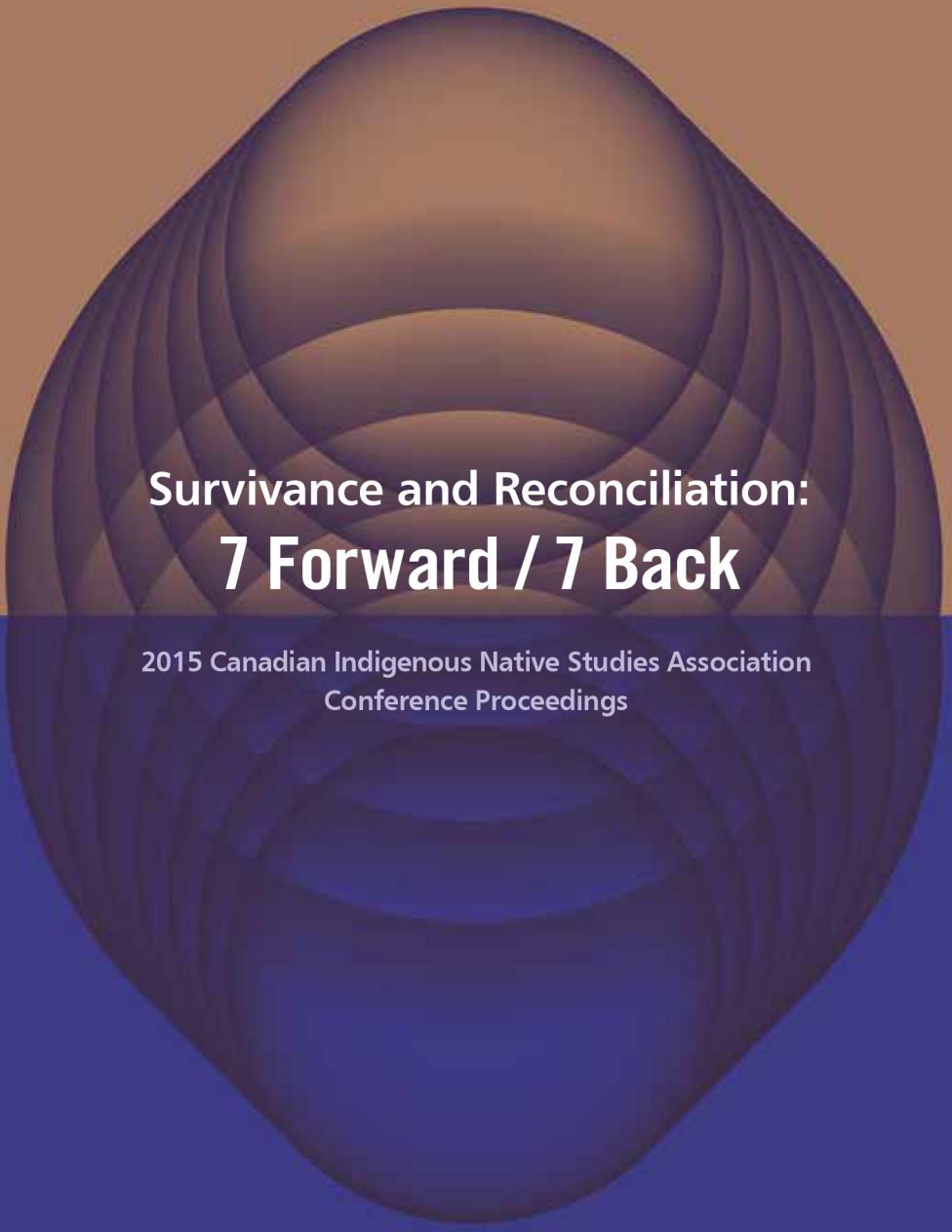

Survivance and Reconciliation:
7 Forward / 7 Back

2015 Canadian Indigenous Native Studies Association
Conference Proceedings

Edited by Karl S. Hele

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This volume is dedicated to CINSA, Indigenous Scholars, and all non-Indigenous scholars working with Indigenous communities.

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Preface

In 2015 the First Peoples Studies Program at Concordia University relaunched the annual Conference of the Canadian Indigenous Native Studies Association (CINSA). Participants were asked to focus their presentations around the theme of Survivance & Reconciliation: 7 Forward / 7 Back in terms of Indigenous knowledges, their survival, and the potential of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and Settlers. By utilizing the Anishinaabeg idea of looking seven generations forward and seven generations back when discussing the contemporary, organizers asked participants to situate themselves in the past, present, and future by having them consider how actions today will affect future generations and how their presentations were influenced by the actions of past generations. This conference brought together Indigenous and Non-Indigenous community members and scholars as presenters from around the globe. More than 300 participants took in 160 presentations that ranged from academic panels, workshops, and films, to musical and artistic performances. Topics covered by the presenters included papers on urban Aboriginals, poverty, two-spirited people, education, treaties, youth, justice, environment, health, literature, residential schools, and an exploration of a variety of ways to tell stories through film, writing, and multimedia.

A big thank you goes out to the sponsors of this event. Funds were provided by Concordia University's First Peoples Studies Program; Aboriginal Student Resource Centre; the School of Community and

Public Affairs; the Research Chair in Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary; as well as the Aid to Research Related Events, Exhibition, Publication, and Dissemination Activities Program. Additional supporters included Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP, Dionne Schulze S.E.N.C. Avocats/Attorneys, Canadian Indigenous Native Studies Association, Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, SSHRC, Centre for the Study of Indigenous Border Issues, and DIALOG. While the sponsors made the event possible, if it were not for the session moderators, chairs, presenters, a bevy of volunteers, and Hospitality Concordia, the conference would not have run smoothly or have been such a memorable experience.

The following proceedings offers only a small selection of papers from the conference. This is the first time in CINSA's history that a conference proceedings has been attempted. Participants were asked to submit a paper for consideration for publication. From those who chose to contribute seven papers have been chosen to represent the depth and breadth of knowledge shared at the conference.

As the editor of the inaugural conference proceedings, my greatest appreciation rests with the contributors to this volume and the peer reviewers. It is a challenge to edit a volume with a variety of approaches, themes, and disciplinary styles, albeit collectively unified by a common desire to showcase Indigenous survivance. Taken together, these eight chapters constitute cutting-edge examinations of Indigenous studies. The authors bring their own interpretation and understanding to each topic area as well as developing it along the conference theme of survivance and reconciliation across the generations. Although this proceedings is by no means the final word on Indigenous studies, survivance, and reconciliation, it does offer a starting point and a new way of understanding the complex conversations occurring within the discipline. This conversation needs to take place in order for Canada, and the world, to move forward in its relationships with Indigenous peoples. It is also part of a burgeoning field of study, represented by scholars who see Indigenous studies and knowledge as an intellectual force. Finally, the conference and the publication of the proceedings answers the call of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to increase awareness of Indigenous peoples, their cultures, histories, and knowledges.

I would also like to thank Concordia University Aid to Research Related Events, Concordia Indigenous Youth Strategic Hire Funds, Concordia University Research Chair in Indigenous Art History and Community Engagement, and Concordia University Research Chair in Computational Media and the Indigenous Future Imaginary for their financial assistance. The numerous anonymous reviewers provided an invaluable service as well as the authors themselves. Finally, the Aboriginal Issues Press staff assistance , advice, and patience are also greatly appreciated and valued. In the end, without this assistance, the volume before you would not have been possible.

Chi Meegwetch,
Karl S. Hele, editor.
Sept. 2016.

Surviving the Long Assault: *Manno* and the Path to Indigenous Reconciliation

Kevin Fitzmaurice, Department of Indigenous Studies, University of Sudbury

David Newhouse, Department of Indigenous Studies, Trent University

Indigenous people in North America have been subject to a century and a half of concerted state effort of civilization and assimilation, a period in Indigenous history starting in 1857 with the passage of the Act for the Gradual Civilization of Indians and ending with the withdrawal of 1969 White Paper in 1971. The state goal has been to transform Indigenous peoples into Europeans; to replace Indigenous languages with English, to replace Indigenous family structures with European family structures, to change the nature of Indigenous economic life, to replace Indigenous Knowledges with European knowledges and to replace Indigenous spiritualties with Christian ones. These attempts have been well documented and acknowledged.[1] Recently Canada has apologized for these attempts and vowed that they will not happen again.[2] It appears that the long assault is over, although some activists and Indigenous political leaders argue that it continues.

Despite the prolonged state efforts, Aboriginal peoples have survived and are starting see some improvements in some aspects of daily life. Aboriginal political leaders have worked tirelessly over the last half-century to address what Newhouse and Belanger[3] call the Canada Problem; for instance, to find ways to live with and within this new entity called Canada. One of the most important documents to emerge out of this

effort is the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples which contains an Aboriginal vision for Canada and for the continuation of Confederation, among other things. It is remarkable that in the short space of 26 years Canada has come from a policy of termination as proposed in the White Paper[4] to a policy that recognized the inherent right of Aboriginal peoples to self-government.[5] The effects of this long assault upon mental and physical health, economic lives, education, families, culture and language and spirituality have been thoroughly documented over the last half century. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission documented in extensive and horrible detail how the long assault worked and its continuing effect.[6]

Over the last two decades in particular we have started to see a wide variety of efforts directed at improving the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples. We are also seeing an explosion of Aboriginal artistic expression (literature, fine art, performance, dance, film, video). It seems counterintuitive that such a devastating assault would result in such beautiful artistic expressions. One can read this as evidence of Aboriginal resilience and creative spirit; which Saul describes as "The Comeback."[7] The promise of 'The Comeback' has yet to be fulfilled. Improvements in the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples have been and continue to be slow to appear.

In attempting to outline some of the key aspects of this long-standing assault on Aboriginal peoples, there is much detail and complexity that is beyond the scope of this paper. Focusing on the more prominent expressions and then outcomes, it is important to begin with the British North American (BNA) Act as the primary and unilateral statement of Canadian sovereignty in 1867 and as a clear break with the long period (1650 to 1815) of what is now commonly referred to as the 'Middle Ground' of Indigenous-Settler trade and the cooperative, cultural dialogue of peace and friendship treaties.[8] By 1867, Settler immigration and relative power increased to the point where from the perspective of the nascent Canadian State, a powerful notion of European racialized superiority -- justified by Social Darwinism and the legal Doctrine of Discovery-- emerged as the foundation for the present-day Canadian nation-state. Canada was therefore founded upon notions that only civilized Europeans could be capable of political and territorial sovereignty and the building of a nation-state. Primitive 'Indian' cultures were imagined in contrast as static artifacts

without a history of change and development, incapable of progress, and antithetical to emerging notions of industrialism and modernity.[9]

The Canadian state's unilateral imposition of the 1867 BNA Act, left 'Indians and lands reserved for Indians' as a federal jurisdictional responsibility (Section 91.24), legally incorporated into the constitutional framework, and forcibly displaced from vast homelands. The highly repressive Indian Act of 1876, further transformed the nation-to-nation treaty relationship of peace and friendship into one of intensive colonial domination. As has been well documented in a number of prominent scholarly texts and commission reports.[10] The Indian Act heavily suppressed basic civil liberties and combined with the Indian Residential School System to assimilate Aboriginal people out of their cultures and their claims to the land as part of a long-standing process of cultural genocide.[11] As the Minister of Indian Affairs, Frank Oliver asserted in 1908, residential schools would 'elevate the Indian from his condition of savagery' and 'make him a self-supporting member of the state, and eventually a citizen in good standing Canada.[12]

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada put it in blunt terms:

> For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."[13]

With the closing of the last residential school in 1996, the challenge today then is to ensure the honouring of the two Crown apologies to Indigenous peoples, to work towards a clear and complete break from the long assault of cultural genocide in Canada, and to find the path forward towards reconciliation and renewal.

In this paper we discuss the broad political and legal aspects of the long assault in Canada in relation to current notions of reconciliation and the best path forward to a renewed, nation to nation or Inuit to Crown

relationship. We begin with an understanding of Indigenous political/spiritual thought as the foundation of long-standing resilience, cultural survivance, and expressions of cultural resurgence such as Idle No More, the Nishiyuu Walkers, and the Healing Movement. It is this political/spiritual thinking that is at the heart of the present disjuncture between State notions of reconciliation as expressed in common law and federal policy and emerging Indigenous political theory on decolonization, resurgence and a 'turning away' from a 'prefigured colonial misrecognition'.

Ultimately we argue for an application of Anishnaabe/Cree relational teachings on the role of the *Shkaabewis* and the good life of *Mino Bimaadiziwin* within the larger context of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action. Reconciliation understood in these terms provides a pathway to meaningful, mutual recognition through the shared realization and acceptance of the full truth (*Manno*) of the long assault as part of a larger unsettling of the enduring colonial assumptions behind existing policy and law in Canada.

Indigenous Survivance in Canada

Drawing on Vizenor's notion of 'post-Indian survivance', Aboriginal people have not only survived the long assault battered and wounded, but are determined to forge a new and better world as Aboriginal people.[14] The question is how did Aboriginal people survive the power of the state. The 2011 Census indicates that there are about 1.4 million Canadians who self-identify as Aboriginal and that that the Aboriginal population has grown considerably over the last century. At the start of the twentieth century, there were only an estimated 100,000 Indians in Canada.[15]

The answer lies in two areas: the Courts persistent call for political reconciliation and the sustaining ethos of Indigenous spirituality and spiritual practice. Despite the adoption of Christianity, either forced or voluntary, as evidenced by the 2001 Census that showed that a majority of Aboriginal peoples were Christian, the traditional spiritual foundations of Aboriginal life remain alive. This is evident in three events of the last years: The 2013 Idle No More movement, the 2014 Nishiyuu Walkers in Quebec and the Healing Movement which began with the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

The rapid growth and widespread support for the Idle No More movement of 2013 was surprising. It started as a political reaction around Bill

C-45 and rapidly moved into the realm of Aboriginal-Canada relations writ large. It became a multi-generational, multi-class, multi-perspective phenomenon. It placed Aboriginal traditional custom and ceremony at its centre. The most potent symbol to emerge was the round dance, given a modern interpretation as a flashmob rounddance enacted in malls across the country and around the world.

The Idle No More movement urged a decolonization agenda (in addition advocating for changing elements of Bill C-45). The colonialist effort can be characterized as a concerted, conscious, long-term state effort at transformation of the original inhabitants of this land into a form of European. This transformation we argue using Dianne Hill and Bob Antone's 1984 thesis of 'ethnostress' has resulted in the current colonial legacy of illness, marginalization and depravation.[16] Colonization, they argue steals the spirit of a people. We postulate that decolonization and post-colonialism has been a way to steal it back. Post-colonial acts are acts of decolonization and are intended to restore the spirit that had been taken away. So why the round dance?

The Cree round dance is a social-spiritual ceremony/act/practice that is a celebration and refreshing of the spirit; it brings people together in a connected circle, celebrating their togetherness and connectedness and affirming their lives, both as physical and spiritual beings. At its centre it is an affirmation of the spirit. The Idle No More founders speak of the foundations of their movement as love and thus provide a spiritual foundation for it. The emergence of the round dance as the central ceremonial public act of Idle No More is more than serendipitous it would seem. The continued use of it is an affirmation of the spirit that colonialism attempted to steal and is, at least in our view, a post-colonial decolonization act that places Indigenous ideas/practices/customs at the centre and makes the Idle No More movement not a protest movement but a movement of affirmation. Its foundations are both love and anger. The Cree round dance reflected the Cree spirituality of the founders and demonstrated that Indigenous spirituality remains a potent force.

We also witnessed another set of actions that were motivated by Indigenous spirituality. The Nishiyuu Walkers from the Cree community of Whapmagoostui, Quebec captured our attention for a few months. Accompanied by an Elder, they walked 1600km in the middle of winter

to bring their message to Ottawa. They insisted that the walk was not a protest but a walk of affirmation, that they are keepers of the Language, Culture, Tradition, and that that they carry the sacred laws of their ancestors. Their website describes their vision:

> Through Unity and Harmony, the quest will revive the voices of our Anskushiyouch. Their voices will be heard once more. With their guidance and strength, the Truth to all the sacred teachings will be revived and we will become once more, a powerful United Nations across Turtle Island.
>
> This land, the earth, the rivers, the winds, the mountains, the clouds and all of the creation, we are the true keepers and will continue to do so until time on earth is over. This Quest, it is time the Youth become the Warriors and the leaders for they are the Anskushshiyouch as foretold. The Earth Walkers, the beings put here on earth to protect all of Chisamanitou's Creation. In unity, in harmony, in peace, in war, we will achieve.[17]

Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* argues that Aboriginal people are suffering from what she calls complex post-traumatic stress disorder which results from a prolonged period of abuse.[18] Aboriginal people have been traumatized by colonization, such as systematically terrorized over a lengthy period of time and held in some sense captive. If we accept the use of Herman's framework for trauma and recovery, then the centrality of the idea of healing makes some sense. The core experiences of disempowerment and disconnection remain central to many Aboriginal peoples. And an approach to healing that entails empowerment and reconnection, which appear to be the centerpieces of the Aboriginal healing strategy also make some sense.

The centrality of healing also resonates with the predominate idea of the human being as a psychological being, a human being whose actions are explained through the lens of needs, drives, motivations, desire: unseen powerful forces amenable to influence by modern western mental health workers: psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, counselors. In the west, we no longer turn to the church and spirituality to give meaning to

our lives; we use these new priests and nuns to help us interpret ourselves and the unseen forces in our lives.

The western idea of the psychological human is combined in the Aboriginal healing movement with ideas based upon traditional understandings from Aboriginal cultures: the Aboriginal idea of the human being as comprising four parts and the human being as interconnected with all living things. Holism and interconnectedness are the two fundamental ideas that arise in the Aboriginal conception of healing: A healthy human being is in balance with the 4 aspects of the self: body, intellect, emotion and spirit as well as being in balance with family, clan and nation.[19] So the Aboriginal approach to health and healing is quite radical in conception: it encompasses more than physical health; it encompasses intellectual, emotional and spiritual health. It involves the connection of the individual to the universe through family, community and nation; it presents the individual in context and says: healing cannot be confined to one aspect as they are all related. One must be prepared to deal with the whole human being, ie, with all 4 aspects of the human being and understand that what happens in one area will affect the other areas in perhaps unforeseen ways.[20]

If healing is a process of empowerment and reconnection, then healing becomes central to the process of decolonization or the process of creating a new consciousness among Aboriginal peoples. Healing then becomes something that is to be supported, that is viewed as good and useful and helpful and as leading to better individuals, better communities, better nations; in general, it is expected to lead to an improved quality of life for Aboriginal individuals and communities. Healing then becomes more than a mental health construct; it becomes as much a spiritual as a political project integral to the re-establishment of the Aboriginal self as well as families, nations and governments.

Healing (and restoration) has become the central theme of much of the work surrounding the restoration of Aboriginal peoples to a place of pride and respect within the Canadian context. It is spirituality that helps us to understand our place in the universe. All good healing then does not ignore the spirit and all good healers recognize its importance in the balancing of our lives. A turn to spiritual practice and ceremony is an

important part of healing. The presence of Elders also demonstrates the importance of spirituality to the lives of contemporary Aboriginal peoples. Survival of the long assault required a strong sense that one would prevail, that one had the strength to endure the darkness and that with time a new and better world would emerge. It required both story and institutional practice that reinforced the story. The courts provided both a space for the story to be told as well as a legal framing of the narrative.

After over a century of nation building through the assertion of political and territorial sovereignty combined with the policy of cultural genocide, the courts were required, for the first time, to respond to the long-standing counter claims of Indigenous (Nisga'a) sovereignty and title to the land. The 1973 Calder decision[21] both affirmed and challenged the colonial discourse of Canadian sovereignty, which by 1973 had become a fact of law. In other words, in recognizing that a wrong had been committed, the Supreme Court's split decision both reproduced the discourse of Canadian sovereignty, while amending it to include the obligation to reconcile the rights of Indigenous societies (derived from their pre-existence to the State) with the sovereignty of the Crown. [22]In response to the 1973 *Calder* decision, then Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau stated to a delegation of BC Chiefs, that 'perhaps you have more legal rights than we thought you had when we did the White Paper.'[23] The federal response to Calder then was to move away from its explicit policy of 'termination' articulated in the 1969 White Paper, initiating instead its land-claim settlement process that in the case of comprehensive claims, has come to include a limited understanding of Aboriginal 'self-government' as 'modern-day treaties'.

