses to Question on "Who Founded Canada" Amongst Canadians by Language Spoken at Home, 2008

LANG USED AT HOME-2008	TOTAL	FRENCH	ENGLISH	OTHER LANGUAGE
The French founded Canada	45%	67%	36%	50%
Aboriginal peoples	54%	39%	57%	61%
The British	52%	34%	57%	58%

Source: Léger Marketing 2008a

FOUNDERS AND THEIR NATIONS

Being viewed as a founder community is not immediately equated by Canadians with being a nation. While francophones are less inclined to describe Aboriginal peoples as founders of Canada, they are more likely to agree that Aboriginal peoples are nations. In part this is attributable to Francophones viewing groups with deep roots in Canada as nations. To a lesser degree, majorities of both anglophones and allophones also regard Aboriginal peoples as nations. Some eight in ten francophone respondents agree with the statement that Aboriginal peoples are nations (48% strongly agree and 32% somewhat agree), compared to 61% of non-francophones. It is worth noting that the allophones (39%) are somewhat more inclined to "strongly agree" than anglophones (32%) that Aboriginal peoples are nations.

TABLE 2: Level of Agreement that Various Groups Within Canada Constitute Nations, 2008

STRONGLY AND SOMEWHAT AGREE COMBINED THAT THE FOLLOWING ARE NATIONS	FRENCH	ENGLISH	OTHER
Aboriginal peoples	79	61	61
Canadians	91	93	94
Québecers	78	38	43
Acadians	74	37	34
Métis	59	46	44
Francophones within Canada	68	37	42

Source: Léger Marketing 2008a

ABORIGINALITY AND INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Another 2008 Leger Marketing survey of 1,500 Canadians for the Association for Canadian Studies examined the degree of contact that non-Aboriginals have with Aboriginal peoples, the extent to which they hold favourable opinions, the extent to which discrimination is perceived to be a problem and the degree of support for concerns raised by Aboriginal peoples. What is less known are the sources of information that contribute to the formation of opinion on the part of non-Aboriginals, for example, does contact with Aboriginal peoples lead to better understanding?

It is widely assumed that one of the best ways to learn about members of different communities is to be in contact with them. While contact is believed to lead to better understanding, this is not always the case. As to interaction with Aboriginal peoples, it is in the provinces of Saskatchewan (which also has the highest

TABLE 3: Degree of Contact with Aboriginals for Canada and Provinces, 2008

2008 % OF CONTACT WITH ABORIGINALS	...OFTEN	...OCCA-SIONALLY	...RARELY	...OR NEVER
Saskatchewan	46.0%	28.6%	12.7%	12.7%
British Columbia	41.3%	32.7%	12.7%	12.0%
Manitoba	37.1%	46.8%	11.3%	3.2%
Nova Scotia	30.2%	32.6%	16.3%	20.9%
Alberta	26.4%	39.2%	20.8%	13.6%
New Brunswick	25.7%	34.3%	20.0%	20.0%
Newfoundland	21.1%	21.1%	21.1%	36.8%
Canada	19.3%	29.9%	21.9%	28.3%
Ontario	14.0%	32.5%	25.7%	27.2%
Québec	8.0%	19.5%	23.5%	48.5%

Source: Léger Marketing 2008b

percentage of Aboriginal peoples in it) and British Columbia where that the highest rates of contact are reported, with Québecers reporting the lowest.

It is in the Atlantic provinces where one finds the highest percentage of persons reporting that they have a favourable attitude towards Aboriginal peoples. Québecers have the lowest percentage holding a very favourable opinion of Aboriginal peoples, with Alberta and Ontario respectively holding the next lowest.

As observed in Table 5, there is a clear correlation between those reporting that they most often have contact with Aboriginal peoples and those possessing a very favourable view.

Survey results were correlated around the degree to which people holding favourable opinions of Aboriginal peoples held favourable views of other groups, notably Jews and Muslims. The survey reveals that some 76% of those possessing a very favourable opinion of Aboriginals also hold a favourable opinion of Muslims (44% very favourable and 32% somewhat favourable). Conversely, of those holding "very unfavourable" opinions of Aboriginal peoples some 70% hold unfavourable views of Muslims. Of those holding very favourable views of Aboriginals, some 90% hold favourable opinions of Jews (66% very favourable and 24% somewhat favourable). Conversely, of those holding "very unfavourable" opinions of Aboriginal peoples, some 57% hold unfavourable opinions of Jews.

PERCEPTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND VULNERABILITY

Although a majority of Canadians hold a favourable view of Aboriginal peoples, there are strong concerns around the degree to which Aboriginal peoples are the

TABLE 4: Opinion of Aboriginal Peoples for Canada and Provinces, 2008

OPINION OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES	VERY FAVOURABLE	SOMEWHAT FAVOURABLE	SOMEWHAT UNFAVOURABLE	VERY UNFAVOURABLE	DNK/REFUSAL
Canada	26.9%	50.1%	10.9%	3.6%	8.5%
New Brunswick	40.0%	48.6%	2.9%	2.9%	5.7%
Nova Scotia	37.2%	53.5%	2.3%	–	7.0%
Newfoundland	36.8%	47.4%	5.3%	–	10.5%
Manitoba	32.3%	48.4%	6.5%	6.5%	6.5%
British Columbia	32.0%	47.3%	8.7%	2.0%	10.0%
Saskatchewan	31.7%	47.6%	12.7%	4.8%	3.2%
Ontario	29.2%	47.5%	9.0%	2.8%	11.5%
Alberta	27.2%	53.6%	11.2%	1.6%	6.4%
Québec	17.0%	54.2%	17.0%	6.0%	5.8%

Source: Léger Marketing 2008b

TABLE 5: Degree of Contact and Opinion of Aboriginal Peoples Amongst Canadian Population, 2008

OPINION OF... ABORIGINAL PEOPLES	...OFTEN	...OCCASIONALLY	...RARELY	...OR NEVER	TOTAL
Very Favourable	48.1%	28.5%	23.2%	13.9%	26.9%
Somewhat Favourable	40.5%	56.8%	54.9%	46.6%	50.1%
Somewhat Unfavourable	5.5%	8.2%	13.1%	15.8%	10.9%
Very Unfavourable	–	2.0%	1.2%	9.6%	3.6%
DNK/Refusal	5.9%	4.5%	7.6%	14.1%	8.5%

Source: Léger Marketing 2008b

subject of discrimination. These are part of the findings of a survey of some 2,000 Canadians conducted by the firm Environics in the year 2006. When Canadians are asked which groups are either often or occasionally the subject of discrimination, Muslims (44% often and 32% occasionally) and Aboriginals (42% often and 32% occasionally) ranked first and second amongst a list of ten groups. As

TABLE 6: Degree of Contact with Aboriginal Peoples and Degree to Which Aboriginals are Seen by Canadians as the Subject of Discrimination

ARE ABORIGINAL PEOPLES SUBJECT OF DISCRIMINATION	DEGREE OF CONTACT WITH ABORIGINAL PEOPLES			
	...OFTEN	...OCCASIONALLY	...RARELY	...OR NEVER
...Often	57	41	36	28
...Occasionally	25	37	35	31
...Rarely	10	12	17	18
...or Never	7	8	8	17
Don't Know	1	2	3	5

Source: Environics Research 2006

observed below those Canadians reporting more frequent contact with Aboriginal peoples believe that Aboriginal peoples are more often the subject of discrimination than those stating they either rarely or never have such contact.

It is not surprising that those Canadians who believe that Aboriginal peoples are never the subject of discrimination think that other groups are also not subject to discrimination. Most respondents that believe that Aboriginal peoples are never the subject of discrimination also feel that Blacks, Muslims and Jews do not encounter discrimination.

A significant percentage of Canadians also regard the rights of Aboriginal peoples in Canada as vulnerable. Some four in ten Canadians feel that the rights of Aboriginals are either somewhat (25%) or very vulnerable (14%). This contrasts with 32% that feel that the rights of visible minorities are vulnerable, 30% that feel that the rights of official language minorities are vulnerable, and 26% that feel that the rights of religious groups are vulnerable. It is worth noting that some two-thirds of respondents that feel that the rights of Aboriginals are very vulnerable also believe that the rights of visible minorities are vulnerable.

RELATIONS BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND NON-ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Favorability of views and perception of discrimination are undoubtedly contributing factors in the way Canadians assess the relationship between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginal groups. But this assessment is equally, if not more influenced by the visibility of political disputes that are prominently featured in the media. Hence the time at which the survey is conducted can have a profound influence on the way in which people evaluate the relationship. Tracking surveys of 1,500 Canadians conducted by the firm Environics reveals much fluctuation between 2002 and 2007 in perception around the state of the relationship.