Following intense Aboriginal lobbying and negotiations during the late 1970s and early 80s as part of the federal government's repatriation and reform of the Canadian Constitution, this undefined set of Aboriginal rights referred to in *Calder* came to be recognized in the 1982 Constitution Act as a Section 35 (1), constitutionally protected 'existing Aboriginal and Treaty right'.[24] With Canadian political and territorial sovereignty newly legitimated under the Constitution Act, and with Aboriginal people and their rights fully entrenched within it, the *Calder* decision established the principle task for both the courts and government to reconcile the assumption of Canada' political and territorial sovereignty

with the counter assertions of Aboriginal nations. As reiterated by Lamer in the 1997 Delgamuukw decision,[25]

> Ultimately it is through negotiated settlements, with good faith and give and take on both sides, reinforced by the judgements of this Court, that we will achieve what I stated in Van der Peet, supra at para. 31, to be a basic purpose of s.35(1) – 'the reconciliation of the pre-existence of Aboriginal societies with the sovereignty of the Crown.' Let us face it, we are all here to stay.[26]

It is within this context of reconciliation that the federal government 1995 policy of Self-government and the courts from Sparrow (1990) to the 'trilogy' of cases in 2004 and 2005 (Haida Nation, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, and Mikisew Cree First Nation),[27] have found Aboriginal rights as requiring a 'duty to consult and accommodate' Aboriginal Nations and that any limitation or infringement on these rights adhere to a particular test of State justification.[28] The 'duty to consult and accommodate' is understood along a spectrum of possibilities from minimal notice to a duty to carry out some form of accommodation.[29] After four decades of court determinations on Aboriginal title and rights as part of a long-standing call for political reconciliation, the TRC has sought to give expression to the reconciling of Indigenous – Settler political/legal differences.

Reconciliation is widely conceived of as comprising two fundamental elements: an acknowledgement of a wrong and the harm that has been done and a reparative action that attempts to compensate for the wrong and its harm. What happens after these two steps is important and conceived of and expressed differently between the government and Aboriginal leaders. The federal government's approach can be characterized by the paradigm of reconciliation[30] which is a continuation of state sovereignty and absorption in which Aboriginal peoples are absorbed, perhaps as distinct peoples/minority groups with some special rights, into the Canadian federation. The approach of Aboriginal leaders is characterized by the paradigm of restoration, for instance a return to the original nation to nation relationship accompanied by a large effort at improving the quality of life for Aboriginal peoples as well as the carving out of significant sites of jurisdiction and authority in what would amount to a renewed relationship to the Canadian state.[31] The TRC (2015) called for

a new Royal Proclamation as a powerful way to signal the start of this new relationship.

In advancing these ideas, Aboriginal leaders are acting upon a long history of relationship building with Europeans. Williams argues that Aboriginal leaders have followed a consistent political philosophy based upon the idea of linking arms together since early contact.[32] There has been no dearth of attempts at creating peaceful relations and finding ways to share the land, work and live together. One of the dominant Aboriginal theories is that as expressed by the Guswentah and the Haudenosaunee/Anishinaabe idea of the bowl with one spoon as a metaphor for sharing and living well together. These philosophies see two sovereignties come together for mutual benefit, mutual protection and mutual recognition. The narrow state view of reconciliation as recognition does not use this language and appears at this time to be inconsistent with the broader Aboriginal notion of restoration.

Colonial Misrecognitions and Indigenous Resurgence

Understanding the path to 'reconciliation' as a diversion away from the core question of full Indigenous political and territorial sovereignty, there is a growing Indigenous movement in Canada that rejects reconciliation, self-government, and relationship building as part of a 'turning away' from the politics of recognition and towards the practice of independent cultural resurgence. At the very heart of this movement is an understanding that the long-standing and present day colonial assault against Aboriginal people in Canada hinges on the three prevailing assumptions behind efforts at reconciliation, namely that:

1. Aboriginal lands were surrendered by the treaties,
2. sovereignty and legislative supremacy rests solely with the Canadian State, and
3. Aboriginal cultures are racially inferior and unchanging.

These core assumptions directly contrast with the longstanding and widely accepted Indigenous discourse on nation-to-nation treaty relations, the sharing of land with European Settlers, and the sacred responsibility to care for the earth. It is a treaty discourse of land protection (not surrender) through sacred and respectful alliances of equality, reciprocity, and the requirement for ongoing renewal and relationship building. Based within

the traditional knowledge and language of Indigenous nations across Canada, this discourse has been extensively reproduced by Aboriginal people (and some non-Aboriginal allies) in court submissions, land claim negotiations, constitutional talks, royal commissions, art and literature, academic publications, and some media sources, most recently articulated in the 2014 Idle No More Manifesto,

> The Treaties are nation-to-nation agreements between the Crown and First Nations who are sovereign nations. The Treaties are agreements that cannot be altered or broken by one side of the two nations. The spirit and intent of the Treaty agreements meant that First Nations peoples would share the land, but retain their inherent rights to lands and resources. The taking of resources has left many lands and waters poisoned….We must demand sustainable development. We believe in healthy, just, equitable, and sustainable communities and have a vision and plan of how to build them.[33]

In contrast, and framed as a call for reconciliation, the courts have nonetheless consistently reproduced the three colonial assumptions in case after case. According to this view, the culmination of Aboriginal title as 'a burden on the Crown's underlying title' reserved for 'pre-contact practices' and Aboriginal rights as duty of 'consultation and accommodation' combined with a 'test of limited infringement'[34] falls far short of exercising Indigenous, sovereign control in one's own land.

To negotiate more restrictive contemporary 'modern-day treaty' agreements as part of a renewed relationship would therefor undermine Indigenous discourses while affirming Canadian sovereignty as being superior to that of Indigenous peoples.[35] Without the full recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, the federal policy of Aboriginal self-government becomes a framework for 'negotiating inferiority.'[36] The present approach on Aboriginal self-government agreements in Canada provides only for municipal style jurisdiction, and converts Indigenous territory into fee simple, private title.[37] Ultimately, it signals an end to First Nations pre-existing sovereign status and extinguishes inherent, Aboriginal and Treaty Rights through the privileging of a neoliberal, individual rights paradigm.[38] According to this view, the very legitimacy of the Canadian

State must be challenged as part of a move beyond the prevailing 'minority rights' approach to Aboriginal rights and self-government as existing entirely within the Canadian constitutional framework.[39]

This critique also applies to the more pervasive sectoral practices of Aboriginal self-government negotiated with Aboriginal organization as a part of the generalized liberal policy of devolution and privatization. Although the governmental devolution of service delivery responsibility to non-governmental Aboriginal organizations can converge in a progressive way with the desire of Aboriginal leaders for greater control over certain jurisdictional matters within their communities, delegation in this way fails to pass on the full decision making power necessary to transform these policy areas and thus falls short of treaty understandings of nation-to-nation relations.[40]

Devolution further creates the conditions for releasing the federal government of its responsibility for prior acts of colonization and assimilation which have created current social problems in Aboriginal communities, while removing delegated issues from the realm of public debate.[41] Once established, delegated, sectoral Aboriginal self-governance can therefore displace the possible realizations of meaningful Aboriginal self-government while exposing vulnerable populations to further domination by the State.[42]

Ultimately, reconciliation without meaningful restitution re-inscribes the colonial status quo as part of a legitimization of Canadian sovereignty. The rejection of these limited understandings and practices of Aboriginal rights and self-government in Canada are part of a broader anti-colonial struggle against the Settler state and the market economy, which entails a radical return to Indigenous knowledges, practices, languages, and the natural environment.[43] Framed as a process of 'disentanglement' from 'colonial attachments' that function to maintain the status quo, the returning to and 'regenerating' Indigenous living as 'Onkwehonwe' people is framed as a direct challenge to efforts of political compromise or reconciliation within the Canadian/colonial state that necessitates sacrifice and struggle.[44] Seeking agreements with the Canadian state as an ongoing colonizer actively destroys Indigenous cultures, communities, and land is characterized as being 'morally unacceptable'. Decolonization thought of in this sense therefore involves a separation from the colonial

state, while inviting non-Indigenous allies to share in the Onkwehonwe vision of respect and peaceful co-existence as a decolonized alternative to Settler society.[45]

Aboriginal self-government policy and law in Canada are 'surface reforms' detrimental to the survival of Onkwehonwe people. Indigenous governments created and recognized by the state and engaged in the mainstream resource exploitation economy legitimize the colonial state, cultivate Indigenous dependency, and signify the end of Indigenous anti-colonial struggle. Meaningful change and decolonization can only be achieved through the 'resurgence of Indigenous consciousness channeled into contention with colonialism'.[46] Moving past contention to a just Indigenous reconciliation with the colonial state could only be achieved through a 'massive restitution of land, financial matters, and other forms of assistance to compensate for past harms and continuing injustices.[47]

Indigenous resurgence is therefore 'a daily struggle to reclaim and regenerate one's relational, place-based existence through spiritual, cultural, economic, social, and political practices that challenge the on-going, destructive forces of colonization.[48] It is synonymous with Indigenous self-determination and decolonization as it is a turning away from discourses of rights, reconciliation, and resources.[49] Instead, Indigenous resurgence focuses on inherent responsibilities to homelands, communities, and future generations.

Within the context of the Anishnaabe 7th and 8th Fire Prophesies. The Anishnaabe are currently living in the time of the 7th fire where after a long period of colonization and the loss of culture, a new people the *'Oshkimaadiziig'* emerge to revive 'pick up' the language, knowledge, and cultural practices by nurturing relationships with Elders.[50] According to these prophesies, the lighting of the 8th fire depends on the successful work of both the *Oshkimaadiziig* as well as the ability of Settler society to decolonize their relationship with Indigenous people and the land and to return to relationships of mutual recognition, justice, and respect.[51]

Resurgence is an internally derived, Indigenous mobilization effort that challenges Canadian sovereignty while returning to Indigenous knowledge and practices. Critical to this process of nation-culture based resurgence is returning to the land and the vision/intention of living in accordance with the principles of *Mino bimaadiziwin*. To this end, principles

in keeping with *Aanji Maajitaawin* or regeneration/starting over as a process of truth telling, taking responsibility, and restoring relational balance are critical to the success of resurgence. In this way, being an Anishnaabe person therefore requires a commitment to *Mino Bimaadiziwin* and building resurgence. Resurgence begins with the self-such that one must work to embody Indigenous knowledge, practice, and language into one's daily living. According to Simpson, in committing to this individual, daily process of decolonization and Indigenization, a collective transformation may then occur.[52]

Decolonization thought of in this way entails four main components relating to moving away from funding mentality, Indigenous language acquisition, providing an alternative to colonization, and returning to the wisdom of pre-confederation treaties. Resurgence requires the reconnecting of Indigenous youth with Elders so as to allow for the transmission of Indigenous knowledge and language; which can be achieved at a community level for very little cost. Relying on external funding of these relationships will act as a barrier to resurgence. Importantly, work to develop an Indigenous alternative to present colonial political relations is also necessary and can be sourced in the pre-confederation treaties, which were grounded in relationships of respect, sovereignty, sharing, and environmental responsibility and collective stewardship.[53]

The path forward to Indigenous resurgence and meaningful decolonization in Canada then is to 'turn away' from the desire to have Aboriginal rights and self-government recognized by the State.[54] Decolonization understood in this way means to struggle to critically reclaim the worth of Indigenous histories and traditions and to provide an alternative to the oppressive, colonial social relations; to 'prefigure' a lasting alternative to the colonial present.

Attempting to be recognized as equal partners in a nation-to-nation, treaty relationship and instead living in a colonial relationship of racialized misrecognition has the very damaging 'psycho-affective' effects of an internalized sense of racialized inferiority such that Indigenous people experience an ongoing identification with the colonial, unequal political relationship. Ultimately, Coulthard argues that the existing political processes of being acknowledged and recognized by the colonial power provides Indigenous people with a false sense of political agency and

ensures ongoing dominance. From this perspective, Aboriginal people in Canada remain politically subjugated by their own attempts to have their rights recognized by the colonial state. Ultimately, to decolonize is to transcend the politics of recognition towards 'a politics of self-actualization, direct action, and the resurgence of cultural practices.'[55]

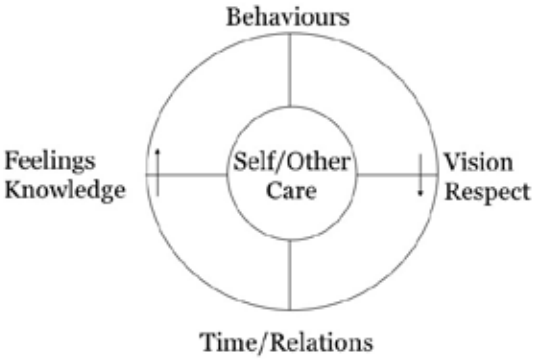
Manno and the Path to Indigenous Reconciliation

As a challenge to both the ongoing colonial assumptions and practices of the Canadian State and the active 'turning away' of the Indigenous resurgence and protection movement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission points to the necessity of relationships and reconciliation. Like the Idle No More movement, the Nishiyuu Walkers, and the Healing movement mentioned above, Indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and law inform the commission's findings and recommendations. Calling for truth, respect, and restoration as a framework to decolonization, its 94 Calls to Action in areas from justice and child welfare reform to museum restructuring and inter-cultural/anti-racism training for public servants, stress the need for massive social change through the cultural and historical re-education of Canadian society[56]. In conjunction with the transformation of Settler society, the TRC further calls for the restoration of Indigenous political and territorial sovereignty through a meaningful implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery as a false justification of Canadian sovereignty in Indigenous lands.

The Commission defines reconciliation as an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships. A critical part of this process involves repairing damaged trust by making apologies, providing individual and collective reparations, and following through with concrete actions that demonstrate real societal change. Establishing respectful relationships also requires the revitalization of Indigenous law and legal traditions. It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process.[57]

Within an Indigenous knowledge, spirituality, and legal paradigm, the ability and willingness to listen to the experiences and the truths of Others, as the foundation to mutual recognition and understanding, is a

key principle in the Anishnaabe/Cree[58] framework to relational balance, reconciliation, and as a method of decolonization. Beginning in the east with awareness, respect and ultimately full recognition and acceptance of difference, the process of good relations then points to the southern direction of taking the necessary time to build trust and a knowledge of each other. With acceptance, time, trust, and knowledge there can be empathy in the west, which when practiced in a committed and responsive way, leads to northern caring behaviours, love, and the art of the good life of *Mino bimaadiziwin*.



According to these teachings, life is primarily about relationships in movement and at the core of our identity, who we believe ourselves to be, lies our dynamic, interdependent relationships with Others (all of Creation). The circles provide guidance through reciprocal helping relationships (*Shkaabewis*); which themselves are based in teachings of kindness, generosity, humility, and honesty. Through the daily practice of these teachings we can create the conditions for caring behaviours and the understanding of interdependence and ultimately peace. Fundamental to these circles is movement and the reality of constant change and its relationship to forgiveness. Forgiveness is only possible when harmful behaviours cease, but forgiveness can also be a catalyst to the changing of those behaviours as well.

According to these teachings as they are applied to processes of reconciliation, restorative justice, and an end to the long assault, the harm and

imbalance of colonization is understood as stemming from the Settler society lacking specific knowledge. In this way, the offending Settler society is provided with the opportunity to voluntarily come together in a justice circle with Indigenous people to truthfully share experiences of harm as a process of respectfully teaching the importance of 'good relations', the role of the *Shkaabewis,* and the art of the good life of *Mino bimaadiziwin.*[59]

Through open and honest discussion, the circle participants are encouraged to develop a complex understanding of colonization and to come to a consensus on what is required in order to move towards a re-balancing of caring relations. Reparations involve an apology, restoration of prior conditions, and the facilitation of healing as a re-connecting, re-balancing of relations. Critical to the success of this form of justice is that reparations must be performed and accepted voluntarily and without coercion.[60]

Using the circles as a guide, reconciliation efforts must first begin in the eastern direction of respect and acceptance. To move to the southern direction of relationships and trust requires that the truth of the long assault be articulated and accepted in a manner that dispels the three false assumptions behind existing policy and law, namely that:

1. Aboriginal lands were surrendered by the treaties,
2. sovereignty and legislative supremacy rests solely with the Canadian State, and
3. Aboriginal cultures are racially inferior and unchanging.

Working towards respectful relationships and reconciliation will require the acceptance of the consistent and long-standing Indigenous discourse of nation-to-nation treaty relations, the sharing of land with European Settlers, and the sacred responsibility to care for the earth. It is a discourse of land protection and not surrender through sacred and respectful alliances of equality, reciprocity, and the requirement for ongoing renewal and relationship building. This is discourse as *manno*[61], the patient and respectful articulation of the truth. In this way, it is understood that if reconciliation is to happen, Settlers will have to come to the truth voluntarily as part of the understanding that they have made a mistake.

Echoing the recommendations of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission reminds us that getting to the truth will require hard work and an openness to transformation,

> Getting to the truth was hard, but getting to reconciliation will be harder. It requires that the paternalistic and racist foundations of the residential school system be rejected as the basis for an ongoing relationship. Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed…. reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem; it is a Canadian one. Virtually all aspects of Canadian society may need to be reconsidered.[62]

What remains unclear at this point is whether Settler society is capable of this kind of work and fundamental change. As is clear from the 1996 RCAP final report, these comprehensive recommendations for reform and restoration are not new and, as the Assembly of First Nations reminds us in their 'RCAP Report Card, have been largely ignored over the last two decades.[63] According to Simpson, efforts at reconciliation are long-standing and have been ignored as part of a consistent pattern of abuse and that there is no indication that any change, let alone massive change, is eminent,

> Indigenous Peoples attempted to reconcile differences in countless treaty negotiations, which categorically have not produced the kinds of relationships that Indigenous Peoples intended. I wonder how we can reconcile when the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustices of dispossession, occupation, particularly when the state has expressed its unwillingness to make any adjustments to this unjust relationship.[64]

Alfred further warns that 'without massive restitution' of lands and funds that address the full extent of the harms done to Indigenous peoples and lands, reconciliation itself can function to absolve colonial injustices as a continuation of this oppression.[65] Moreover, Coulthard cautions of the interplay between the politics of recognition and that of reconciliation and that the state's understanding of reconciliation as an agreement on 'Indigenous assertions of nationhood with the state's unilateral assertion of sovereignty over Native peoples' lands and populations' will not restore the relationship as a from of 'transitional justice' out of colonization.

Rather, it is reconciliation as a re-inscribing of colonial assumptions and a continued misrecognition of Indigenous people.[66]

Only with the shared realization and acceptance of the full truth of the long assault and the Indigenous discourse (*manno)* can there be meaningful, mutual recognition as part of a disruption of colonial assumptions behind oppressive policies and laws. Beginning in the eastern direction of awareness, respect and then ultimately to full recognition and acceptance can provide the space for the development of Indigenous structures of law and sovereign authority, or what Coulthard terms 'the resurgent politics of recognition'[67] as a turning back towards treaty relations of trust, empathy and caring behavior as a re-balancing of Indigenous-Settler relations through the restoration of Indigenous lands, governments, and societies.

Indigenous people have never given up on this possibility. Within the core relationship teachings of the *Shkaabewis* and the art of the good life of *Mino bimaadiziwin,* as discussed above, there lies a sense of optimism within the principle of ongoing change and transformation. In spite of being up against what Coulthard calls the state's 'sheer magnitude of discursive and non-discursive power'[68] that functions to ideologically reproduce itself at every turn, Indigenous efforts at reconciliation have in many ways transformed the existing colonial relationship from a policy of absolute termination in 1969 to a dialogue today on the meaning and practice of Indigenous political and land rights within a sovereign Canada. Moving the conversation further towards *manno* and Indigenous principles of reconciliation and 'the resurgent politics of recognition' marks a further step towards ending the long assault of colonization.

Looking to the Canadian government for change is however not the answer. Most certainly, the new Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau did not intend to completely break with existing Aboriginal rights jurisprudence and end colonization as a radical acceptance of Indigenous discourses when he made his election promise to return to nation-to-nation treaty relations.[69] As highly conservative institutions that adhere closely to their own traditions, policies, and laws, the courts and political institutions in Canada can only go so far, inevitably reproducing their own sense of authority and legitimacy with every new accommodation and recognition/absorption/distortion of Indigenous counter claims.

The burden of reconciliation lies unfairly, as it always has, squarely with individual Indigenous people, organizations, and allies. This conclusion ultimately begs the question; how will you then contribute to reconciliation in Canada…what will you say and what will you do?

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'FirstNa' Urban Transnationals in Canada

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In 2008 at the Mobility and Insecurity: Diasporas, Democracy, and Canada Workshop at York University (York Centre for International and Security Studies), I argued in a crude and provocative way for the inclusion of First Nations urban diaspora as transnational because they expanded their overarching social, economic and political relations across and beyond their First Nation and Canada.[1] Despite the criticism on the impossibility to consider urban First Nations as transnational under a nation to nation-State framework, I continued my quest in terms of coining grassroots epistemologies such as Indigenous forced transnationalism across borderlands in order to understand the complexity and fragmentation of Indigenous mobility.[2]

With this in mind this chapter explores how Indigenous mobility complicates our understandings of being 'FirstNa' urban transnational.[3] Here I want to further explore how First Nation people,[4] whose Nation might be Ojibwa, Cree, Dene, Iroquois, or Mi'kmaq, represent a fragmented version of transnationalism once they move to urban centres. My emphasis on Indigenous transnationalism complicates the epistemological constructions of being transnational based on Western paradigms.

While making my proposition, I draw from data collected from 2001 to 2005 during my "deep hanging out"[5] and informal conversations with some members of the Aboriginal[6] community dwelling in Southwestern,

Ontario. Here I will only include the stories of those who migrated from their First Nation community (home) to urban centres and their experiences of being 'FirstNa' urban transnational (see Figure 1). My emphasis on Indigenous mobility and how these movements complicate and add flexibility to the concept of transnationalism needs further elaboration.

Figure 1: Additional Information about Interviewees

Nina mid 50s, single, mother of three children, born on-reserve, and she is currently living in there. She attended university and her children do not live with her.
Hannah late 40s, single, born-on reserve and currently living in the city.
Marie mid-40s, single, mother of one child, born on-reserve, lived on-reserve for 33 years and she currently lives there. She is going to school and her child is living with her.
Sally mid-50s, single, mother of one child. Born on-reserve and she is currently living in the city. She completed her college degree and works full-time.
Helen mid-40s, single mother of one child. Born in the city from First Nations parents. Living in the city with her new partner. She completed a college degree and pursuing her graduate studies.

Indigenous Mobility

For the past three decades global fragmentation and uncertainty has overtly encouraged scholarly studies on mobility, diasporas, migrants, nomads, transnationalism, and deterritorialization.[7] Indeed, mobility studies contravened "sedentarist metaphysics,"[8] which focused on territorialized and place making of cultures around the globe. Appadurai noted the increasing trend on global flow of culture and economy in terms of push and pull or center-periphery models of migration, rather he proposed to examine the "complex, overlapping [and] disjunctive order"[9] of migration trends. Regretfully, scholars embedded on studying Indigenous mobility overused the push and pull models in order to explain migration patterns across Canada.[10] Therefore, the complexity of Indigenous mobility must

not be framed on models that miss precisely the fragmentation and the (dis)order of moving back and forth from First Nations communities to urban centres or intra-community (within the cities).

Nevertheless, research on place and place making from disciplines like Native studies, anthropology, geography, communications, and others (de)constructed the "dynamics of culture, power, and economy".[11] For instance, studies on First Nations mobility to urban centres and abroad aided in the deconstruction of the settled Indian.[12] As Watson accurately noted, "Indigenous migration to, and residence in, urban areas, does not signify the disappearance of Indigenous life but, rather, characterizes its social, geographical, and political 'extension'".[13] The *Toronto Aboriginal Research Project* is a good example of sounded research on Aboriginal People living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and mobility was one of the variables studied to understand their current dilemmas, achievements, and needs. Two findings are worth mentioning: first, the study noted the high mobility among the Aboriginal community residing in the GTA both intra-community and with their communities of origin, including First Nations communities. Second, the increasing trend of Aboriginal population in urban areas is interpreted in terms of 'ethnic mobility' and the increasing willingness to self-identify with an Aboriginal ancestry. 'Ethnic mobility' is then more related to the expansion of the criteria for defining Indian status through the Indian Act amendments of Bill C-31 and C-3 than moving from First Nations communities to the cities and the birth rate growth in urban centres.[14] Similar studies should be conducted in other locations across Canada as an attempt to understand the complexity of First Nation migration to urban centres and ethnic mobility. The former has been a recurrent theme of research.[15] Here I turn to explore the transnational experience of First Nations people in urban centres and the stranded relations with their First Nation communities.

Fragmenting and Expanding Transnationalism

In the 1990s scholars coined the concept of transnationalism as the study of immigrants and their sociocultural, economic and political relations between their homeland and their host country.[16] In Canada by the end of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century, scholars incorporated a transnational perspective in their research that included,

but was not limited to, international migration, immigrant settlements, and ethnicity.[17] Despite the lack of clarity on defining transnationalism, scholars conducted different studies. For instance, Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc studied the social relations of transmigrants in cross-border transnational activities.[18] Others, like Kivisto, suggested the use of transnationalism as a subset of assimilation theory.[19] Portes and Portes et al.,[20] looked at how transnationalism aids in understanding the processes of assimilation of "first-generation immigrants and their offspring" from individuals and families theoretically linked from above and from below[21] and their impact on "the development of sending countries".[22]

Some scholars attempted to give some clarity to the concept by drawing from the epistemological inconsistencies from below. For example, Faist elaborated a systematic and rigorous definition on the transnational social spaces of immigrant communities.[23] These social spaces included kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities.[24] To a greater extent his proposition gives no room for other type of spaces that do not necessarily fall within those categories for example nation to nation-State transnationalism (First Nations framework).

Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt looked at the transnational experience from "below" and included conducting economic, political and sociocultural activities in a sustained and habitual manner between the host country and the point of origin.[25] However, their proposition constraints the scenarios that do not follow a pattern of immigration from South to North, or the nation-Sate to nation-State model. In other contexts the practice of sociocultural, economic and political activities is not necessarily creating a habit in a sustained manner per se. Precisely First Nations people practice their social, economic, cultural and political relations between their home (Reserve) and the host location (urban centre) in a fragmented and irregular manner.

Thus, the epistemological inconsistencies and porosity on defining transnationalism favours the construction of being 'FirstNa' transnational.[26] I argued elsewhere the need for framing transnationalism in a more flexible and fluid manner.[27] First, a nation to nation-State transnational framework for First Nations' experiences in urban centres is needed for framing 'FirstNa' transnationalism across Canada.[28] Duany's study of Puerto Rican transnationalism in the United States is a good example

of such models.[29] In other words, framing the study of transnationalism within the context of a nation-State to nation-State model is not always feasible and the recurrence of nation to nation-State dynamic is gaining terrain in the praxis of Indigenous communities across the world. This framework of transnationalism undermines the traditional anchoring model of social actors engaging with and confronting two or more nation-states.

Second, the recognition of Indigenous First Nations as Nations within the nation of Canada has been the outcome of contested socio-historical relations that include, but are not limited to, treaty agreements between Indigenous communities, the British Crown, and afterwards, the Canadian state.[30] There are about 600 First Nations across Canada that have posed their sovereignty status, political activism, and lobbying for the recognition of their nationhood through the work of Aboriginal leaders, Native political organizations (e.g., Assembly of First Nations), First Nations communities, and other public interest groups.[31] In other words, the construction of nationhood for Indigenous people is organized in relation with territory and cultural identity.[32]

It is feasible to elaborate the experience of First Nations people as transnational due to their migration from their Indigenous Nations to multiple urban centres across Canada. Indeed, First Nation people create and recreate a strong sense of their Indigenous identity based on language, territory, and cultural practices (e.g., Anishinaabe).[33] First Nations' transnationalism needs further elaboration.

Being 'FirstNa' Transnational

The presence of First Nations people in Canada is not a recent social phenomenon. It has been part of the social fabric of this place since time beyond memory. Mobility of First Nations is a continuum across and beyond the country despite the Crown's (and later the Canadian government) interest of making sedentarism their modus vivendi.[34] The continuing migration of First Nations people to urban areas is a reality documented and recognized by the Canadian government, the media, Native research firms, and scholars.[35] The 2006 Canadian census estimates that 72.1 percent of the off-reserve First Nations people lives in urban centres and 26.3 percent of them live on-reserves.[36] The fertility rate

among the Aboriginal population is higher than the rest of the population in Canada, between 2006 and 2011 the former increased 20.1% while the latter 5.2%.[37] In addition, the Aboriginal population is much younger than the mainstream society; children aged 14 and under represent 7% of all children in Canada.[38] Statistics Canada plans an increase of approximately 1.4 million or 4% of Aboriginal people by 2017.[39]

Most of First Nations people living on-reserve face high rates of alcohol and drug consumption, unemployment, illiteracy, teen pregnancy, violence, and suicide.[40] In addition, many families experience the intergenerational consequences of residential school, which have a negative impact in their emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual life.[41] Darnell and Manzano-Munguía focused on the "moments of decision-making" that prompt individuals to leave their Reserve and relocate in urban centres.[42] The following excerpts vividly illustrate these moments:

> [I] was gang raped by 5 boys not sure their age but all were different [referring to their age] … I was ten and used different drugs that kept me numbed while being raped. Didn't stay longer [referring to her reserve], I was 14 when I went to Toronto and stayed there for ten years. Being raped was always there and my healing was very slow, very slow… the medicine pouch helped but I was very bad, bad… [Interview with Nina, 2004].

> I left home [reserve]... I probably wouldn't left there if I had my parents… but my father died when I was one and my mother died when I was 14… It was difficult for her because I had three little sisters … They [sisters and mom] had to give up where they lived…. we moved to a different house and then they grew [her sisters] and had kids… I could not handle for more… As soon as my mother died I was putting care of them, had to babysitting, do housework, all kind of stuff. Clean for them…me and my younger sister we had to cook and clean for our older sister… She wanted to tell me what to do and I was rebellious… I had enough of that and decided to move [to the nearest city]… Had some money and left….[Interview with Hannah, 2005].

> I was single and just leaving a nasty relationship. There wasn't enough room at my parents [located in a First Nation

> community] for my son and I. I found out that I couldn't be with my great parents living at home and being a child myself. So that was my motive to get out of there [referring to her reserve] and London [Ontario] was my only option because I didn't have anyone to provide a home for my son or myself down there [referring to her reserve]. There's no… there's no like apartments nothing like that…like to put women in the reserve out for. You basically have to have your own means, so that's why I left. There is no opportunity on reserve no jobs …except the ones in the band office… but most of the time people are drinking alcohol. I used to do it…. When I left the reserve I attended AA and then I went to London and continued with my recovery…. We need to heal… our communities need to forgive what happened to us and to forgive…. We have lost good lands.... Why we don't have those beautiful lands that are right there just before the reserve… why we have those lands, not the good ones! We need to forgive and to remember what our elders told us [Interview with Sally, 2003].

As these examples vividly illustrate there are multiple moments of decision making that trigger the process of moving from Reserves [First Nation communities] to cities like London, Ontario. The complexity of living in urban centres has been studied by multiple scholars, Native organizations, and/or grassroots community initiatives with the purpose of not only knowing their living conditions but their challenges and policy implications.[43] For example, in 2003 the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres and the Grand River Employment and Training Initiative (O-GI) documented the challenges facing Aboriginal youth (n=2000) in urban areas. The vast majority migrated from their First Nation community to multiple urban centres in Ontario. The data was collected from 19 Friendship Centres across Ontario and some of the findings included, but are not limited to, low literacy levels (44%), low education (38%), no work experience (26%), living in poverty (36%), and racism/discrimination (35%) .[44] George Kennedy, Robert Wemigwans and María Cristina Manzano-Munguía documented similar findings for the area known as the Golden Triangle (Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge) in southwestern, Ontario.[45]

Despite the prevalence of challenging environments for First Nations people in urban centres, there are multiple Native organizations ameliorating these gaps and providing a safe place to live. Therefore, these organizations represent the locale for social, cultural, spiritual, political, and economic support for the vast majority of First Nations migrants.[46] Here the emphasis is on the transnational economic and social relationship that First Nation people maintain with their First Nation community through Native organizations. I have elaborated elsewhere how First Nation people learn and select the type of services and programs delivered by these organizations.[47] For instance, some of these organizations in partnership with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)[48] deliver culturally appropriate programs that will aid the Aboriginal population to gain meaningful employment and access training or education (e.g., Anishinaabeg Outreach in Kitchener and Guelph and Nokee Kwe in London, Ontario). If a First Nation individual is seeking training (skills trade) and/or education he or she might be eligible for funding through his or her First Nation community (Reserve). These relationships between the First Nation individuals, their First Nation community (liaison tribal worker), and the Native organization (as mediator) will pave the way for accessing the training or educational initiative. Here the transnational relation between urban First Nation individuals and their First Nation community is not perceived in a sustained manner but rather, irregular and fragmented. The following excerpt illustrates this transnational experience from below:

> I wanted to be an office assistant and being here [the city] made it possible. Nokee Kwe helped and my Nation [referring to her First Nation Community]. The worker here [referring to the Counselor officer] did the paperwork and my home too [referring to the tribal officer]… My reserve gives the monies … I have to finish in two years and give back to my community. That's what I want to do, not sure how but I will help my community once I finish… [Interview with Marie, 2005].

Marie is still related to her home (First Nation) not only through her training program but, through the paperwork and money allotted for her training initiative. She is one of many First Nation individuals who are

pursuing educational or training programs in urban centres and closely related in one way or another to their First Nation community of origin. It is not an activity carried out by the band member in a "sustained and habituated manner" [49] but rather in a fragmented and irregular manner between the Reserve and the urban centre.

Chief Augustine is another example of a First Nation transnational. Even though he is currently living away from Sigenitog First Nation (located in Nova Scotia), he sustains economic, social, political, and cultural relationships with his First Nation community. An example of how he politically engages himself with his Nation is through the political lobbying on Mi'kmaq rights and political achievements to the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat. The following excerpt of his Keynote Address at the Mi'kmaq Grand Council Mi'gmawei Mawiomi Secretariat in Nova Scotia illustrates his on-going connections with his home community and the political activism in (de)constructing First Nations epistemologies:

> We have to reconstruct our world for the rest of the Canadians to show them what we have lost.... We have to argue on the premise of our priorities and concerns in relation to our own governance structures and knowledge systems, and according to our own collective experience and relationships with the land and what it has provided for us (our culture and language, our identity).[50]

> Nogematot, all of my relations, my brothers and sisters, today is [a] historic moment and we cannot let it pass without taking note of [some] interesting events in our past and without honouring our leaders of the past as well. All of the groundwork laid by Indian leaders of the past is the result of what is happening today. Aboriginal title, Aboriginal rights and the Treaties of Peace and Friendship, which recognized these rights and title, are what the leaders have been fighting for the last three hundred years.[51]

So Chief Augustine and other First Nation people construct their transnational migration experiences in terms of being 'FirstNa' [Nation] or 'TransNa'.[52] To a greater extent, this *performative* grassroots construction depicts the diversity needed for conceptualizing transnationalism. Helen

is another example of being 'FirstNa.' She was born in London, Ontario and while being a baby her parents decided to move from their First Nation community to Minnesota. She lived there for 4 years while her father completed bible school and the family moved again to their First Nation community. In her youth, Helen moved to London, Ontario and had a child as a single mom.[53] Two older brothers, her youngest sister and other members of her extended family (e.g., cousins, aunties) live in her First Nation community, except for her parents who passed away. She goes back and forth between the city of London and her home community while relating to cultural activities (e.g., healing workshops), politics (elections, band membership), and band funding programs (College and university). I concur with Latour[54] who calls our attention to look at the *performative* constructions from below: the actors create their own epistemologies and build from there the theory. So 'FirstNa' or "TransNa' relates to First Nations experiences of being transnational while living in the city and relating to their First Nation community.

The following examples will further illustrate my argument. Hannah's rationale for connecting with her First Nation community while living in the city implies another constructions of being 'FirstNa' in Canada:

> …. No matter where I am located, my home is and will always be [the name of her First Nation community]. We know that when we talk about home it is the place that we belong…. We know that it is home to us, when I see someone that is Native people, when we run through… we know … we know about the place that we belong. If you are Native, you know…. Some people do not understand the connections that we have with our homeland… I have the bonds to my place… I have over 400 and more in my family and that's only me. My children have many more probably around 600 hundred…. Some people when I talk about my family, my friends… they think it is only two or three but I have cousins, relatives. I do not see them that often…you know and I do not know everyone of them but [I] do know them at a distance… when someone dies, when someone gets married, and we see each other…. We know that … and I know they are relatives, my close cousins and others, my friends…all my friends

> who are like family … you know all of my friends are still there, at home [referring to her First Nation] [Interview with Hannah 2003].

'FirstNa' is flexible enough to accommodate a variety of vivid experiences and relations from the city to their Reserve (First Nation community) and vice versa.[55] Nina's experience complements my proposition:

> It took me a while to go back to the rez [First Nation], some years, but I knew what was going on at home… I stayed connected with my people [referring to a her First Nation], my friends, newcomers, or relatives they talk about home and my people [relatives and other band members] here and there. I receive things from my family and I send back some stuff… One Elder sent sage to me and I sent tobacco...[Interview with Nina, 2004].

The vignettes elaborated throughout this paper contributed to understanding the concept of being 'FirstNa' transnational in urban areas as open, porous, fragmented, and *performative*. Thus, it is a *performative* grassroots construction subject to change and flexible enough to accommodate the experiences from below.

Conclusions

This paper expanded and fragmented the meanings of transnationalism while adding flexibility to the concept. It is my hope that my proposition of considering 'FirstNa' as urban transnationals will encourage further refinements and critiques that will lead to a better understanding of transmigrants, transnationalism and Indigenous people around the world. My emphasis on Indigenous mobility did not bring any closure to our understanding of transnationlism rather it is an attempt to complicate the current model and to look for alternative frameworks that significantly redefine the current epistemologies that we use in our attempt to explain the complexities of human experiences. Future work on transnationalism might include a transdisciplinary approach to Indigenous mobility across borderlands.

Endnotes

1 "First Nations Diasporas in Canada: A case of Recognition". Funding for this research was awarded by the Democracy, Diasporas, and Canadian Security in International Perspective Research Award (2007-2008) and the York Centre for International and Security Studies. See also María Cristina Manzano-Munguía, "First Nations Diasporas in Canada: A Case of Recognition" in *The Nature of Empires and the Empires of Nature Indigenous Peoples and the Great Lakes Environment.* Edited by Karl S. Hele. (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013), 163-87.

2 María Cristina Manzano-Munguía, "'Forced Transnationalism' among Indigenous people across Borderlands: Mexico and the United States" in *Transnational Indians of the North American West*. Edited by Clarissa Confer, Andrae Marak and Laura Tuennerman (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2015), 45-64.

3 Following Bruno Latour's *Reassembling the Social*, I use the term 'FirstNa' as a *performative* grassroots construction of being First Nation Transnational. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor- Network-Theory* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34.

4 First Nations people refer to registered band member Indians. See Indian Act 1985, R.S.C., 1985, c. I-5 section. 5 (1) through section 5(10). Justice Laws Website, http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/page-2.html#h-6 (accessed 24 Aug. 2016)

5 Renato Rosaldo was the first to use the term "deep hanging out" to refer to what "makes anthropological ethnography distinctive". See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 56, 351; and James Clifford, "Anthropology and/as Travel," In *Etnofoor* 9,2 (1996): 5.

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9 Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference", 296.

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52 Reprinted from *Transnational Indians in the North American West* by Clarissa Confer, Andrae Marak, and Laura Tuennerman editors by permission of the Texas A&M University Press, page 58. Copyright © 2015 by Clarissa Confer, Andrae Marak and Laura Tuennerman.

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Indigenous Environmental Justice: Exploring the Potential for a Canadian Framework

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"To think that Indigenous concepts of justice do not exist is Eurocentric thought"[1]

Scholarship on environmental justice (EJ), defined as the struggle for an equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits across racial, ethnic, and economic groups, is well developed in the United States, but has not obtained the same level of visibility in Canada.[2] Unlike the United States, Canada does not yet have a formal environmental justice policy and program framework.[3] This is despite the fact that there are numerous well-documented cases of environmental *in*justice in Canada, particularly involving Indigenous peoples.[4] Environmental justice, as it pertains to Indigenous peoples,[5] involves a unique set of considerations that necessitates drawing conceptions of Indigenous sovereignty, law, justice and governance into the conversation.[6] It requires an examination of not only power relations among peoples (that tend to result in a disproportionate burden being shouldered by less dominant segments of society), but also the colonial legacy that continues to play out in laws, court cases and policies that structurally enable ongoing assaults on Indigenous lands and lives.

Following President Bill Clinton's executive order of 1994, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) developed an EJ policy framework within its country.[7] Despite its intended aims to address EJ, it has failed to fully consider the unique considerations of Indigenous

people and tribes in the United States.[8] As such, two decades later a specific Indigenous and Tribal EJ policy was developed. This paper examines the potential development of specific Indigenous EJ policy in Canada by drawing upon the experience of the United States.

In this paper, I also advocate that the development of any Indigenous EJ policy or framework must ground its foundations in Indigenous epistemology to truly reflect Indigenous conceptions of what constitutes *justice*. This approach calls into question the legitimacy and applicability of Canadian state mechanisms, as the nation state has clearly failed Indigenous people in Canada over the centuries, and continues to do so.[9]

It is also increasingly clear that current global and national environmental protection regimes are failing as well, with increasing species extinction, water pollution, contamination and scarcity, climate change, etc., all vying for our immediate attention.[10] In addition, ongoing and increasing conflict for control over lands and resources in Canada further demonstrate that existing environmental regulatory and policy regimes are not working, and especially are not resulting in environmental justice.[11] Any development of an Indigenous EJ policy framework in Canada must consider the broader context for Indigenous justice in Canada, including the Indigenous EJ policy development process in the United States, and identify the unique considerations that would pertain to a distinct Canadian EJ Policy. To address the phenomenon that current national and international environmental protection regimes are failing, it is important to examine how "justice" is framed from an Indigenous epistemological framework. In Canada, the release of the highly anticipated Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report has brought renewed understanding of Indigenous relations to the natural world that can inform environmental justice. As such, this paper will examine the role of reconciliation in achieving said environmental justice.