As observed below, between 2005 and 2007 there was an important decrease in the extent to which Canadians felt the relationship was improving. It was in the province of Saskatchewan (33%) that respondents were most likely to think that the relationship improved over that period. They were least likely to think it had improved in the provinces of Québec and Ontario. It would be helpful to know why Canadians feel the relationship has not improved.

TABLE 7: The State of the Relationship Between Aboriginal Peoples and Other Canadians, 2007
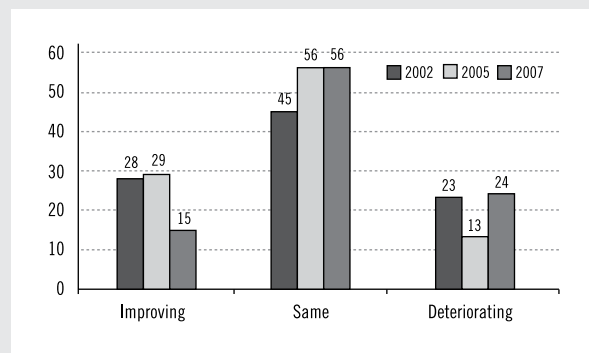
Source: Environics Research 2007

To put the relationship between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in a broader context of inter-group relations in Canada, a 2007 Association for Canadian Studies-Léger Marketing survey of some 1,500 Canadians asked whether Canadians were optimistic or pessimistic about their state looking ahead to 2017. As revealed below, Canadians were somewhat more pessimistic about Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relationships than they were around most other forms of group interaction. Again, it would be useful to know to what such pessimism is attributable.

TABLE 8: Degree of Optimism or Pessimism Around the State of the Relationship Between Selected Groups as Seen by Canadians, 2007

	TOTAL OPTIMIST	TOTAL PESSIMIST
White and Visible Minority Canadians	79%	16%
Christians and Jews	77%	14%
English and French	75%	19%
Immigrant and non-Immigrant	73%	22%
Religious and Secular Canadians	69%	23%
Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians	65%	29%
Christians and Muslims	58%	34%

Source: Léger Marketing 2007

FROM ABORIGINALITY TO CANADIAN DIVERSITY

While there appears to be growing interest in learning more about the history and sociology of Aboriginal peoples, little attention is devoted to what Canadians actually know about Canada's First Nations. Forming opinions about Aboriginal peoples, based on what one learns is rarely done in a vacuum. Youth in particular will often interpret the knowledge they acquire about Aboriginal peoples in conjunction with what is learned about other peoples and communities through either history or social studies courses. Hence more thought needs to be directed at the connections that students make in their broader learning process. Also it is valuable to know what such knowledge acquisition implies for what they learn about identities in general and how it helps shape their own identities. When seen from this perspective, insight might be offered into the challenge confronted by educators in conveying multiple narratives about Canadian identity to youth as well as to help them make sense out of what it is a complex story.

How does knowledge about First Nations histories and about the contemporary condition of the communities affect broader debates about Canadian diversity? To what extent does fostering more openness towards Aboriginal peoples transfer onto other groups and have a positive effect on broader public opinion when it comes to societal diversity? To explore this relationship we correlated data on the degree of contact with Aboriginal peoples and reaction to certain common questions that arise in debates within Canada around identity and diversity. The specific focus below is on the issue of assimilation with a view to determining how those more likely to favour Aboriginal peoples giving up customs and traditions feel about multiculturalism, official languages and the Charter of Rights.

TABLE 9: Agree with View that Aboriginal Peoples Should Maintain their Culture and Way of Life Correlated with Degree of Pride in Multiculturalism, Official Languages and Charter of Rights, 2003

	% AGREE THAT ABORIGINAL PEOPLES SHOULD MAINTAIN THEIR CULTURE AND WAY OF LIFE		
PROUD OF….	MULTICULTURALISM	HAVING TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	CHARTER OF RIGHTS
Not proud at all	32.5%	43.3%	44.4%
2	50.0%	51.3%	57.9%
3	44.7%	38.7%	53.6%
4	50.0%	64.7%	36.2%
Neither	42.2%	54.2%	53.6%
6	51.8%	68.5%	58.6%
7	62.5%	66.9%	59.2%
8	67.1%	69.6%	60.1%
9	74.2%	72.5%	70.0%
Very proud	72.8%	74.9%	70.6%