The Broader Context for Indigenous Justice in Canada

In June 2015, the TRC released the final report on the history, purpose, operation and supervision of residential schools in Canada.[12] The Commission, chaired by Justice Murray Sinclair, revealed that the central goal of Canada's Aboriginal policy was nothing less than to eliminate

Aboriginal peoples. The Commissioners found the objective of successive colonial governments in Canada has been to:

> …ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."[13]

Over time, various iterations of this policy of cultural genocide, as described in the TRC's final reports, involved a host of injustices, including seizing control over lands and resources and denying Aboriginal peoples the opportunity to engage in Canadian social, political and economic life. The TRC pointed out that colonialism remains an ongoing process, shaping both the structure and the quality of the relationship between the settlers and Indigenous peoples.[14]

The broader context in which any process of EJ policy development finds itself, therefore, is one of a systemically racist (and sexist) colonial ideology that continues in the present day. Government-established commissions and final reports, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the Ipperwash Inquiry and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, have consistently revealed that Canadian conceptions and practices of justice have routinely failed, and continue to fail, Indigenous peoples.[15] This is abundantly evidenced through such ongoing tragedies as the disproportionately high representation of Indigenous people in the criminal justice system and the missing and murdered Aboriginal women crisis, to name but two significant injustices.[16] Recent activism such as that expressed through the *Idle No More Movement* is also a clear indication that Canada and its laws, policy frameworks, regulations and programs continue to fail Indigenous peoples. The current First Nations water crisis across Canada is also systemic in nature and offers another example of continued environmental injustice affecting many Indigenous communities.[17] Such results are disappointing to say the least, and especially so in light of such international efforts as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP), which has called for the recognition of rights to self-determination and to justice

for Indigenous peoples.[18] UNDRIP recognizes a vast array of inherent rights of Indigenous peoples, and the TRC has referred to these as guiding principles for achieving reconciliation in Canada. This includes Principle 1, which states that "The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is the framework for reconciliation at all levels and across all sectors of Canadian society."[19]

There are many forms of institutionalized inequity in Canada, particularly in regards to Indigenous control over lands and resources.[20] Comprehensive and specific land claims processes, self-government agreements, consultation and accommodation processes are intended in part to address such inequities, but to a large extent have failed to do so.[21] In summary, there is no shortage of environmental injustice in Canada. In contrast to the Western perception of Canada as a tolerant nation, Canada to this day remains very much a colonial state, with systemically racist structures in place that undermine on a systematic level the equitable achievement of justice.[22] Given such a context, and despite various commissions having concluded from in-depth studies that injustice for Indigenous peoples remains pervasive, how can we expect justice for Indigenous peoples in relation to the environment? How will ideas around Indigenous environmental justice be received or enacted?

Indigenous Environmental Justice Policy Development in the United States

If we are going to make progress on these issues in Canada, perhaps a reasonable place to start is to observe what has transpired thus far south of the border. Current conceptions of environmental justice emerged in the United States in the early 1980s in response to a grassroots civil rights initiative aimed at stopping the state of North Carolina from dumping PCBs into Warren County, the county with the highest numbers of African American citizens in the state. Though not the first time hazardous waste had been situated in close proximity to people of color and the poor, the Warren County protests brought national media attention to the issue and "triggered subsequent events that would increase the visibility and momentum of the environmental justice movement."[23] Subsequent activism and studies revealed that people of colour and poor communities in general face ecological crises to a far greater extent than the general

population.[24] They consistently bear, for example, a higher burden of exposure to air, water and soil pollution. The people most affected by these conditions were understandably outraged (though perhaps not surprised) by these findings, and the environmental justice movement was born. Initially, the EJ movement focused broadly on people of colour and the poor. Within this general scope, Indigenous peoples soon found a place to express their particular concerns.

Two decades later, in 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12898 *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations.*[25] "The executive order established an Interagency Working Group on environmental justice chaired by the EPA Administrator and comprised of heads of 11 departments or agencies and several White House offices."[26] The EPA thus obtained the authority to consider and address environmental justice concerns. EJ undertakings are overseen by a National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), a federal advisory committee to the EPA which provides, among other things, for Tribal and Indigenous membership on the committee. The implementation of the Executive Order is supported by a number of policies and programs (including funding) geared toward assessing injustices and seeking resolutions for them. Accountability is achieved through annual reports provided by USEPA to the public. In addition, the EJ framework provides guidance for consultation and coordination with Indian tribes.[27]

Despite such achievements, the EPA's EJ strategies did not initially yield satisfactory results.[28] In order to address some primary concerns, the EPA in recent years has sought to develop a specific EJ policy regarding Tribes and Indigenous peoples. NEJAC established an Indigenous Peoples Work Group to assist in this process. A series of consultations was undertaken, including a review of the draft policy.[29]

In July 2014, the *EPA Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples* was released. The EPA policy is intended to "better clarify and integrate environmental justice principles in a consistent manner in the Agency's work."[30] The policy commits the EPA to providing tribes and Indigenous groups "and others living in Indian country, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in EPA decisions that may affect their health or environment."[31] There are

some aspects of the policy that are compelling. First, it sets out 17 principles, some of which are of particular interest here. One of these is the recognition of traditional knowledge's role in EJ as laid out in Principle 6: "The EPA encourages, as appropriate and to the extent practicable and permitted by law, the integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into the Agency's environmental science, policy, and decision making processes, to understand and address environmental justice concerns and facilitate program implementation."[32] Principles 8-10 deal specifically with support for federally recognized tribes to develop their own environmental justice polices in areas under their jurisdiction.[33] In other words, Tribes and Indigenous groups will develop their EJ policies to apply in their communities and conduct their own EJ analysis, and presumably, although it is unstated in the policy, be responsible for redress. This is an interesting turn in terms of EJ policy development, as Indigenous peoples are then seen as not just victims of environmental injustices, but active agents in the implementation of environmental justice at a local level.

It is far too early to determine how well the USEPA will deliver on the new Tribal and Indigenous peoples EJ framework or how many Tribes and Indigenous groups will embrace EJ within their own governance structures. From the outset, however, it seems there are some potential areas of difficulty with the framework. First, the policy has been developed by the USEPA. While there was some consultation with Indigenous peoples, this seems to be yet another attempt to have Indigenous peoples 'fit in' to a non-Indigenous framework. The case studies demonstrating the failure of this approach are legion. Time and again it has been shown that in order for a program to adequately involve Indigenous peoples and address Indigenous concerns, it must involve Indigenous peoples on a consistent and ongoing basis, *from the outset* of the program's development. In short, the program must be *co-developed* between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. Simple consultation is not enough. Second (and this relates largely to the first point), while the USEPA EJ framework does recognize TEK, the framework itself is not rooted in Tribal or Indigenous intellectual or legal traditions or knowledge. Again, it was developed as a non-Indigenous program, with Indigenous input. If the program does not adequately represent the views of the people it is supposed to serve, implementation will be challenging. Third, the framework makes reference to

only being applicable to "federally recognized" tribes. This immediately raises the question of what is supposed to happen with regard to those Indigenous groups that are not federally recognized. Surely, for an EJ framework to be effective, it cannot be designed as a tool for the continued exclusion of certain and perhaps the most vulnerable and "unrecognized" populations.

There are doubtless other issues that will emerge from the application of the Tribal and Indigenous peoples EJ policy as its implementation proceeds. Even from a cursory review, however, it seems clear that, while progressive in the sense of focussing on Indigenous-specific EJ, in practical terms it continues to prolong the ongoing tensions resulting from seeking justice remedies from a system that has been proven ineffective.

Considerations for a Canadian EJ Policy

Surprisingly, as noted above, currently no such EJ policy framework exists in Canada[34] despite numerous cases of environmental injustices [35] and the clear need to fill this regulatory gap within Canadian legal and governance systems. This may not be the case for long, however, as in Nova Scotia there is an ongoing attempt to address the EJ gap through the introduction of a private members bill, *Bill 111: An Act to Address Environmental Racism in Nova Scotia*. The bill was introduced to the Nova Scotia Legislature in the spring of 2015 with further readings to come in the fall.[36]

In Canada, a newly developed EJ policy framework may serve to bring into focus a fresh perspective on the nature and extent of the injustices that are encountered by Indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups on a daily basis. Already, some excellent work by EJ scholars has begun to articulate the environmental injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples and some attempts to achieve equity.[37] Some preliminary considerations that have been raised thus far include but are not limited to:

- EJ policy in Canada will likely need to be applied at multiple scales (federally, provincially, locally and in Indigenous communities). To have an EJ framework at one level and not the others will raise serious implementation challenges.
- Current Canadian environmental governance processes are ineffective at ensuring the voices of Indigenous peoples are heard and accounted for in decisions that affect their lives.

- Current governance systems have failed to protect the environment over time despite the establishment of environmental protection and conservation legislation.
- Indigenous peoples in Canada and the US have a unique set of relationships to the State (e.g., fiduciary, trust, treaty) that differs from that of other peoples.
- Increasing control of Indigenous peoples of lands and resources through assertions of sovereignty, jurisdiction, and self-governance continues.
- There is a lack of recognition of Aboriginal and Treaty rights.
- Historical and ongoing processes of colonization and racial discrimination remain outstanding.
- Current environmental laws are inadequate for protecting disadvantaged peoples and the environment.
- The differing ways various segments of society are impacted by environmental injustice, such as women or youth, are poorly understood and recognized.
- There is a lack of meaningful implementation of the Crown's duty to consult and accommodate Aboriginal peoples.
- Economic, social and health disparities remain apparent.
- There is a desire by many Indigenous groups to "develop" resources in effort to provide economic benefits for their communities.
- Recognition of Indigenous environmental principles, such as the earth as a living being; the needs of the seventh generation; the interrelationship among all things; the existence of 'natural law'; the importance of reciprocal relationships and responsibilities; and cyclical thinking; may serve as important guidance in moving towards a sustainable future.
- There is an ongoing lack of recognition and application of Indigenous systems of governance, law, justice, and other knowledges.

An EJ policy framework is not likely to adequately address all environmental justice concerns in Canada, particularly in relation to Indigenous

peoples, but it can provide another tool to hold those in power accountable for their actions. As Indigenous legal scholar John Borrows pointed out in his submission to Ipperwash, there is always a multitude of strategies employed by Indigenous groups to protect and defend their rights and interests.[38]

It is worth nothing that although governments in Canada do not recognize EJ formally, there are other organizations who do. Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOs) such as Eco-Justice and Polaris recognize that Indigenous rights and well-being are tied to environmental justice. The private members bill on environmental racism, noted above, is the result of the advocacy of the ENRICH (**E***nvironmental* **N***oxiousness,* **R***acial* **I***nequities and* **C***ommunity* **H***ealth)* project, a University/community collaboration that is advocating for political and legal recourse in Canada to address environmental justice/racism concerns.

An area that has not been given serious consideration in Canada relates to the kinds of EJ regimes that may come into being when Indigenous nations obtain more authority and jurisdiction over their territories through self-government agreements, comprehensive land claim settlements and other negotiated agreements.[39] Indigenous nations, like other levels of government, must also consider how EJ will be achieved under their own authority and processes. It has already been found that not all Indigenous peoples benefit in equitable ways from development as others, in particular women, even within Indigenous institutions of governance.[40]

Some might argue that self-government and co-management regimes merely reflect the larger, dominant, political processes that are not seriously intended to serve Indigenous peoples, but national economic interests. This scenario begs the question: Do we (collectively in Canada or as Indigenous peoples) really wish to expend our energy trying to "improve" upon a fundamentally flawed process in light of the fact that various commissions have revealed that centuries old systemic inequalities in such processes persist to the present day? Such a context merely allows environmental injustices and racism to continue.[41]

Differing Epistemological Frames of Justice

> If we continue to simply equate justice with punishment and choose to continue to ignore our own Indigenous teachings and concepts of justice, then we are forced to remain dependent upon colonial institutions. These institutions have been built upon colonial ideologies or racism and eurocentrism that perpetuate discrimination and oppression. The end result therefore should not be surprising: the colonial power imbalances are maintained and colonial ideologies are legitimized and enforced. Our lived misery will continue. [42]

How are we to ensure that once Indigenous nations regain law-making, governance and management authority in their communities and territories that broader Canadian society, driven by an aggressive and neoliberal resource extractive agenda, will not simply be reproduced? What can we learn from existing EJ policy frameworks and scholarship to advance conceptually what EJ might mean in Indigenous context?

As Wenona Victor suggests, Indigenous peoples need to frame justice issues from their own worldview and epistemological standpoint. It is not wise, in her view, to rely on western, colonial frames of justice to address the concerns of Indigenous peoples. Justice from an Indigenous point of view differs substantially from western views in a number of ways. For example, in Indigenous cultures, justice is not limited to relations among people alone, but includes other relatives as well. Environmental justice is therefore not just about inequitable and unjust relationships among people, but among "all our relations". Injustices are not just about assaults on the lives of people, but on all the other beings that make up the environment (animals, plants, birds, water, etc.) as well. An example of such understandings being put into practice can be seen in the Mother Earth Water Walks, led and inspired by Grandmother Josephine Mandamin. These journeys around various bodies of water, particularly the Great Lakes, point to a uniquely Indigenous and gendered understanding of relationships to water as a living entity, as deserving of life as any other being in Creation. [43]

Such Indigenous ideas were recognized by the *First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit 1991,* including the notion that

all species have rights. For an EJ policy framework to receive substantial Indigenous support, as it must in order to be successful in Canada, a major paradigm shift would have to occur within the EJ field. Indigenous epistemologies would need to be foundational in the development of such frameworks, rather than being limited to merely providing a "perspective" or being "included" as an "add-on" to existing EJ frameworks. Indigenous EJ frameworks would be situated within a context of Indigenous law, governance and knowledge systems which outline the rights and responsibilities of all beings to each other. These systems already exist, and have done so for millennia.

Such a discourse takes us beyond rights to *responsibilities* (including those that, while not recognized by the Canadian state, remain of utmost importance to Indigenous nations). In Anishinaabe thought, for example, environmental justice requires cooperation, balance, and harmonious relationships to ensure sustainability. Anishinaabe EJ would include obligations and responsibilities to all of Creation, including all beings, the ancestors and those yet to come, the spirit world, etc.; it is not limited to the living or the "natural" world as seen through western eyes.[44] Anishinaabe justice would be supported by Anishinaabek[45] law, which requires that people must cooperate with all beings in Creation.[46]

The Sto:lo example as described by Wenona Victor is similar in that:

> A foundational teaching for Qwi:qwelstom is based on the interrelationships of all living things - this includes our ancestry, whether past, present or future as well our natural environment, plants, animals, trees, mountains, water, birds, rocks, etc. As all life is inter-related we are encouraged to strive for peace, balance and harmony.[47]

An Indigenous EJ revitalization process, however, does not ignore the fact that Indigenous justice, laws and governance must co-exist along with other forms of justice. In turn, the state is not absolved of its responsibilities to Indigenous nations through fiduciary and treaty obligations. In many cases there may perhaps be simply a sharing of common concerns regarding environmental sustainability and other issues. There remains a role for nation states, including within academia and other sectors, in that Indigenous peoples require the necessary space to renew, regenerate,

revitalize, and practice Indigenous conceptions of justice. Some argue, as did Justice Murray Sinclair and his fellow commissioners, that this can be achieved through reconciliation.[48]

Conclusions: The Role of Reconciliation in Achieving Environmental Justice

In drawing upon the historic TRC report and the wisdom shared by over 6,000 participants who experienced injustice and sought healing, what can we learn from the reconciliation process that may be of assistance to the development of an Indigenous EJ framework? Elder Reg Crowshoe explains:

> Reconciliation requires talking, but our conversations must be broader than Canada's conventional approaches. Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aboriginal perspective, also *requires Reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete*.
>
> This is a perspective that we as Commissioners have repeatedly heard: that reconciliation will never occur unless *we are also reconciled with the earth*. Mi'kmaq and other Indigenous laws stress that humans must journey through life in conversation and negotiation with all creation. Reciprocity and mutual respect help sustain our survival. It is this kind of healing and survival that is needed in moving forward from the residential school experience.[49] (italics mine)

Elder Crowshoe's words remind us that Indigenous conceptions of justice extend beyond relationships between peoples. He also suggests that such ideas may in fact help bring about reconciliation in broader society. There is much that Canadian society can learn from Indigenous peoples. This learning will take various forms, particularly as there is no single definition of Indigenous justice, nor will there be for environmental justice. Indigenous peoples are diverse and epistemologies can vary significantly across nations, yet similar principles emerge that bear further study. This paper merely represents an initial glance at the development

of Indigenous EJ in Canada. There are numerous ideas currently under exploration. However, as pointed out in recommendations made by recent government-initiated commissions across Canada, all point to the necessity of grounding environmental justice in Indigenous laws, governance, values and knowledge. Indigenous realities must inform the foundation for any policy EJ development initiative, whichever government (Indigenous or not) takes it on. The TRC offers a path forward, through its 94 calls to action[50] that can be drawn upon to offer guidance for achieving reconciliation with the Earth itself.

Inspiration for reconciliation with the Earth can be found internationally, notably through the *Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth*, (Mother Earth Declaration) created at the World People's Conference on Climate Change. The Mother Earth Declaration asserts that human beings have a responsibility to respect and live in harmony with the Earth. It is possible that by drawing upon Indigenous philosophies, values and knowledges that living well with the Earth may become possible for societies across the globe.[51]

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sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system (NCIV, Definition of indigenous peoples, 1). In Canada, there are three main groups of such people: namely, First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples.

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Aboriginal government, destroyed Aboriginal economies, and confined Aboriginal people to marginal and often unproductive land. When that policy resulted in hunger, disease, and poverty, the federal government failed to meet its obligations to Aboriginal people. That policy was dedicated to eliminating Aboriginal peoples as distinct political and cultural entities and must be described for what it was: a policy of cultural genocide." Murray Sinclair et al. *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation* (Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 102, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (accessed 26 Jul. 2016).

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43 Deborah McGregor, "Indigenous Women, Water Justice and Zaagidowin (Love)," *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* 30, 2/3 (2015): 71-78.

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It is important that all Canadians understand how traditional First Nations, Inuit, and Métis approaches to resolving conflict, repairing harm, and restoring relationships can inform the reconciliation process. Murray Sinclair et al., *What We Learned,* 121.

49 *What We Learned*, 123.

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Seeing Ourselves: The Path to Self-curation, Cultural Sovereignty and Self-representation in Eeyou Istchee

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Foreword: Aanischaaukamikw within the North American Context

In North America, indigenous people have established museums based on particular, locally relevant stories of living culture, remembrance, struggle and resilience. Though most undertakings are small, some are downright tiny and others receive thousands of visitors each year[2]. Indigenous museums are diverse, their aims and approaches depend on the unique circumstances and aspirations of the communities that build them. Planned to address and defend lands, language, cultural practices and values, survival skills, and local histories for their children and future generations[3], these centres make social and political claims that counter centuries of effort from settler societies and colonial governments to deny

that sovereignty. Most local museums are also community centres that serve as knowledge archives and teaching resources to hold and transmit oral history, values, knowledge, skills, and to revitalize local language. For some communities, educating outsiders and attracting tourists are also important. Others engage in partnerships with mainstream and educational institutions. The variety of expression in community cultural centres demonstrates not only the breadth and range of community needs and aspirations but also how open and flexible the museum concept has become in First Nations hands[4].

Miriam Jorgenson carried out a survey of 166 tribal museums, archives and libraries in 2012[5]. Most of the institutions surveyed (89%) identify "education of tribal members" as a "very important" function for their organizations[6]. Other functions receiving strong support as "very important" are "cultural preservation, perpetuation, and revitalization for tribal community" serving as a "repository for cultural materials and resources, and providing "support for tribal sovereignty"[7]. Outward looking functions—or service to non-tribal citizens—were generally less important. Only forty-four percent of responding tribal museums indicated that "tourism or economic development" was a "very important" function, and only forty-three percent gave "education of non-tribal members" this status[8]. While the body of literature on tribal museums has been growing steadily, there are many fewer resources pertaining to aboriginal museums in Canada than to those in the United States. The illustrative examples below are drawn from both countries.

Formed with the aim of passing tribal history on to younger generations, the Ak-Chin Him-Dak Eco-museum in Arizona, for example, was developed with help of staff loaned by the Smithsonian Institution. Through this partnership, the museum's founders were introduced to, and decided to follow, the French eco-museum model. This model, which originated in France in the 1960s and was later adopted by many small (non-indigenous) Quebecois towns, proposes a strong focus on the unique qualities, history and identity of a place[9]. It seems to be particularly well suited to Ak-Chin aspirations. The Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways in Michigan is based on reclaiming cultural inheritance and identity to promote understanding and healing[10]. This museum presents oral history narratives that include the painful stories

of colonization through multimedia exhibition strategies developed with assistance from outside partners. The Iroquois Museum in upstate New York presents local history and knowledge through its unique collection of contemporary Iroquois art.

Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute shares some characteristics with the Makah Cultural and Research Center: primarily ACCI's goal of reaching both inside and outside Eeyou Istchee; the research centre and the remote location. The Makah Cultural and Research Center (MCRC) is located in Neah Bay, Washington, across the Juan de Fuca Strait from Vancouver Island. MCRC was established in 1979 by the people in the small community of Neah Bay. Museum Director Janine Bowechop and anthropologist Patricia Pearce Erikson have written together about the MCRC as a project that has enlisted both local and external expertise to "create a space for recovering traditional knowledge and countering dominant ideologies"[11] . When a 1970 landslide at a long abandoned coastal site exposed unusually well preserved objects some two thousand years old, the community called in archaeologists to excavate the site and protect it from outsiders scavenging for pottery and other treasures. The long history revealed by these artefacts prompted the Makah people to set up a centre that became the MCRC. The artefacts have generated questions amongst Makah youth, inspired elders to recall old stories and attracted visitors to the site. Although the museum originated in historical discoveries, preservation of "living culture" is at the heart of the centre's mission, according to Erikson[12]. Cultural programs at the centre have been developed and hosted by and for members of the Neah Bay community. The centre's library contains photos, oral history, language and other cultural resources used by the local schools, tribe members and visiting scholars; the craft store supports local artists.

Thousands of tourists now travel to the MCRC annually[13]. Cross-cultural encounters occur at many levels. Research relationships with other museums and educational institutions are especially important. According to Erikson, collaborations with non-Makah anthropologists, historians, archaeologists, and other scientists have contributed to the centre's growth and it has become a base for academic research directed by the community[14]. Relevance of that research to community needs is a major concern for the museum's directors[15] and they ensure

that Makah values and ways of knowing guide research projects in ways that protect the interests of the community. Strategies for protecting some kinds of knowledge and controlling access to other kinds have been prime concerns for many indigenous groups[16]. At the MCRC academic researchers and visiting museum professionals must learn to align their interests, approaches and systems of knowledge construction with those of the community. Encounters with outside researchers have reportedly influenced some Makah students to become researchers and museum professionals themselves.

Bowechop and Erikson contend that tribal museums/cultural centres are contact zones where the stereotypes and injustices of settler histories can be confronted and changed. They explain that:

> The colonial model of knowledge production ascribes the center of knowledge making onto the university and museums and the object of research onto the Native American community at a purported "periphery." The long tradition of social scientists taking their research materials with them has given the MCRC Archive department years and years of work in tracking down these materials...and duplicating them, where possible, so that they remain available for Makah research. Tribal museums, such as the MCRC, seek to reconfigure Native American communities as authoritative centers, or perhaps nodes, of knowledge making in their own right[17].

It is in confronting old power relations and then reclaiming the power to create knowledge, they maintain, that the Makah people can move toward realigning relationships.

The White Mountain Apache Cultural Center provides an alternative approach to that of ACCI and MCRC. Heritage preservation and promotion can be as important to the governance of large nations as it is to small communities. Members of the White Mountain Apache Tribe in Arizona created a heritage centre and park as a path towards increased sovereignty. Self-determination has been linked by tribal leaders there to self-representation and to local economic development based in heritage tourism[18]. The distant past as revealed in an archaeology site, traditional tribal life, and recent history are combined at this centre. To carry out their

plans for the centre, community leaders set up strategic partnerships with anthropologists, archaeologists and other professionals[19]. These outsiders were expected to further the community's goals through their work at the centre by mentoring band members in research and management, by encouraging interest in pursuing education, and by creating opportunities for local employment. Working together with community leaders, the team transformed a locally problematic site, a former US army post, to host exhibits exploring its history of relations with settlers and the federal government. In addition, they built a park and a traditional village that exhibits both contemporary works by local artists and historic objects excavated from a nearby archaeological site. In the process of creating the centre community members have engaged deeply with local histories. Over time, the army post has become "a symbol of hope, sovereignty, and self-determination" for many White Mountain Apache[20].

Many aboriginal museums articulate with historically significant places such as ancient settlements and other cultural landmarks, or with problematic sites such as old residential schools and forts. Place is important: as James Clifford notes, "[in] a local museum, 'here' matters. Either one has traveled to get here, or one already lives here and recognizes an intimate heritage"[21]. The historic Ozette site for the MCRC is an example, so too is the fort at the White Mountain Apache Cultural Centre. The meaning and importance of place, of land and landscapes, as libraries of aboriginal culture has been well documented[22], while the relevance of the land to museums, especially to large urban museums, has been discussed less often.

An example of the significance of place is seen in the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish) and Lil'wat Nations creation of the cultural landscape on the spectacular "Sea to Sky" highway, which runs through their traditional territories from Vancouver to Whistler Mountain, into a "Cultural Journey" for the 2010 Winter Olympics. Created by the bands to encourage cultural tourism and increase the visibility of Sḵwx̱wú7mesh presence on the land, the journey includes interpretive kiosks and directional signs that are Canada's first in ancestral languages[23]. There are interpretive maps, an audio guide, and a book to supplement the actual road trip. Large stone markers, legible even from cars that do not stop[24], provide the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh names of settlements along the route. A series of

information kiosks and an accompanying audio tour explain legends and history of selected places along the route:

> The Sea-to-Sky Corridor is a route stretching north from Vancouver through Whistler, renowned worldwide for its breathtaking ocean views and magnificent mountain ranges. The Corridor is much more than spectacular scenery — it is also a Cultural Journey. …Every inch of the route is rich in mystery with First Nations oral history, supernatural beings and place names. Learn how mighty Thunderbird, giant two-headed serpents and other mythical beings have shaped our land. Enjoy your journey along this modern path culminating at our crown jewel in Whistler, British Columbia — the Squamish Líl'wat Cultural Centre[25].

The reconfigured highway calls attention to this place and its often contested histories in much the same way that objects in museums can be reminders of tangled settler-native histories. Art historian Charlotte Townsend-Gault has described this cultural journey/highway as a carefully planned experience with a political message[26] about visibility. Rather than a journey through time in museum displays, travelers are called to acknowledge continued Coast Salish presence: "Witness through our eyes, the place where we have thrived and existed since time immemorial."[27] While connections to places along the route are marked[28], other places and the knowledge related to them are protected by the fact that they remain unmarked and are therefore unnoticed by observers driving past. A vehicle can stop only at the kiosks for specific views of coastline and mountains and for the stories provided. The stories presented[29] relate to S<u>k</u>w<u>x</u>wú7mesh engagement with the land as well to stories of colonial presence: scars of ecologically disruptive mining and logging sites, for example, are pointed out. The Cultural Journey highlights the changes that have occurred for both people and the land over time[30]. While a highway is rarely considered a museum in any sense, as it is about moving rather than about objects, this one emerges from forces similar to those that have inspired the other examples of indigenous museums and cultural centres discussed here. Certainly the highway can be seen as contact zone where cultures meet and where "drive-through politics" take the place of treaty negotiations[31].

All of the examples provided here, and in the detailed case study of ACCI, can be understood as underlining efforts to achieve cultural sovereignty. Legal sovereignty, independent (but still federally circumscribed) authority over a bounded territory and its people, is granted to aboriginal people in Canada and the US through legal recognition and law[32]. "Cultural sovereignty," according to Rebecca Tsosie, is "defined from within. This is the core of the 'inherent sovereignty' of Indian nations and is best represented by the efforts of Indian nations and Indian people to exercise their own norms and values in structuring their collective futures"[33]. Debates around control over representation and preservation of cultural heritage are often enmeshed with rights-based legal claims. Maximising political authority within the larger state is no easy matter, but cultural sovereignty reclaimed, suggests Rebecca Tsosie[34], provides a significant resource to support claims to rights and land, as well as a resource to help in healing long-standing historic injustices.

Introduction to our CINSA 2015 Conference Presentation

Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI) opened in 2011 and is located in Ouje-Bougoumou, Quebec. We are the regional cultural institute for the 10 communities [Whapmagoostui, Chisasibi, Wemindji, Eastmain, Waskaganish, Nemaska, Ouje-Bougoumou, Waswanipi, Mistissini and Washaw-Sibi] in the eastern James Bay and south east Hudson Bay Cree territory of Eeyou Istchee ("*The People's Land*"). Our inaugural exhibition, entitled *Reclaiming the Ways of Our Ancestors*, was meant "…to reintroduce the Eeyouch to their own material cultural as well as to introduce their oral traditions, language, artefacts and documentary past to the rest of Canada and the world"[35]. Our overall remit is preserving the traditions of the last Seven Generations and preserving them, for the Seven Generations to come. This is communicated in our mission statement:

> Many indigenous cultures, histories, and languages, even in Canada, have disappeared as the Elders have passed on. Aanischaaukamikw flows from the knowledge that Cree culture must be captured, maintained, shared, celebrated, and practiced or it will wither and die. Cree Elders have spoken of the need for a central place for the protection of "the ways", and have

Image 1: Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute. Photo by Laura Phillips

> developed a vision for Aanischaaukamikw over several decades. Aanischaaukamikw is the realization of that vision… [ACCI] is the Crees' primary location for preservation of documents, media, and physical objects, designed for preservation, conservation, and knowledge transfer. More than anything, it is a living, breathing symbol of the James Bay Crees' determination to preserve and share the stories and legends, the music, the pictures, and the physical objects that show their unique interaction with the land.[36]

In the years since our opening we have been able to reflect on the content of the exhibition and to evaluate refinements that might be made in order to meet our mission and goals. We have begun to re-envision our inaugural exhibit and the other display spaces within the museum, in order to present the content from a uniquely Eeyou[37] perspective. Extensive consultation with elders and community members was carried out in the preparation for the inaugural exhibit. In 2014 we decided to re-survey our communities to determine how accurately our exhibit reflects Eeyou culture and tradition, and how we can better engage community members. This revision process was initiated at a time when ACCI was transitioning to fill Collections roles with qualified and skilled Eeyou staff. In December 2014, Paula Menarick was appointed Collections Officer, taking responsibility for registrar and curatorial tasks within the Collections

team, while our Library and Archives collections were already staffed by Eeyou community members.

After her survey of tribal museums for the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums in 2010-2011, Miriam Jorgenson reported that aboriginal museums in both Canada and the US tend to be small, with few staff members, modest operating budgets and limited resources for professional development[38]. She found a pressing need for trained Native American staff in all areas of museum, archive and library activities. Increased funding for more staff was reported as an equally urgent requirement. Comparatively speaking, as a regional centre representing multiple Cree communities within our territory, ACCI is larger than individual small scale tribal centres, but we still hope that this chapter can be a useful model and case study for other Indigenous and First Nations communities in Canada and internationally, to see what we have learned so far in the process of opening our own regional cultural institution. As outlined above in relation to the Makah centre, being able to represent ourselves to others is an essential first step in all of our goals for self-determination as Indigenous people.

Introduction to Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute

Plans for a cultural institute in Eeyou Istchee were the subject of three planning studies in the 1980s[39] that examined how a cultural centre could meet the needs of the Cree communities, and house the objects that were collected starting from that time. In 1998 the project architect, Douglas Cardinal was selected and Ouje-Bougoumou was chosen the location for the building. Slightly more than a decade later, the construction started and in 2011 the building opened[40] as a multi-purpose institute with regional cultural programming that would act as the core for the network of community cultural centres. The building itself was designed as a state of the art building to house museum, library and archival collections, with climate controlled secure storage spaces and environmental buffer zones incorporated into different areas of the building. As such, the museum received Category A designation for Cultural Property in 2014, after being approved as meeting the required storage and security criteria for best practice in collections management.

ACCI promotes a dynamic and unified approach for services to our communities. In the words of Willie Iserhoff, Director of Culture & Language at the Cree Nation Regional Authority, and Dianne Ottereyes Reid, President / CEO of Aanischaaukamikw, ACCI "…represents the concept of *aanischaa* [sic], which refers to a bridging or continuity, to ensure that Cree traditions, knowledge and values are passed on from generation to generation"[41]. Our role at ACCI is to encourage open communication and interaction with all of the Eeyou communities in the region; to provide assistance and support in preventative measures for the proper care and protection of collections; to partner with other museums and heritage organisations regionally, nationally and internationally; to build capacity for Eeyou community members to take on professional roles within our institute; and to ensure that the Elders are the foundation for all of the cultural programs and teachings.

Our staff, consisting of just over 20 full time positions, is mainly from the Eeyou communities, but we also employ national and international specialists. We specialise in museum collections, archives, library, conservation, education, events, tourism, marketing, retail. Our building is also home to tenant entities that complement our remit: cultural, archaeological and linguistic staff from the Cree Nation Government; the staff of the Cree Nation Arts & Crafts Association [CNACA]; the staff of Cree Outfitting & Tourism Association [COTA] and the Aanischaaukamikw Foundation.

Our Programs Department consists of Education, Events & Gatherings, Museum, Library and Archives branches, all of which come together in our work as a teaching, learning, resource centre and research hub to develop engaging public programming for Eeyou communities and beyond. Our collections branch uses the industry leader MINISIS/MINT data management system for our collections management, which integrates data from our museum, library and archives. This data will soon be shared online in our new Cree Community Collections online website, which includes our ACCI collections as well as collections from our Eeyou community partners, in a project funded in part by Heritage Canada's Museums Assistance Program[42]. We are also called upon to offer expertise in conservation and collections management to support the cultural entities in our Eeyou communities[43].

Image 2: Ouje Bougoumou showing the location of Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (lower right; inner circle) in the context of the village, with a frozen Lake Opemiska shown at the top behind the horizontal tree line; Ouje Bougoumou First Nation offices (lower left; inner circle); Waapihtiiwewan School (upper left, outer circle); Cree Pentecostal Church (upper left; inner circle); Eenou Companee Offices / Canada Post (upper right; inner circle); multi-use shabtuuan public space (centre). Photo by Gaston Cooper.

We see as one of our most sacred obligations the assurance that our traditional knowledge is documented and passed on to future generations. In order to reclaim elements of our heritage that have been lost over time, we launched an artefact replication program in order to replicate Eeyou objects that we had on loan from partner museums, similar to the efforts made by the Gwich'in as documented by Kritsch and Wright-Fraser[44] in 2002. To date, we have replicated a beaded hood in the male style, from the collections of the McCord Museum and used this knowledge to research the creation of an original hood. This research included consultation with Elders towards ensuring the revival of the tradition. It also included the essential intangible heritage and teachings of the sacred hood in our culture, as well as the physical creation of the hood itself. Other Programming achievements include the Canadian Museum's Association Award for Excellence in Education programming for our theatrical production of the *Mind's Eye, Stories from Whapmagoostui*[45]. In 2015 we were awarded a second major grant from Heritage Canada to develop a travelling exhibition on the theme of 'walking', in partnership with the

Chisasibi Heritage & Cultural Centre. The continued investment in our institution shows that there is support and enthusiasm for our mission, and we hope that other Indigenous groups will benefit from our story and achievements.

The ACCI Visitor Experience

The visitor experience begins with the approach our iconic building, modelled after the traditional *shabtuuan,* or long house, style. ACCI is set in one quadrant of the central circle of Ouje-Bougoumou ("*The place where people gather")*, designed following a traditional medicine wheel layout, overlooking Lake Opemiska. Upon entering the Elder's Hall reception area, visitors are greeted before being directed to a seated area in the Billy Diamond Hall, where they view a short video of scenes from Eeyou Istchee, showing each community and examples of traditional activities taking place. The video is set to piano and guitar background music, without any narrative or sub titles to distract the viewer from the visual experience of the land. The video includes some singing and story-telling in Cree, to give the viewers an idea of the sound of our language. Many of the objects that feature in the exhibit are shown being used in the video.

Additional display areas in our building that complement the inaugural exhibit in the Exhibit Hall include three large scale works of art, commissioned with the province of Quebec's 1% integration of arts and architecture fund[46]: a mural illustrating traditional activities entitled "Our Rich Culture" by Tim Whiskeychan, 2013; a stained glass window depicting geese entitled "NISK" by Tim Whiskeychan, 2013; and a mural by Virginia P. Bordeleau entitled "Hommage à Billy Diamond", 2013, showing miniature scenes of accomplishment from the life of Grand Chief Billy Diamond. In 2015 we installed a 'Featured Object' case in one corner of the reception area to give visitors a taste of what is contained further into the building Our first display featured two historic shot guns with details of their multi-generational ownership (see Image 3). These guns are on long term loan from community members, along with one shot gun case and an embroidered ammunition pouch. We intend to change this case bi-annually, and ask our non-collections staff to assist with the curation of this case, as well as invite cultural staff from other communities to curate an exhibition[47]. In 2016 we installed a display of beaded barrettes,

Image 3: Shot Gun Display in the Elder's lobby with shotguns on loan from Gaston Cooper and Josie Shecapio-Blacksmith. Photo by Laura Phillips

in partnership with the Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association (see Image 4). Many of these barrettes are on loan from community members to give them an opportunity to display examples of their own beadwork and favourite barrettes they have collected.

We have two areas of visual storage that also double as display areas: one features objects, photographs and artwork related to the Goose Hunt, while the second area currently has a display of First Nations and Indigenous Artwork that we have on loan from the Cree Nation Board of Compensation and from the Cree Native Arts & Crafts Association. These displays include the artwork of Andrew Moar, Harold Bosum, Glenna Matoush and Alfred Coon-Come, to name a few.

Our library contains books relating to Eeyou culture, as well as First Nations history and politics. We have used the Brian Deer classification

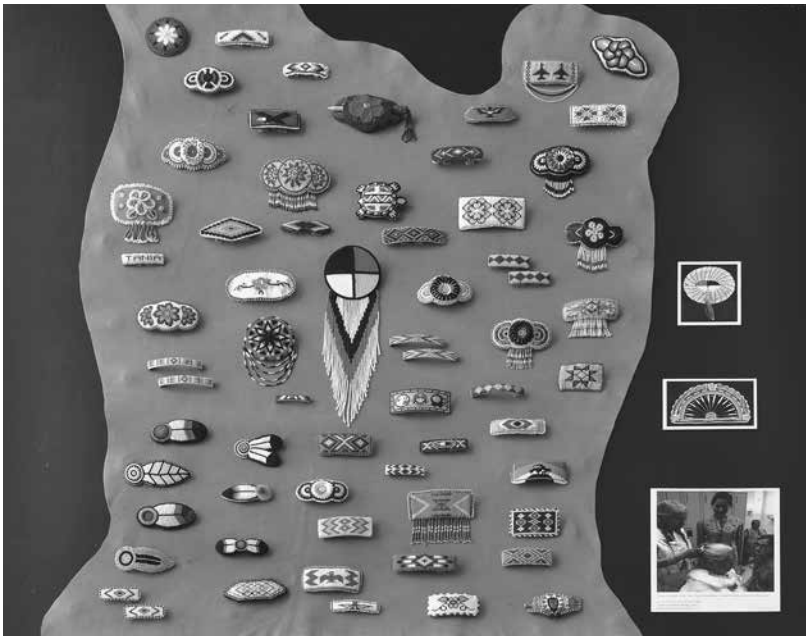

Image 4: Beaded Barrette exhibition. Photo by Fiona Hernandez

system for our library collection[48]. Our archival collections focus primarily on Eeyou culture and it is open to researchers by appointment. Our archival deposits to date include the academic archive of anthropologists who did fieldwork in Eeyou Itschee during their careers, including Harvey Feit, Cath Oberholtzer, and Richard Preston, as well as archival material of entities and organisations that were active in the region in the twentieth century. Our gift shop sells souvenirs and crafts from local artists, and the building also has a Skills Workshop for education activities.

Our building has a visible internal wooden frame, and large windows to maximise the view of the landscape and setting we are in, with views of trees, sky, the lake and the land. All of this comes together to give our visitors a lasting memory of our Eeyou territory, before they enter the Exhibit Hall to view our object collections.

Evaluating our Exhibit and Display Areas

As of 2014 we had been open for three years. We were fortunate to host many important loaned objects from major museums in Canada and

Image 5: View of Exhibit Hall. Photo by Fiona Hernandez

abroad. After three years, some of these loans needed renewal or return. Almost all of our objects are composed of organic materials, with natural paints and dyes. Thus, many of the objects in our inaugural exhibit needed to come off display and return to storage so they could have a rest from light exposure to avoid risk of fading. Since the opening date, the staff have gathered comments from visitors and made their own assessments for improvement of the exhibit. With the knowledge that we were going to have to make some changes to the exhibit, we decided to revisit the communities for a new wave of consultations which would feed into a 5 to 10 year framework for implementing the desired exhibit enhancements.

Some areas of the exhibit underwent enhancements based on staff coming up with alternative solutions, while other areas remain challenges that still need resolution. For example, the 'Archaeology Wall' is one area of the exhibit that we would like to improve. When you enter our Exhibit Hall, you are confronted with a wall inset with archaeological finds from 4 major inhabitation sites within Eeyou Istchee: *Aaskwaapisuaanuuts* (Waiting for Swans), *Upimiskaau* (Lake Vincelotte), *Waapushukamikw* (Colline

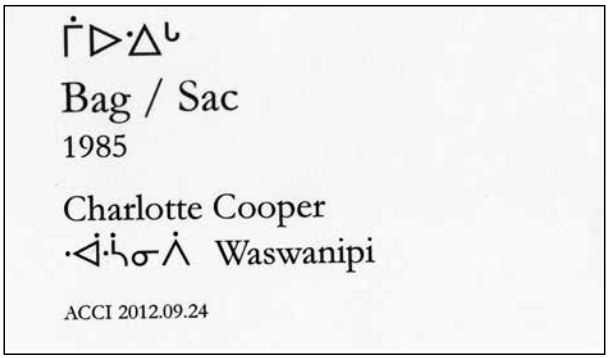

Image 6: Examples of the new style of label. Photo by Laura Phillips.