Source: Ipsos-Reid 2003

TABLE 10: Degree to Which Canadians Think that Aboriginal Peoples Have Been the Subject of Discrimination Correlated with Views on Whether There are Too Many Immigrants in the Country not Adopting Canadian Values, 2006

	DO YOU THINK THAT ABORIGINAL PEOPLES HAVE OFTEN, SOMETIMES, OCCASIONALLY, RARELY OR NEVER BEEN THE SUBJECT OF DISCRIMINATION			
THERE ARE TOO MANY IMMIGRANTS COMING INTO THE COUNTRY THAT ARE NOT ADOPTING CANADIAN VALUES	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Strongly agree	33.2%	40.1%	54.9%	52.7%
Somewhat agree	26.9%	29.0%	24.3%	23.4%
Somewhat disagree	17.4%	16.4%	9.5%	10.9%
Strongly disagree	18.4%	10.6%	9.2%	8.5%
Neither agree/disagree	2.0%	2.0%	0.4%	2.0%
DK/NA	2.0%	2.0%	1.8%	2.5%

Source: Environics Research 2006

A 2003 survey conducted by Ipsos amongst 2,000 Canadians for the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC), reveals that some 62% of Canadians think that Aboriginal peoples should try to maintain their culture and way of life. Some two in three Ontarians, Atlantic Canadians, British Columbians and Prairie residents endorse this view. Québecers (56.4%) and Albertans (53.2%) were somewhat less likely to support this.

Those who are proud of Canada's policies in the area of diversity are more supportive of the preservation of Aboriginal cultures. As seen below, those less proud of multiculturalism are less likely to agree that Aboriginal peoples should maintain their culture and way of life. Whereas amongst those who are proud of having two official languages and the Charter of Rights are more likely to agree that Aboriginal peoples should maintain their culture and way of life.

Some 73% of those saying they are very comfortable hearing languages other than English or French being spoken on the streets in Canada, agree that Aboriginal peoples should try to maintain their culture and way of life compared to 45% amongst those who are uncomfortable hearing languages other than English and French on the streets. Nearly 70% of those who agree that societies with a variety of ethnic and cultural groups are more able to tackle new problems also agree that Aboriginal peoples should try to maintain their culture and way of life. In contrast, of those who disagree that diverse societies are better able to tackle new problems, some 45% agree that Aboriginal peoples should try to maintain their culture. Although paradoxical, some might find it paradoxical some 45% of those who believe mixed race marriages are a bad idea, agree that Canada's Aboriginal peoples should try to maintain their culture and way of life. Compared some 68% that think endogamy is fine. As observed

below, those most likely to think Aboriginal peoples are the subject of discrimination are less likely to agree that there are too many immigrants coming into the country that are not adopting Canadian values; whereas, to the group that never thinks Aboriginal peoples are subject to discrimination are far more likely to agree that many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values.

CONCLUSION: ADVOCATES OF ASSIMILATION VERSUS ADVOCATES OF ACCOMMODATION

We have attempted to demonstrate that the idea that the Canadian narrative offers some continuity between the vision of the country's architects and the contemporary outlook, but Canada's approach to population diversity of its population is flawed. Paradoxically it may be argued that it is the presence of historic debate about the place of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the acceptance of diversity that offers some degree of continuity. There consistently appear to have been persons advocating assimilation and those favoring recognition of differences. However it is essential to point out that the concepts of assimilation and accommodation have evolved over time and public debate around the issues of population diversity is more civil that it was historically.

As noted above, today most Canadians hold favourable views of Aboriginal peoples and they express relatively significant concern about the level of discrimination encountered by them. Ideally it would be useful for policy-makers to know more about the causes behind the negative sentiment towards Aboriginal peoples on the part of the minority of Canadians. This requires a broader examination of what Canadians know about the histories and the contemporary condition of Canada's First Nations. It also entails knowing more about from where people secure information about Canada's First Nations. In this regard, a November 2008 survey of some 1,500 Canadians conducted by the firm Léger Marketing reveals that some 80% of Canadians agree that: "teaching about the treatment of Aboriginals in our history should be more of a priority" (Léger Marketing 2008c). Policy-makers need to explore ways of helping the public better understand the history of Canada's Aboriginal peoples.

It has been established above that there are important connections between those who support the promotion of Aboriginal cultures, endorse the principle of multiculturalism, and value the presence of official languages. However, an important segment of Canadians reject this vision of the country. Policy-makers need to explore how these pillars of Canadian identity are interrelated and provide resources to educators tasked with helping the population to properly explain our diverse reality.

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