Blanche / Marble Hall), *Kaanemekushkaashii* (Plenty of Lake Trout Lake) from a mix of periods, on a background map of the region. Another wall presents the detailed label information for the objects, with illustrative photographs and another map with point data for known archaeological sites, many of which have been recorded during hydro-electric projects alongside major waterways. There is a wealth of fascinating information in this area, but the presentation is problematic in conveying this to visitors because the interpretative text is separated from the objects. The objects are physically difficult to access for collections management purposes, and the display is not flexible to allow changes when new excavations produce interesting finds. This is one section of the exhibit that needs to be improved, which will be a major undertaking.

Other improvements have been more straightforward and simple to implement. For example, we have made changes to the content and design of our object labels. The original background colour of the labels was red, with white and black writing. Our exhibit has dim lighting to avoid excess light exposure on the objects, which made the labels difficult to read. We want to add the object maker's name, when known, to the label, and the community they are from[49]. Adding this information to our labels will help us demonstrate regional variations, and similarities, and give a sense of pride to visitors from these communities. Including names of known people also helps to engage our local Eeyou visitors, since they likely know or may even be related to these individuals. Each label needs to convey the basic object information in three languages: Cree, English and French.

Originally the labels were placed around the edges of the exhibit cases, with numbers orientating to each object. We wanted to decrease the overall size of the labels, to make them present information in a more concise manner, without repetition of the same information in each translation area. We intend to place the smaller labels inside the cases, in close proximity to the described object, rather than relying on adhesive numbered legends which proved to be inflexible over time.

Another area for improvement is the method of delivering further information about the displayed objects. When the exhibit was originally conceived, it was thought that a smart phone 'app' would deliver detailed content through the use of QR code readers. This has proven difficult to maintain, with low levels of use, which is in line with other museums experiences of visitor's take up of scanning QR codes, which is further reduced when they need to download an application or the QR code reader[50]. The original intention was for visitors to be accompanied through the displays by an Eeyou guide who would give verbal explanations of the overall content and themes. In practice, there are instances when no guide is available, so we have trialled the use of brief text panels to explain the general content of some cases in the exhibit, or the history of an object, with an emphasis on how the object is linked to community members. The inclusion of the community member's names to illustrate the story of an object is meant to engage our Eeyou visitors, in the same way that we found the inclusion of the maker's names has done. For our non-Eeyou visitors, we hope to demonstrate that the 'unique selling point' for our museum is that we have access through our communities to detailed living information about Eeyou objects, in comparison to non-tribal museums with historic collections, where information has often been lost over time, simply not recorded, or deemed unworthy of including in displays.

Another known area for improvement is increasing the size of interpretative photographs throughout the exhibit. The exhibit cases are illustrated with a number of historic photographs from various archival repositories or publications. The photographs usually demonstrate an aspect of Eeyou life that has a related object displayed. The photograph is typically half of the total panel, with the other half including caption and credit information. Unfortunately, this often means the content of the photograph is not clearly visible. We intend to double the size of the photographs displayed,

Image 7: Camp Scene (2014) By Benjamin Capassisit

Image 8: Camp Scene (2014) By Darryl Hughboy

Image 9: Camp Life Case showing 20th century collections: rubber camp shoes, lamp, medicine bottle, enamel bowl and cup, chainsaw, water carrier/ yoke, goose decoy. Photo credit: Fiona Hernandez.

and reduce size of the captions. In 2015, we chose to include the work of contemporary community photographers to illustrate our displays. In our 'Camp Life' case (see below) we chose two photographs from a local winter Facebook photograph competition to give contemporary illustrations of winter camps.

One of the criticisms about the content of the inaugural exhibit was the lack of explanation about continuity of tradition into modern Eeyou life today. In 2015, we introduced a new themed case to display objects relating to 'Camp Life'. This display includes contemporary objects like a chain saw, a yoke or water carrier, an enamelled bowl and cup, rubber shoes and a goose decoy. In practice, this display shows non-Eeyou visitors examples of what objects are used in the bush, as well as some contemporary photographs [mentioned above]. As we hoped, Eeyou visitors do engage with this display, saying 'I have one of those' or sharing a personal story. For example, Kenny Mianscum, from Ouje-Bougoumou, visited the museum in August 2015. He had many stories to share as he viewed the exhibit, but one that was particularly memorable was triggered when he viewed the rubber shoes in the Camp Life case:

> … before there were any roads into this region, our people had to canoe to Oskelaneo to pick up their winter supplies. In one journey, the leader of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) thought that it would be a good gesture to give the men a new pair of

> boots. So the men accepted the gift, exchanged their moccasins for boots, but not far into the journey the men found the boots to be very uncomfortable.
>
> From Chibougamau Lake / Dore Lake, there are twenty-six portages, down to Oskelaneo. There is one that is more than a mile long. Because the boots were very uncomfortable to the men, they put their moccasins back on, and at some portages you would see the boots left behind, hanging from the tree[51].

This section has summarised some of the challenges we would like to overcome with our Exhibit Hall, after 3 years of living and growing into our space. We have already introduced a few changes that were mentioned above, but for the longer term, we wanted to go back to our communities to get their input and feedback.

The Consultation Process and Preliminary Results

In order to collect the thoughts and opinions of our community members to take into account when planning changes for our displays, we began an extensive program of informal community consultations in January 2015 in collaboration with each of the local cultural coordinators in the Eeyou communities. As of September 2015, we completed four of the ten consultations[52]. Our 2015 consultations included gathering opinions from our Eeyou communities about how to rework the display of our copy of the *James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement* to commemorate this event effectively, and to decide which themes of twentieth and twenty-first century Eeyou life we should focus on for our collections development. Our main goal for the consultations was to meet a range of community members, many of whom had not visited Aanischaaukamikw, to show them the cultural centre using projected slides and a short movie, to get their ideas about how we should focus our collections and exhibits to better represent them and their communities. It is important to note here that these consultations were not based on formal surveys or focused on data collection and statistics, as we felt that such techniques would not contribute to building relationships with community members, or to eliciting and hearing their stories and ideas. We acknowledge from the outset that each community has distinct and unique traditions, as well as traditions

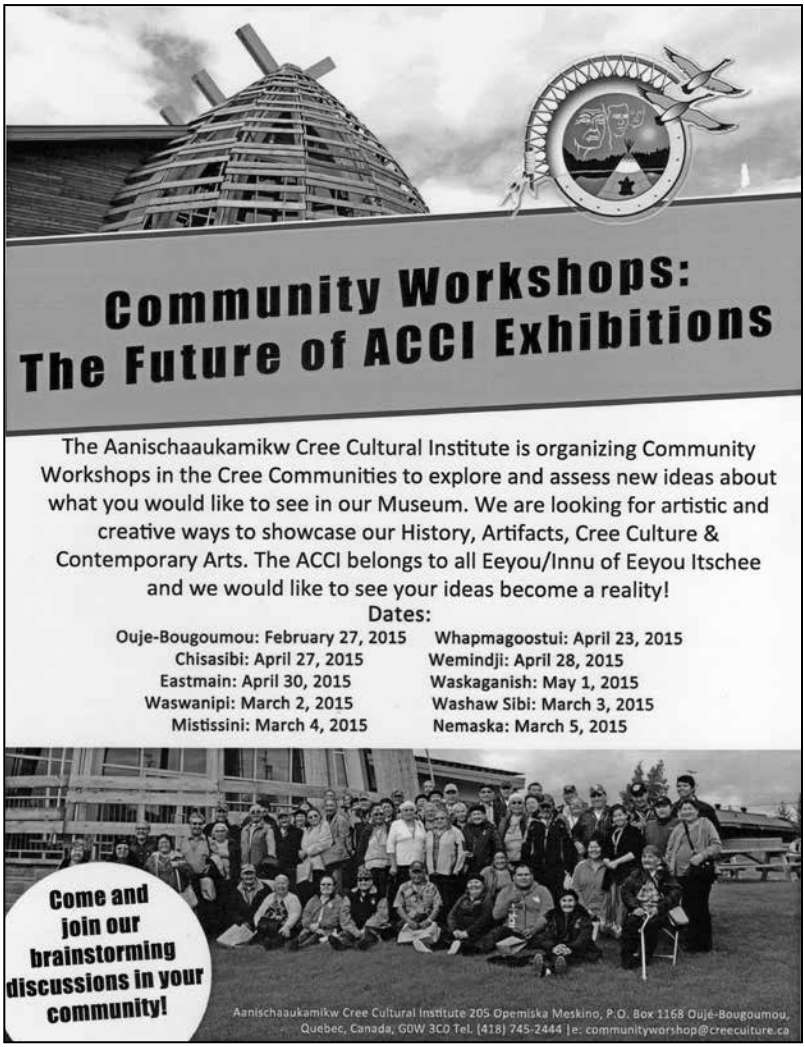

Image 10: Example of a poster from our Community Consultations. Poster design: Paula Menarick and Fiona Hernandez. Used with permission of Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute.

that are common to all. There are also differences between the inland and coastal communities, so these sessions are as much about gathering dissimilarities as general consensus.

One of the immediate challenges was the organisation of the consultations, which required travel across the territory[53] to each community, the

booking of a meeting place, and arranging our travel. In order to maximise attendance at the sessions, we advertised them on the Aanischaaukamikw Facebook page; the relevant community announcement Facebook page; in local and regional radio announcements; with posters in the community; and by sending personal invitations to the Chief and Council, the Youth Council and community groups. In reality we found that there tended to be many competing events taking place in the communities on the day we arrived, which sometimes affected the number of people who were able to attend. We tried to offer at least 3 sessions throughout the day, so that people could attend the session that best fit their schedule. All of the sessions were recorded with an audio recording device, with transcriptions of these files made afterwards. Each participant provided their contact information so the demographics can be analysed in the final report. As of July 2016, the consultations have not taken place in all of the communities, but we outline a typical consultation session below.

We chose to begin each session with a brainstorming activity where people wrote words on sticky notes and stuck them into sections divided by 'Water', 'Land', 'Sky'. This was to get the participants thinking about the space around them, and the kinds of things they associate with their life, their culture and their territory. Each session was led by a Cree staff member, and the language spoken was usually Cree though English was also used. When possible, another staff member took notes related to the discussion to compliment the audio transcription for the final report.

Our discussions centred on slides illustrated with a representative photograph and questions such as: Have you visited the exhibit? What did you like? What did you not like? What would you add? What would you like the exhibit to say to visitors? To youth? To foreigners? To Eeyou people? What should we say about the land? How can we best illustrate Eeyou Istchee? How should we present Eeyou politics? Which events in Eeyou / Quebec / Canada history should be included in the exhibit? What is unique about your community? What makes it different from the others?

As stated above, the consultations are not completed so we have not performed a great deal of the required analysis of the attendees' demographics or trends and statistics relating to their responses and discussion. Based on our experience so far, moving forward we will likely target specific focus groups based on age groups, rather than an open call across the

community because we found the number of participants to be lower than we had hoped for[54], with most representation from the older (age 50+) groups. Our main source of knowledge comes from the Elders in each community, so that we can be sure to reflect the teachings and traditional ways. Our planning of future sessions will also need to ensure accessibility for this essential group.

Aside from learning how to improve our ongoing consultations process, participants at the completed consultations presented a wide range of ideas for enhancements to our exhibits and suggested themes that we can research further. The suggestions included more emphasis on the seasons and a holistic view of time, stories, connections to the land, camps and journeys, and the Cree language. There were requests for more hands-on activities such as demonstrations of traditional skills and crafts. Opportunities for visitors to express opinions and different points of view about things were suggested. We were asked to include the old and the new, to acknowledge both continuity and changes, to engage with the youth through technology, videos, music and pop culture, and to include more contemporary Cree art. The theme of connections to the land was often heard, with requests for more content about how the Eeyou have lived in the bush for many thousands of years. There was an expressed desire to see more maps with Cree place names, transport routes, networks, trap lines, hunting territories, land occupation, and community relocations. Also in relation to the land, we heard requests for exhibits about animals, plants, weather, animal tracks, and water ways. A timeline of events including the 1976 James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement, and the agreements that followed, with explanations of what happened and their impacts on the land was put forward along with discussions of the old way of Eeyou politics and more coverage of protests, protest songs, activism. In this historical vein there were also proposals to include local histories, a timeline for each community, and displays that focus on the unique aspects of each community's environment. The inclusion of sensitive subjects was also recommended: the impacts of residential schools, missing women, colonisation and cultural appropriation, land transformation, dams, mining, forestry. Some participants stated they would like us to include aspects of spirituality, sacred objects, ceremonies, and the old stories and legends.

Conclusion

This paper has presented an overview of tribal museums within North America to place Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute in our larger context, summarised the brief history of how our centre was planned, and how we are approaching updates to our exhibits to reflect the contemporary and traditional aspects of Cree life in Eeyou Istchee. We hope this case study will encourage other Indigenous and First Nations groups to create a similar space of their own to feature self-curated exhibits for themselves, a place to introduce their culture to others, and to explore their cultural sovereignty. The foundation of ACCI as a physical entity was an enterprise that started in the last century: a place to celebrate and preserve the Eeyou traditions that have been more than Seven Generations in the making. As of 2016, we are an established cultural institute representing the James Bay Eeyou of the past, present and for the Seven Generations to come as we continue to symbolise "the Cree's quest to complete the circle of full control over all aspects of their lives, communities, and cultural destiny"[55].

Endnotes

1 The authors would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who believed in Aanischaaukamikw and who worked to ensure ACCI was created, and continues, as a viable enterprise well into the future, especially the Eeyou Elders. We would also like to thank the reviewers for their useful comments on the earlier draft of this paper.

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Cultural Safety: Applications and Implications for Indigenous Children, Families, and Communities

Catherine Richardson/Kinewesquao,
University of Montreal

Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Concordia University

What makes you feel you belong? Where do you feel most comfortable? What verbs evoke a sense of cultural safety? These questions set the stage for our recent cultural safety panel discussion at the recent Canadian and Indigenous Studies Association in Montreal. Here, five presenters theorized and discussed the applications and implications of cultural safety for Indigenous children, families and communities. They also talked about their practice of social engagement designed to extend cultural safety, as well as to analyze the implications of its absence. These conversations form part of an ongoing commitment to improving the lives and experience of Indigenous peoples in their now colonized homelands.

Cultural safety is a term originally articulated in the context of bettering nursing services for Maori in New Zealand/Aotearoa.[1] As a barometer of dignity and inclusion, cultural safety is a concept and practice that informs the upgrading of programs and services for Indigenous peoples and non-majority populations, primarily in former British colonies such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada.[2] As authors and educators, we came together with an interest in exploring its application across other fields. Our intent is to broaden and deepen the concept so that cultural safety becomes woven into the social fabric and not just "pulled out" when certain people enter the room. "It is clear that cultural safety must extend beyond health if its full implications are to be realized".[3]

To begin, we organize our inquiry around the following questions.

- What kind of practices embody cultural safety across various fields?
- How is cultural safety applied specifically across life stages and in regards to the diversity amongst Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere?
- How might human service workers strengthen practices of *centering others* and *working across difference* and becoming an ally for Indigenous individuals and families?
- Is cultural safety one step in a broader movement of decolonization[4] in Canada?
- Is it part of a larger movement to restore and return to Indigenous peoples what has been taken away through colonial violence?

While coming from various backgrounds including Indigenous education, child welfare work, counseling, environmental education/preservation and youth work, some common themes emerged. In this paper, we begin by presenting some of the context and issues related to defining and applying cultural safety. Then, we review key themes raised in our presentations.

Contextualizing Cultural Safety More Broadly

Cultural safety is a response to the historical service delivery in which mainstream professionals are situated at the top end of a social hierarchy whereby services are delivered to Indigenous, immigrant or "othered" groups occupying a structurally subordinate position. In a more cosmological sense, cultural safety emerges from Indigenous spiritual understanding that every being is sacred. Indigenous epistemologist Willie Ermine believes that we all share the same breath, life force and microcosmic aspects of source and that this makes us all equal, interconnected and worthy of care and respect.[5] This belief is expressed through the Cree concept of *mamatowisiwin*.[6] Ermine also brought forth the concept of *ethical space* as a site for deeply respectful human exchange in social work. Across the globe, Maori cosmologist Irihapeti Ramsden introduces the Maori concept of *Kawa Whakarurahau* which embodies a form of cultural safety:

> Cultural Safety and *Kawa Whakaruruhau* have arisen from the agony which Maori suffered through the experience of colonisation. Such loss and grief and pain should not be experienced without learning. What we have learned is that we cannot revisit the subjective experience of being deprived of precious things but rather we should learn from the experiences of the past to correct the understanding of the present and create a future which can be justly shared[7]

The reality she depicts for the Maori is shared by many other Indigenous people worldwide. However, most social services in former colonies are modeled on Euro-centric delivery, on the template of the European body.[8] Centering Euro-centric values tends to position First Nations, Metis and Inuit people as the "other" and implies some sort of deviation or even deviance. Health scholar Mary-Ellen Kelm has documented how Euro-centric practices in health care delivery[9], which Todd & Wade[10]identify as also endemic in the psychological helping professions, reproduce an "expert", Euro-centric notion of "wellness" to the detriment of the Aboriginal service-user. The social work literature abounds with examples of how structural inequalities are taken up and reproduced. Factors such as gender, racialization, socio-economic class, sexual orientation, and judgements about body size also relate to the quality of care one will receive.[11] Structural social work[12] has tried to address issues of inequality but has fallen short in regards to the emancipation and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

Practitioners and educators have, in fact, talked about notions of cultural safety for decades using terms such as cross-cultural respect and social equality.[13] More recently, terms such as collaborative practice, "working across difference"[14] have been used to emphasize that this is not about learning someone else's culture as an added competency, but as recognizing one's own culture and understanding the right of others to have their own. Society can be organized around diversity, celebration of difference and the de-centering of Euro-privilege and white supremacy. The main emphasis being on anti-oppressive practice whereby power needs to be adjusted so that service users (students, clients, families, etc.) are not acted upon in culturally oppressive ways by professionals in power,

thereby replicating and enforcing dominance.[15] One might theorize that the degree to which a concept such as cultural safety is taken up by health authorities relates to the degree that it does not challenge the status quo. One example is the preference of the status quo to organize around the concept of resilience as opposed to acknowledging resistance to oppression because the former individualizes the response to the problem and does not imply structural change.

Definition and Implications for Practice

Cultural safety sits at the further end of the continuum of cross-cultural services, following cultural competency, cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity.[16] Cultural awareness and sensitivity refer to the initial step of becoming aware of differences, cultural competency goes further in that it involves the acquisition of knowledge, competency and attitudes, and then comes cultural safety which places the emphasis on how safe the recipient of the services, respected and considered for their cultural location.[17] Often defined in contrast, a non-culturally safe practice entails "any action, which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and well-being of an individual."[18]

Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman documented that the various forms of humiliation and mistreatment people experience in public institutions contribute to a sense of "spoiled identity" through exclusion, misrepresentation, mistreatment and alienation.[19] He noticed that whenever people were treated badly in institutions and bureaucracies, they tended to respond to the conditions in ways that contributed to their identity formation:

> A stance-taking entity, a something that takes a position somewhere between identification with an organization and opposition to it, and is ready at the slightest pressure to regain its balance by shifting its involvement in either direction. It is thus *against something* that the self can emerge.[20]

What this means for citizen service users is that receiving helpful, dignified, client-centered interactions increase the likelihood that they will feel and be well in society. As such, they will be more likely to identify with the society, participate more fully, experience more belonging and citizenship.

Those who experience disrespect are more likely to withdraw in anger or humiliation, to rebel and to feel outside of the dominant society. They will not see themselves reflected or welcomed in this society. This situation can, unhelpfully, be recast as an issue of "problem or uncooperative clients" who need to be trained to accept the offerings of various systems without critique or self-protection. Obviously, if the goal of medical practitioners is to improve the health of their patients, offering culturally safe and appropriate care would lend itself to this goal. In contrast, offering services that alienate patients impedes the broader goals of service provision because patients are less likely to accept the proposed treatment and trust the service provider.

Power theorist James C. Scott in "Domination and the Arts of Resistance" documented how people respond to mistreatment and abuses of power in daily living and work environments.[21] He asserts that individuals resist mistreatment and this resistance may result in a distancing from the oppressor, even if it does not seem so on the surface. His analysis supports the idea that when service providers/educators commit to a practice that is self-aware, socially-aware and culturally-aware, with an analysis of power, things will go better for oppressed and marginalized populations. Indeed, cultural safety calls for service practitioners to relinquish power and commit to its equalization in practice settings.

Cultural Safety and Opportunities for Decolonization

Underlying our paper was a question about the extent to which cultural safety can be implemented without other structural and systemic changes. In other words, can cultural safety be promoted as a "stand alone" initiative to enhance the health and well-being of recipients without attention to other injustices such as structural violence and inequalities? To rest on a sound and supportive structure, a systemic effort to decolonize White/Indigenous relations will likely lead to the longevity of health and social service initiatives. To this end, cultural safety entails a paradigm shift. The social visionary Leo Tolstoy says:

> I sit on a man's back choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all means possible.... except by getting off his back. [22]

In analyzing practices that do not uphold and uplift the dignity and well-being of the person, we may begin to assess the interaction between professional and Indigenous client, at both macro and micro levels. The panelists shared the understanding that the need for cultural safety was rooted in the deep history of social injustice that Indigenous peoples experience in Canada and worldwide.[23] References were made to the impeding implications of the colonialist machinery, including installation of mega-extraction resource projects on Indigenous territories. The connections between the destruction of land and violence against Indigenous women[24] have been articulated, as well as the ongoing over-representation of child removal from Indigenous mothers.

Child removal from Indigenous families is seen, on a systemic level, as ongoing cultural genocide.[25] To avoid replicating domination of Indigenous peoples in the future and to create social equality, widespread re-structuring of mainstream institutions, infrastructure, services, practices and relationships is necessary. As such, cultural safety has implications for human rights and the accessibility of services, resources, care and benefits within a society. But while dropping clean water into a dirty bucket does not lead to a pristine social ecology, we present some insights to move towards "decolonization," considering this to be integral to the paradigm shift. As discussed by Indigenous scholars[26], there is no consensus on what or how this will take place. Below, we draw from the literature as well as contributions by presenters.

Fundamental changes that create a ground for cultural safety may require that the professional exit their zone of comfort, privilege to expand their analysis. Various forms of diversity training have been used to expose the professional to their own racism, blind-spots and other socialized and limited perceptions of "the other." For example, Indigenous social work educators often use the talking circle, stories and testimonies to educate students about colonialism, social misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in order to deconstruct stereotypes and promote acceptance and shape socially just social workers.[27] In the United States, National Coalition Building Institute has offered trainings to deal with racism in groups such as police, universities, workplace to promote culturally safe and respectful work spaces. Consciousness-raising has been part of Canadian education in areas such as feminist studies, social work, environmental and social

justice activism in many educational settings. In short, there are many ways and various models to teach professionals to work across difference and engage in a micro-analysis of dignity in human service interaction. Robina Thomas once said, "I don't have to go to a christian church to learn about european culture and they don't have to come to a big house to learn about mine. For me, it is about working across difference."[28]

Part of the shift within professionals comes from exploring concepts such as "whiteness", the division of land and resources in Canada for instance (e.g. Indigenous peoples in Canada currently own ¼ of 1% of what was formally all collectively held Indigenous land while 99 ¾% of the land is owned by non-Aboriginal Canadians).[29] Exploring laws which perpetuate inequalities or understanding what impoverization entails for service-users are other elements that could be included. It may mean analyzing one's own privilege and committing to leveling the differences between those who *have* and those who *have not* in western societies.

Simon Brascoupe's, Anishinabeg/Haudenausanee, studies and writes about cultural competency and safety. He discusses the history of colonization, stating that it is important to understand this history in order to improve services to Indigenous clients. Brascoupé emphasized the need for citizens and social service workers to be educated about the history of colonialism in order to adopt new ways of interacting with Indigenous populations who have been traumatized, and to implement perspectives that allow for implementing visions that reflect Indigenous concepts of "good health/good life." He points out that the history of colonialism in Canada is Canada's history, not the history of Indigenous people.[30] However, due to the dynamics of power and the tradition of the victors to write the history books, the state has chosen to conceal much of the violence perpetuated, by the government, on this land. Although there is an increase awareness of colonial initiatives such as child internment in residential schools, the "Sixties Scoop" and mass removal of Aboriginal children, the level of awareness is still low and relatively recent.[31] For Indigenous peoples, cultural safety implies an atmosphere of respect for Indigeneity. He cites the study by Chandler and Lalonde, which indicated that communities that actively engaged in 'cultural continuity' had lower suicide rates as evidenced by the connection between culture and health.[32] He considers practices of reparation, including receiving state

funding to develop Indigenous-run and designed services, are the most likely to deliver on cultural safety rather than relying on mainstream service providers to take the lead on this readjustment of social relations in professional settings. While several initiatives have been put in place to put cultural safety practices into place, his work with the Cree and others Indigenous groups indicates that the putting cultural safety into practice remains challenging.[33]

Presenter Jeannine Carriere discusses her research and practice in the area of First Nations and Metis adoption. In terms of her recommendations, she critiques the lack of cultural planning for Indigenous children in the child welfare system and offers suggestions about how child welfare practices could become more culturally and psychologically safe.[34] Carriere is interested in short and longer term positive outcomes for Indigenous children in care. This means attending whole-heartedly to practices which preserve cultural, identity, connection to family/community and a sense of belonging. The literature on this topic shows that these preventative factors are the most likely to promote well-being for the child while neglecting them is most likely to lead to suffering, disconnection, addictions and even suicide.[35]

Jeannine Carriere's work focuses on the importance of creating and implementing cultural plans in child welfare settings.[36] The fact that cultural planning exists sporadically and randomly across child welfare offices indicates that much work still needs to be done in this area. In terms of the larger context of cultural safety, some offices, such as those run by Indigenous communities, would offer services that were Indigenous by design. For example, one child welfare office in Alberta took children in care to naming ceremonies.

In the context of child welfare, one of the most important things is to work with the whole family, providing appropriate services based on family needs.[37] While child-centered mandates are important in many ways, the use of this narrow lens tends to result in further family breakdown and separation in ways that replicate past colonialism. Caring for people throughout the cycle of life means planning for children, women, men and elders within the context of the culture. While current attempts are sometimes made to keep Indigenous children in their own community, which offers one aspect of cultural safety, a broader community development

approach is needed to create a broader safety, resources, and opportunities for adults to raise children after years of colonial community devastation. If cultural safety were to become a central organizing principle in child welfare, many of the currently inadequate practices would be replaced with new ones respecting Indigenous values.

Catherine Richardson is a Metis therapist and researcher who works in the areas of recovery from violence.[38] She has also worked as a child welfare advocate doing safety planning for Indigenous families. She works with response-based practice which is an approach to counselling and social services based on principles of according and restoring dignity, acknowledging resistance to mistreatment, discussing the importance of positive social responses to victims and assessing future safety based on the social responses to those seeking assistance and care. Response-based practice implies cultural safety in that individuals are not diagnosed, labeled or inflicted to what Todd and Wade have called "the colonial code" in the helping professions.[39] This work is based on understanding what individuals and families already know, do and value and organizing this pre-existing knowledge into safety plans, reports, assessments based on these responses. Response-based practices involve contesting western DSM diagnoses and working with people to describe themselves and their desires in relation to a life beyond colonization. As such, this work is aligned with the aspirations and human rights of Indigenous people first and contests institutional corruption, such as workplaces where workers are mistreated, harassed and coerced into implementing soul-destroying methods that do not uplift the dignity nor the human spirit. Part of this commitment to safety and justice involves a concerted use of accurate language and avoiding euphemisms and discourses which tend to conceal violence and blame victims. As such, the concept of cultural safety is inextricably linked to psychological safety and fairness in representation, contesting the systemic blaming of women and mothers for domestic violence by their male counterparts. As such a gender lens is an important aspect of cultural safety.

Natasha Blanchet-Cohen discussed her work in the area of provincial education provided to Aboriginal students in Quebec living in urban areas. As a starting place was a recognition that education has historically been characterized by cultural genocide.[40] Released in 2015 *The Truth and*

Reconciliation report states: "Much of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught, or failed to teach, over many generations."[41]

Indeed, as spelled out in the landmark Indian Control of Indian Education 1972 Policy Paper, Indigenous organizations refer to cultural safety, without using the term itself. The paper indicates:

> Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him: the history of his people, their values and customs, their language, he will never really know himself or his potential as a human being. Indian culture and values have a unique place in the history of mankind. The Indian child who learns about his heritage will be proud of it. The lessons he learns in school, his whole experience, should reinforce & contribute to the image he has of himself as an Indian.[42]

Blanchet-Cohen discussed the applicability of cultural safety to providing quality and appropriate education to Indigenous children.[43] Specific questions raised included:

- How do aboriginal children experience provincial education?
- Do children feel education provides for cultural safety (i.e. honour their identity)?
- What/where/how can the sense of cultural safety be strengthened in education?

Research carried out in partnership with Native Friendship centers showed the current discomfort that children experience in the provincial school system, with comments such as: "Once in a blue moon in my class we sometimes talk about native people; they always talk about the past not the present."[44] Included in the concerns raised by students was the prevalence of racism in schools, the lack of preparedness of teachers and consideration of Indigenous worldviews and the problematic sense of belonging experienced by the children.

Opportunities to nurture cultural safety were being provided not by schools, but by Indigenous community organizations such as the Native friendship centers. An evaluation of after school homework support

program pointed to some of the practices that characterize a culturally safe program.[45] At the basis was a recognition of the need to involve families and communities in children's education and to strengthen the linkages with the school, community/family and student. In addition, emphasis was placed on creating a space where children felt accepted for who they were, providing a sense of belonging that fosters self-confidence and enables learning in a collective sense of the term.

In her final comments, she reflects on the relevance of cultural safety as a touchstone for guiding appropriate education for Aboriginal students. This includes the emphasis on children's experience of belongingness, dignity and pride as a measure of whether or not schools of effectively delivering an education system that matters. The need to rectify power imbalances that discriminate and impede on Indigenous worldviews, and the need for all actors within the school system, including teachers, administrators and families to recognize and act upon the fact that they are all bearers of culture and need to address their own biases and prejudices in order to ensure systemic changes.[46]

Mutang Urud, Kelabit from Sarawak Borneo, provided an account of the significance of cultural safety in grounding his own work and activism in defending his territory against the ongoing threats of large-scale economic activities, such as logging, plantations and dam building. He emphasized the quintessential importance of land in providing cultural safety, embedded in the land is the culture, values and language and relationships that provide a sense of belonging and meaning to people. He shared how this sense of identity and well-being can be damaged for Indigenous peoples who are forced to move away from their traditional home to seek work in cities or foreign countries.[47]

Faced with these challenges, he discussed the need for resistance and the importance of Indigenous peoples defending their land in order to safeguard the foundations of cultural safety. A key question that he raised was around 'how to resist'? He raised the need to build community collective support between the rural and urban indigenous communities as well as amongst the elders, leaders, families and youth. A vital recipe for building the cultural and political constituency is to democratize the cultural knowledge and oral history so that all actors in the community feel a greater sense of belonging. Knowledge both informs and breeds

confidence. Mobilizing community support and facilitating appropriation are particularly important to ensure cultural safety for future generations, as well as support empowerment of communities' in defending the ancestral territory.[48]

Concluding Remarks

In this paper, as shared our experiences and insights on how to cultivate and nurture cultural safety. Underlying the presentations, there is a common recognition that implementing cultural safety requires paying attention to the interactions between the "macro" and "micro" realms. It is both about ensuring at the individual level that people feel they belong, and that they are valued, and at the systemic level that structures, policies and programs are in place to enable individual and collective well-being. And while often the delivery of programs and services is examined in isolation of other human rights issues such as land claims, this panel clearly shows that land rights are integral to cultural safety. The recent inclusion of Mother Earth and all living beings in Bolivia's and the granting of personhood to a river in New Zealand are positive signs.[49] These examples are indicative of a broadening perspective in relation to rights, human interaction and ecology for cultural safety to become normal practice.

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Indigenous Canadians and Cultural Survival in Montréal: Cultural Vitalization within the Native Friendship Centre of Montréal

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Starting with Cooke and Bélanger defining Indigenous[1] migration from rural to urban areas as a socio-economic motivated strategy[2], I will first give a brief introduction to the topic of *Urban Indigeneity in Canadian cities*. The focus of this paper is on Indigenous people migrating to urban centres and the issues they face during that process. After a short description of the methods and research questions I applied during my fieldwork, I will then – as part of my findings - consider the main issues that come along with this Indigenous migration to urban areas: Relating to the *urban transition*, the presentation of *push-and-pull-factors,* that have major implications on the migration, will first be investigated in the context of personal hopes, expectations and necessities to leave reserves and move to urban centres. I will refer to data mostly gained through autobiographical Interviews, but also during informal discussions and participant observation. This representation of *push-and-pull-factors* will be a large part of the empirical chapter of my work and receive special attention since it constituted the main subject in all my interviews and informal discussions, turning out to be an extremely interesting and enlightening aspect and a recurring theme.

I will furthermore discuss the situation of Indigenous people in Montréal who already went through an *urban transition*,[3] concentrating

on a sample of Indigenous people, that regularly come to the *Native Friendship Centre of Montréal* and use the programs and services offered there. Based on these aspects, I will finally conclude with the question how Indigenous people in Montréal vitalize their (indigenous) culture(s), thereby ensuring their cultural, collective survivance and which role the *Native Friendship Centre* plays in it.

Urban Indigeneity in Canadian cities

Urban Indigeneity has become a visible phenomenon within Canadian cities since the 1940s[4], and has become a highly debated topic by many disciplines within the academic landscape, especially within social sciences, anthropology and Native studies. With more than half of Canada´s Indigenous population living in cities today[5], the growing urban Indigenous communities not only have major impacts on urban patterns such as social organizations, economic, political and cultural structures of the cities, but also do they affect the lifestyle and the identity awareness of Indigenous people within these new surroundings.

The situation of Indigenous people migrating to urban centres therefore does not only include challenges, other migrants also face - such as integration into new surroundings, assimilation into urban economies, and interacting within a trans-cultural environment - but also discrimination, stereotyping and stigmatization due to their ethnic and cultural identity. Despite this shift from living primarily on reserves and rural areas to living more and more in urban areas, the national and federal policy has remained mostly unchanged in Canada and Québec, admitting Indigenous people political, social and economic rights almost exclusively on reserves[6]:

> Government programs and funding still almost exclusively target reserves. The implicit […] assumption is that Aboriginal people are only entitled to be recognized as distinctively Aboriginal, and have access to Aboriginal specific programs and services as long as they live on federally recognized reserves (…) This has major implications for Aboriginal politics and government policy[7].

Missing opportunities for political and cultural representation and ignorance of Indigenous urban communities create a lot of problems, which Indigenous people face upon arrival in the city: *"Urban Aboriginal*

communities have been completely excluded from the devolution process since Canada consistently refuses to acknowledge the existence of distinct urban communities[8]. Another issue Indigenous people who already experienced an *urban transition* often face is excessive demand with the "urban culture" and also negative loaded stereotypes[9] and marginalization within the Canadian society upon arrival in the city, that has already been discussed in numerous works, such as in Kermoal and Lévesque 2010: *Repenser la rapport à la ville: pour une histoire autochtone de l'urbanité*, or in Morissette 2012: *Les autochtones ne sont pas des pandas. Histoire, autochtonie et citoyenneté québécoise.*

> Aux yeux de la société dominante, lorsque les Autochtones sont invisibles, on dit qu'ils s'assimilent. Et quand ils sont visibles, on remarque alors leur extrême pauvreté, leur alcoolisme ou toute autre « tare » qu'on voudra bien leur attribuer. Le reste, hélas, passe souvent inaperçu[10].

This quote illustrates, that often only the negative aspects concerning the lives of Indigenous people within cities, are noticed by the "mainstream" society. These conditions create urban settings as a living space that is or often is perceived as very complex and unequal by Indigenous people. Therefrom it is more important to offer contact points for Indigenous people within the city, to help them acclimate and furthermore offer a social and cultural meeting place. In addition, the non-Indigenous population of Canada has to be educated more comprehensive on the historical and present situation of Indigenous people to understand the ongoing processes[11].

For this purpose, Indigenous institutions and organizations such as *Native Friendship Centres* have been established in most major cities of Canada. These *Friendship Centres* provide an extremely important institution within the city, since they primarily try to obtain and pass on Indigenous culture(s) and identity through events as drumming, beading, Powwows or community dinners etc. alongside everyday services. In addition, these *Native Friendship Centres* create spaces of encounter between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and offer the opportunity to learn from each other, enabling a continuous exchange and establish the Indigenous community within the cityscape.

Indigenous Migration to Urban Centres – Montréal

Indigeneity in Montréal

The Indigenous migration within the Canadian province of Québec from rural areas and reserves to urban centers such as cities and suburbs has been growing to a significant phenomenon over the last 30 years[12], mostly in Montréal and Québec cities[13]. According to the 2011 Census data[14], off-reserve Indigenous people in Canada constitute the fastest growing segment of Canadian society. In 2011, more than 56% of Indigenous people lived in urban areas, which represents an increase of over 7% since the 1996 Census[15]. With 26,280 Indigenous people living in Montréal in 2011[16], the urban Indigenous community represents an increasingly visible part within the cityscape of Montréal.

> The solution to the „urban Indian problem" for many majority Canadians has been to encourage Aboriginal peoples to „move back to the reserves." […] Some saw „urban Indians" as posing a threat to the city itself […] Ironically, but consistent with this view, the Saskatchewan government once went as far as to place the blame for inner-city discrimination squarely on the shoulders of urban Aboriginals[17].

This phenomenon therefore is no longer an individual, personal matter but has become a matter of politics, communities and also institutional programs and projects. The only platforms to represent themselves politically and culturally, are organizations such as *Friendship Centres* or cultural Indigenous institutions, that offer contact points and support in these areas. Furthermore, Indigenous people living in urban settings share a collective volition to live and preserve their cultural identity within the city:*„[...] Aboriginal people all demonstrate a will to protect and pass on their cultural identity"*[18]. Here we can see that the institutionalization of Indigenous rights within an urban setting (self-government, representation etc.) still has to be regulated and strengthened by law as soon as possible.

Background: Theories and Patterns of Internal Indigenous Migration

The urbanization of the Canadian Indigenous population has received notable awareness since the 1960s and 70s[19], which mainly set the focus on the discussion concerning urbanization as a common issue, that Indigenous people migrating from rural areas as reserves to urban settings automatically face. By focusing on social and economic issues such as poverty, discrimination, assimilation or an assumed loss of culture, Indigenous migration has always been characterized as a result of extremely poor economic and social conditions within reserves in Canada, whereupon a lot of studies tend to relate to - for example Cooke and Bélanger in *Migration Theories and First Nations Mobility: Towards a Systems Perspective.* Furthermore, Snyder and Wilson point out the political position Indigenous people hold within reserves, which plays a significant role within the process of migration[20]. No longer is the scientific focus only on the process of urbanization today, but mainly on the consideration of the situation of Indigenous people within cities, their social conditions and marginalization within the Canadian society[21]. These authors also assume a close relationship between the loss of traditional and family environment in the city and the resulting problems - such as unemployment and homelessness. If we look more closely at Indigenous populations migrating, we can see that they have experienced different levels and structural patterns of urbanization than other populations have[22], such as poverty, discrimination, marginalization and loss of culture, which often have impacts on cultural and individual identity. One of the most challenging issues for Indigenous people living in urban areas is to maintain and (re)vitalize their cultural identity which can be supported by urban institutions and organizations that work by respecting and integrating Indigenous values**.** Despite these facts „*studies of migration have also not given adequate consideration to the role of Aboriginal organizations in the city, or to the various types of personal and institutional links that would encourage migration between the two areas*"[23]. Overall, migration must be seen in a political context, such as the *Indian Act*, and also in connection to the historical relationship between Indigenous people and the Canadian government, as these conditions still affect processes of migration. Also, the individual motivations and reasons causing migration, have so far

received little attention within anthropological literature. Merely some authors, for example Letkemann 2004 in *First Nations urban migration and the importance of "urban nomads" in Canadian plain cities: a perspective from the streets,* or Lise Gill 1995 in *From the reserve to the city: Amerindian women in Quebec urban centres* take a closer look at the individual reasons for leaving the reserves and the process of migration to cities within their work. This is why I chose to work with the *Native Friendship Centre of Montréal* to be able to take a closer look at these points in my research, concerning the *push-and-pull-factors* causing migration and embedding my findings into the context of *cultural and individual vitalization.*

Methodology and Compiled Data/Field Research

Working with the Native Friendship Centre of Montréal

Considered one of the most influential institutions for Indigenous people within Montréal, the *Native Friendship Centre* attempts to organize cultural exchange between the urban Indigenous community and the Canadian society at large, as well as a vitalization of Indigenous culture(s) to provide a strong urban Indigenous community. The data which are presented here are based on fieldwork conducted in Montréal between September 2012 and March 2013 working with the *Native Friendship Centre* and were collected in the form of unstructured, open and mainly biographic interviews, informal discussions and several months of participant observations. Volunteering with the *Ka´wáhse street patrol*[24], the data I am relying on was gathered through biographic interviews and discussions with mostly homeless people, who also often were under the influence of drugs or alcohol, which is why I decided myself (and also in consultation with my interview partners) – regarding their particular situation – to anonymize the names and interviews. To gain a first access to the research field, I first started attending regular local events, such as the *culture nights*, dinners, drumming, workshops etc. During this exploratory phase, which lasted for several weeks, I was able to make social contacts and collect first data through participant observation, which laid the foundation for my following research process. The process of data collection is based on an inductive approach, following the *grounded theory concept*[25] by Corbin and Strauss (1998). Most of the interviews were conducted with homeless indigenous people in Montréal, regularly engaging in

the services offered by the *Native Friendship Centre of Montréal,* leading to a sample consisting of a specific group of Indigenous people that by no means can be seen as representative for the whole Indigenous urban community in Montreal. The sample for this research consisted mainly of Indigenous people of various nations and tribes that had migrated in recent years or months to Montréal - some of them on what they had planned to be only a transitional basis. Many of the men and women were between the age of 40-55, some significantly younger (approximately in their mid-twenties). Since conversation and interview situations often turned out to be extremely difficult because of external circumstances such as the influence of drugs, change of the sleeping place in the city, no willingness to talk or leaving Montréal, there is no continuous stable sample. In addition, there were many that were ashamed of their situation and were unwilling to do any interviews or conversations, so that the results of my participant observation in this paper gets particularly much importance.

Constant informants were both employees of the *Native Friendship Centre* and the street patrol, both men in their mid-30s and early 40s, to whose statements, conversations and information most of my collected data refer to. Here also, I have to state, that these two informants are employed by the *Native Friendship Center*, having mastered the transition from their home reserves to Montréal and now representing role models for those seeking help at the Centre. After having worked with the *Native Friendship Centre* for several weeks, I realized that the issue of the *urban transition* was the most important recurring theme in conversations with and between Indigenous and employees. Therefore, I highlighted the reasons for the rural-urban migration on the basis of biographical interviews and compared the findings with those described in literature concerning critical conditions on reserves[26]. Through my very open research question and the inductive approach I was able to respond to relevant topics to the effect to generate and manifest my research questions. Consequently, I did not look for an existing hypothesis in order to verify it, but for explanations and contexts, from which I then derived a thesis. Through participant observation I was able to gain a deeper understanding of the activities of the street workers, including psychological demands and stress factors. By conducting open, narrative interviews, the interviewees had the necessary

Image 1: Ka´wáhse Street Patrol's Van. Photo: Katharina Kiefel, 2012

space to develop their own narrative style, emotions and feelings, and were able to address all themes relevant to them. In carrying out these interviews, I mainly focused on research questions such as: *How do Indigenous people that moved to the city experience their lives in Montréal? What are the individual reasons causing migration? What are the push-and-pull-factors?* But also on questions like: *Which role does the Native Friendship Centre play within the Indigenous urban community and how does it help to (re)vitalize Indigenous culture(s) and support people?* and *What else can be done to support Indigenous people upon arrival in the city?* These questions finally led to the main results of my study, highlighting the importance of institutions for the urban Indigenous communities, and the relevance they have for the well-being of Indigenous urban peoples, the local value that it plays for them and the social future of the cities.

Working with the Ka´wáhse Street Patrol

The name *Ka´wáhse street patrol* refers to each person´s personal journey, while also highlighting the project´s transport capabilities. The *Ka´wáhse street patrol* was created in 2004 and is funded through the Urban

Aboriginal Homelessness division of the *Support Communities Partnership Initiative* (SCPI). The street patrol aims to improve the conditions of Montréal´s homeless Indigenous community, stabilize the environment of those at risk of being abused, robbed and disrespected in the streets, and establishes links with other organizations, for example *Médecins du Monde* and *Projet Autochtone de Québec* (PAQ). Several days a week, the team of the *Ka´wáhse street patrol* patrols a particular route within the city with various stops in parks or homeless shelters. Stopping in the streets and parks, the street patrol hands out blankets, condoms, clothing, and food. The most important part is active listening, peer support, and counselling, referral to detox treatment, and transport to shelters.

While working as a volunteer with the street patrol, where I was the only woman, it was mainly the ethical context that I often felt confronted with, mainly in the beginning. The first moral hurdle I had to take, was the fact, that I – as a "white", young, female researcher – came in an environment of mostly poor, needy, homeless and drug addicted Indigenous people. Due to these social imbalances between me and the Indigenous people, I felt uncomfortable at first and "superior" in an uncomfortable manner. Despite some difficult situations while working with the street patrol, that were mainly due to working with people under the influence of drugs, my research process kept getting better and allowed me to conduct several discussions and interviews.

Findings

Looking back on a historic development of long term interaction between Indigenous Canadians and white European settlers, the current situation of Indigenous people within Canada still can be traced back to these mostly unequal, partially crucial and criminal relationships. These interactions between Indigenous peoples and Canadians still continue to take place, adapted to current political and economic interests of the provincial and federal government. In addition to these "newer" interactions, concerning issues such as the *Indian status,* the establishment of reserves, dealing with health issues, crime, delinquency and the discrimination, but also reconciliation and survivance of Indigenous peoples within Canada, also external factors, such as environmental change have impact on Indigenous people´s lives today. Not only do these changes affect the

life circumstances of Indigenous people today, but also have consequences for their cultural practices and awareness. It is therefore important, to be aware of such developments in relation to the relevance of Indigenous culture(s).

Urban Transition: Push-and-pull-factors Causing Migration

> I have an elder that I follow […] he always says follow your dreams […] and I came to Montréal [...] it was a dream. I had a dream of being in a foreign country, not able to speak [the language]. Am I living my dream? Yes! I went through a lot of shit in my life and you can only learn from your mistakes to be a better PERSON in your life! (Interview, 2013).

> The city – it was my dream! I thought it would be a better life, a new life here! But now you see me on the streets, I don´t have a job, no place to stay.... this city ruined my dreams! (Interview, 2012).

Looking closer at the reasons that make Indigenous people migrate, it shows that they are very often based on personal and individual motivations, that usually result from social, economic and health issues, but also political situations on reserves and can therefore be seen as *push-factors*[27]. During my research, factors such as population pressure, crime and delinquency and also the late effects of *residential schools* within reserves, emerged as the main *push-factors.* Existing literature concerning the migration from rural areas and reserves to urban areas, mainly focus on the problematic conditions on reserves:

> A lot of our reserves, where they were placed by the government a long time ago, are in places where there can´t be that much economic development. They´re isolated […] you´d think you were in a Third World country […] You wouldn´t believe it. They have no running water, they have skin problems, digestive problems. It´s absolutely horrible[28].

Besides boredom, unemployment and resulting psychological distress, issues such as population pressure in (high) arctic regions, that – in combination with extreme weather conditions – also leads to health issues[29].

Not only have these conditions major implications for the well-being of Indigenous people, but also do these conditions affect their cultural identity[30], which corresponds with my compiled data:

> The government took away all that we had left, they shot our sled dogs, took away our culture and our pride! … you know, that´s not our traditional culture anymore … living in houses …they make us behave and act like white people! The houses make us sick! A lot of my people died because of the houses! (Interview 2012).

These changes of traditional values often result in a crisis that can cause serious personal and community problems. The impact of "western" models on reserves illustrate very well and also show the importance of culture and cultural practices for the well-being of Indigenous people both on-reserves and especially in urban areas. Limitations in hunting and fishing-rights for example, make it more and more difficult to obtain subsistence upright, and general political and economic changes reduce the quality of life within reserves enormously[31]. The literature also describes reasons such as delinquency – often caused by a lack of education, discrimination and the late effects of *residential schools* – as *push-factors* to leave reserves. Particularly Indigenous women are being marginalized and represent a vulnerable group that repeatedly becomes a crime victim and therefore forces them to leave the reserves[32]: "*Females in First Nations communities were involved in violent crime at more than double the rate of females in small urban or rural areas"*[33]. Through my interviews, I could gain an insight into the situations on reserves, that also refer to crime and generation trauma through *residential schools* as huge *push-factors.* One of my Interviewees, who grew up on a reserve in Kenora, told me that his brother was brutally murdered on the reserve, his mother became violent towards the kids, as she herself had never overcome her trauma of the *residential school* (see Interview I, 2013). Apparently not only the generation of Indigenous people who had been in *residential schools,* but even their children and grandchildren suffer from the consequences of this "cultural genocide". These aspects might be one of the main reasons that drive Indigenous people living on reserves to move to urban centres and leave their political and legal space, but are not the only ones, that

condition migration. Talking to Indigenous people in Montréal they also mentioned boredom, discrimination and lack of health facilities being the main *push-factors* to move to the city:

> In Senneterre (,) there´s a lot of RACISM (`), ah it was all hard finding a job (.) NOW (`) it´s a little easier there are some-ssome comm-uuh-COMPANOES that are hiring my [native] friends that are working there (`) but … back in the DAY (,) like 10 (,) 12 years ago (,) it was almost IMPOSSIBLE to FIND A JOB (?) in Senneterre (?) . . aaah. . . soo . . I had nothing there for me (`) I . . didn´t wanna be on welfare (,) I didn´t wanna be just doing nothing with my life (`) so I decided to come to Montréal (,) FINISH my highsschool (!) . (Interview, 2012).

This quote indicates social and economic issues such as missing job opportunities and discrimination as *push-factors* to leave the reserve and migrate to an urban Centre. It doesn´t only exemplify the often mentioned issues and conditions on reserves, but also shows small, positive developments contributing to an improving situation on reserves today. By focusing on socio-economic issues and the ethnic and political identity, the importance of cultural identity is discussed infrequently. My research focuses on cultural issues: "*I guess if I didn´t have my culture here (,) I´m sure I would have been you know still in . . . freakin´ prison now*" (Interview 2013).

Pull-factors

Corresponding to these *push-factors* that play an enormous role within the migration patterns[34] are the *pulls*, that attract migrants, often creating an attractive illusion of "a better life", having more opportunities, better access to employment, education and housing that is often associated with the "western lifestyle": „*cities have attracted Aboriginal migrants because they provide more services and greater educational and employment opportunities [...]*"[35]. Moreover, Indigenous migration to cities is often interpreted as a desire to leave rural communities and reserves, which leads to the assumption that a desired assimilation into the "mainstream" urban society at the same time means a *"loss of indigenous culture"*[36]. My Interviewees often mentioned the "attraction", that Montréal impacted on them:

> I …didn´t wanna be on welfare (,) I didn´t wanna be just doing

> nothing with my life (´) so I decided to come to Montréal (,) […] It´s a better life here (!) there´s more things to do (,) in my HOMEtown there´s NO theatre (,) . . aah the only thing there iis there´s like two or three bars left now (,). (Interview 2012).

In addition, there is a request for better education[37] and more possibilities for women within cities, compared to reserves: *"Women […] say they prefer cities because they have greater individual freedom, more privacy and more opportunity to develop, to study and to work […] women feel they are able to live more freely in an anonymous city than in a community where everyone knows everyone else […]"*[38]. While some Indigenous people experience success upon arrival in the city, others experience marginalization, discrimination, stress of the unwelcoming city, confusion and the inability to find employment or housing which push some into crime and homelessness[39].

> (…) urban experience is viewed through the lens of disintegration, resulting in social disorganization and cultural breakdown from the clash between a traditional rural way of life and a modern urban life in which the dominant experiences are loneliness, despair, anomie, and racism resulting in alcoholism and poverty[40].

Urban transition from reserves to urban centres often indeed means a drastic change in living conditions and habits. These changes are often associated with dreams and expectations that - in most cases – cannot be met due to various factors. These factors can be discrimination, racism, the feeling of being alone, or "lost" in the city etc. *"The city – it was my dream! I thought it would be a better life, a new life here! But now you see me on the streets, I don´t have a job, no place to stay . . . that city ruined my dreams!" (Interview 2012).* An urban Indigeneity that is "functioning" in a positive way in contrast is often seen by the non-Indigenous urban dwellers as an anomaly and associated with a sense of shame and loss[41]. These negative connotations associated with such a decision to leave home coming from the non-Indigenous community often is an additional burden, that migrating Indigenous people have to face.

Arrival in the City – Institutions for Urban Indigenous Peoples

Existing literature often describes the arrival in cities as a transitional migration phase between reserve and city, that characterizes the processual

character of an *urban transition*[42]. Living in a trans-cultural environment and interacting with different cultures and city residents constitutes a very significant part of the everyday city life that Indigenous people face when moving to urban centres.

> […] migrants need services to help with their cultural adjustment, employment services, social or educational services and recreation and rehabilitation services […] when they arrive, they need a period of adjustment because cities are very different from their home community. These differences become extremely important when […] they have to use a new language, when they have to meet deadlines or make appointments to obtain services to which they had much easier access in their community. In the face of so many barriers, many […] give up[43].

These new and often challenging factors of acclimatization and structural, institutional and societal obstacles might be leading to psychological distress and can therefore lead to far-reaching consequences: *"[…] psychological difficulties that some […] encountered in the transition from "knowing everyone" to feeling "isolated", and losing their sense of groundedness and ability to negotiate the urban environment (…)"*[44]. Even institutional and bureaucratic processes can pose enormous hurdles for Indigenous people, who are not familiar with processes such as visits to agencies in the city neither are they informed about drop-in centres and possible support and thus often experience a sense of isolation and helplessness. Many women I spoke to had been coming involuntarily to Montréal, either fleeing from sexual assault and physical violence, or even for the birth of their children, due to complications and lack of medical supplies on reserve. In these cases, no further examination on the city as a habitat had taken place, which is why this initial phase in Montréal for many ended in psychological overload and occasionally in poverty, prostitution or homelessness. The literature shows that such cases are not isolated cases: "*[…] many (…) arrive […] to receive medical treatment and some end up staying in the city once the treatment has finished [...]"*[45]. These obstacles and institutional hurdles often collide with Indigenous, "traditional strategies", that fail to navigate and adopt to the still alien new environment. Building a social network within the city, getting to know the political and social position within society, as well as

finding a way to represent themselves, are one of the most important factors for Indigenous people living in cites to avoid issues as identity crises, depression, low self-esteem and insecurity[46].

Several federal initiatives that have been established since the 1970s to serve urban Indigenous communities, still function as important institutions in Canadian cities to network within the urban Indigenous communities. Such institutions include the *Native Friendship Centres,* that contribute through providing support for urban Indigenous housing, education and employment[47] to a strong, maintaining and integrated urban Indigenous community. Urban Indigenous institutions and programs can represent an enormous relevance within the reality of an urban setting for Indigenous communities, who have long been ignored by the provincial and national government[48]. The very fact that there is a large number of such organizations can amongst others be seen as due to the widespread assumption, that the urban environment still is characterized as an environment which Indigenous people do not "fit in" or have problems to adapt to[49]. These organizations often almost are the only ones providing spaces for the celebration of Indigenous culture(s) and developing culturally appropriate and helpful ways of offering services and have been mostly neglected within research studies and literature, that still focuses to a large extend on the poor socio-economic situation of Indigenous urban people and their need for self-government[50]. This shows how important the research of the needs of an urban Indigenous community is, mainly concerning cultural, personal, social and economic components.

The (Re)vitalization and Maintenance of Indigenous Culture(s) within the City

In such crises of identity, caused by helplessness, discrimination and low self-esteem, Indigenous people may be particularly vulnerable to discriminatory and stereotyped identity "write-ups", which are often incorporated that they actually become part of the identity. This changed identity perception becomes visible for those who were affected by *residential schools* and often still face feelings of shame or low self-esteem. The twin sister of one of my interviewees, who got adopted by a white couple in the 1960s still suffers from these experiences: "*you know (,) even last week there on Facebook (,) she said she-she WISH-SHE-WASN´T-NATIVE (!) (break) I*

heard (.)" (Interview 2012). Since there is a strong Pan-Indigenous need for building social and cultural networks[51], and also a very strong demand to continue practicing Indigenous culture(s) within the city, urban Indigenous institutions and programs can start to represent an enormous relevance within the reality of an urban setting as Montréal. *"However, for young people in particular, a loss of sense of identity, belonging and ultimately self-worth needs to be understood and addressed as a critical factor potentially contributing to self-destructive behavior and in vulnerability to exploitation by others"[52]*. Corresponding to my findings, Inuit mainly have to cope with losing their traditional values and practices such as *food sharing* of whale or seal meat, hunting or fishing.

During my research, almost all Indigenous people I spoke to about their origin were very proud of their culture and ancestry, which corroborates previous studies: "*Eight in 10 aboriginal participants said they were "very proud" of their specific aboriginal identity (…) six in 10 were either completely worried or somewhat worried about losing contact with their culture"[53]*. For this need to continue strengthening and (re)vitalizing the cultural identity, we can see new forms of expression within a trans-cultural environment, being closely associated with a strengthening and (re)vitalization of Indigenous urban identity rather than with its disintegration or dispossession. Indigenous culture(s) and identity turned out to be a very central part within the everyday life of Indigenous people in Montréal, which also Pemberton states: *"Eight in 10 aboriginal participants said they were very proud of their specific aboriginal identity [...] six in 10 were either completely worried or somewhat worried about losing contact with their culture"[54]*.

> First, Friendship Centres aim to improve conditions for urban Aboriginals. Secondly, they seek to aid Aboriginals in coping with and participation in Canadian society. Third, Friendship Centres try to achieve the aforementioned goals in a context that is culturally appropriate for Aboriginals[55].

Findings of my study show that Indigenous people that regularly come to the *Native Friendship Centre* pointed out, that they trusted Indigenous organizations more than non-Indigenous organizations, also referring to a better understanding from people working at the *Native Friendship Centre of Montréal*. This results mostly from the ideology, structure and

vision of the *Native Friendship Centre* which aims to provide culturally appropriate programming, services and activities through teamwork, respect, trust, pride and equality to contribute to a collective well-being. The success shows in the great numbers of Indigenous people engaging in the services offered and the importance that Indigenous cultures play for the well-being of Indigenous urban peoples, the local value that it plays for them and the social future of the cities[56]. Moreover, the almost exclusively Indigenous staff of the Centre often function as a "role model" for those who engage in the services of the Centre and also enable – through their sometimes similar background – an identification with their current situation.

Conclusion

By looking at the situation of Indigenous Canadians in Montreal in terms of *urban transition*, particular emphasis is placed on the *push factors*, such as the conditions on reserves, which mostly require the migration of Indigenous people. With 26,280 Indigenous people living in Montréal in 2011[57], we see that the presence of Indigenous people in Canadian cities is becoming more and more visible, bringing diverse cultural and socio-economic factors with it. The "issues" of urban Indigeneity turn out to be a very complex subject which contains more than the "maintenance of cultural traditions and cultures", revitalize traditional ways of living and building a strong community off-reserve[58].

During my work with the *Native Friendship Centre* I was mainly confronted with problems and barriers that Indigenous people that went through an *urban transition* face upon arrival in the city. Since the Canadian government has and still is responding very slowly and to an insufficient extent to these developments, increasing importance is attached to organizations and institutions, such as the *Native Friendship Centres: "(…) the government says that we´re LOW lifes (,) … UNEDUCATED (!) alcoholics and drunks(.)" (Interview 2013)*. To counteract these stereotypes and prejudices and to facilitate interaction between Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people at an eye level, it is important to educate not only on the native history, but mainly about the current situation of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Especially in urban areas and cities, it is important to promote an exchange between the Indigenous and

non-Indigenous community, to raise awareness of the local culture (s) and to allow a coexistence.

> Montrealers barely know there even are Aboriginals living in their city, much less that a lot of them are struggling with homelessness and addiction […] Canadians and Quebecers need to open their eyes and realize that we´re people too, and that for years the government has put us on the bottom shelf. They need to realize that my grandfather, his grandfather and his grandfather all lived on Turtle Island (…) This is our traditional land[59].

The presence of the *Native Friendship Centre* in Montréal and the cultural programs offered through it show great response within the urban Indigenous community and therefore confirm the urgent need for Indigenous cultural institutions and the strong desire to maintain Indigenous cultures within the city, drawing attention to challenges, such as Indigenous identity, questions of belonging etc.[60]. Moreover, can such institutions lay the base to create a visible Indigenous urban community. In so far as the Native Friendship Centers will not be able to provide cultural programs for each and every one of the indigenous groups their clientele came from, the provision of cultural models of identification will have to either leave out smaller groups, and cater to those First Nations represented in larger numbers, or else develop an urban hybrid indigeneity. Wherever possible, however, cultural mentoring programs provided by members of their own First Nation appear to be preferable.

What can be done to make significant improvements in the quality of life for urban Indigenous people in the next couple years and most importantly: how can "a better quality of life" be defined? As part of a solution, more research and investigation on Indigenous peoples´ needs and support within new surroundings is necessary to be able to address Indigenous peoples and their needs directly, and to develop a framework of policy, and of effective programs out of it. In terms of the continuing growth of urban Indigenous communities, the (re)vitalization, survivance and continuance of Indigenous culture(s) through institutionalized platforms requires significantly more attention, because current restrictions concerning access to services, as well as a very strong lack of political and cultural representation within urban settings, exacerbate the

discrimination and marginalization many Indigenous people experience within urban areas[61]. It must also be discussed, who should be involved in this process supporting Indigenous urban communities: federal or provincial government? Friendship Centres? Cultural education Centres? Therefore, it would be ideal to find a balanced approach of individual needs, desires and the aims of institutions and urban Indigenous organizations. Creating partnerships between Indigenous institutions and the urban policy could shape a public policy in which the urban Indigenous community largely participates.

Endnotes

1 In the context of this paper, the term Indigenous refers to the Pan-Indigenous population of Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

2 Martin Cooke and Daniéle Bélanger, "Migration Theories and First Nations Mobility: Towards a Systems Perspective," *Canadian Review of Sociology/ Revue Canadienne de Sociologie* 43, 2 (2006): 141.

3 Urban transition describes the process of migration from rural areas as reserves to urban areas, experienced by Indigenous people.

4 Evelyn Peters, "Geographies of Urban Aboriginal People in Canada: Implications for Urban Self-Government," in *Canada: The State oft the Federation: Reconfiguring Aboriginal-State Relations,* ed. Michael Murphy (Montreal: McGill-Queen´s University Press, 2003), 42.

5 See Environics Institute. "Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study. Montreal Report 2011," http://www.uaps.ca/ (accessed 11 Aug. 2015), 24.

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