Economic Development in Selected Aboriginal Communities: Lessons in Strength, Resilience and Celebration

By

Wanda A. Wuttunee

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Interdisciplinary Program
University of Manitoba
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Abstract

The research objectives addressed are: (1) to ascertain the place held by Aboriginal wisdom in economic development theory; (2) to document the blend of approaches and economic development strategies currently employed in selected Aboriginal communities; and (3) to identify the role of Aboriginal wisdom in selected Aboriginal communities that are striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms.

In examining the cost of development, the literature suggests that a variety of approaches are taken by researchers in diverse disciplines. Examining the traditional philosophies held by Aboriginal peoples suggest approaches that have much to offer this discourse. Scholars from within Aboriginal society are also questioning the process and quality of development taking place and offering alternative approaches. Modern economy influences have diluted the universality of the role of tradition, many Aboriginal communities are attempting to blend traditional approaches with modern economic strategies.

Four communities shared experiences for this research. A model entitled Elements of Development, created by and for Aboriginal people, was used as a framework for the results of the research. Several conclusions can be drawn including the demand that re-examining sustainable development is imperative since an Aboriginal perspective cannot be grafted onto the current discourse, that on the whole lacks an appreciation for the role of spirituality. This micro-examination of communities does not lend itself to the development of universal models that may be rubber stamped onto other Aboriginal communities. Sensitivity to the process of development and the unique influences and common attitudes are more helpful in fostering the growth in Canada's Aboriginal economy.

That said, some of the more interesting features of this research include: (1) a sophisticated screening of business opportunities that wholistically includes those aspects of community that have been given priority by the members; (2). a process for building a financial strategy that involves extensive community input with sensitivity to tradition; (3) organizations working together in an urban setting that have promise for meaningful Aboriginal contributions and finally, (4) striving for a beneficial partnership with a corporate conglomerate.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation sprang from a place that began in another project without any link to the PhD program. The opportunity to enter the program was laid out before me. Once the difficult decision was made to take on this challenge, the support for my efforts was overwhelming. My warmest thoughts are with each person who made time to meet with me, share their thoughts about their communities and who became the best part of this experience. There were many who contributed to this project and I sit with them, humbly.

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Trying to make a work such as this, dance in two worlds – that of academia while being true to what I know in my heart, is not my journey alone.

Thank you Elmer and David for sharing your gifts. You are both an inspiration.

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1. Introduction

In the time before there were human beings on Earth, the Creator called a great meeting of the Animal People.

During that period of the world's history, the Animal People lived harmoniously with one another and could speak to the Creator with one mind. They were very curious about the reason for the gathering. When they had all assembled together, the Creator spoke.

"I am sending a strange new creature to live among you," he told the Animal People. "He is to be called Man and he is to be your brother."

"But unlike you he will have no fur on his body, will walk on two legs and will not be able to speak with you. Because of this he will need your help in order to survive and become who I am creating him to be. You will need to be more than brothers and sisters, you will need to be his teachers."

"Man will not be like you. He will not come into the world like you. He will not be born knowing and understanding who and what he is. He will have to search for that. And it is in the search that he will find himself."

"He will also have a tremendous gift that you do not have. He will have the ability to dream. With this ability he will be able to invent great things and because of this he will move further and further away from you and will need your help even more when this happens."

"But to help him I am going to send him out into the world with one very special gift. I am going to give him the gift of the knowledge of Truth and Justice. But like his identity it must be a search, because if he finds this knowledge too easily he will take it for granted. So I am going to hide it and I need your help to find a good hiding-place. That is why I have called you here."

A great murmur ran through the crowd of Animal People. They were excited at the prospect of welcoming a new creature into the world and they were honoured by the Creator's request for their help. This was truly an important day.

One by one the Animal People came forward with suggestions of where the Creator should hide the gift of knowledge of Truth and Justice.

"Give it to me, my Creator," said the Buffalo, "and I will carry it on my hump to the very

centre of the plains and bury it there."

"A good idea, my brother, " the Creator said, "but it is destined that Man should cover most of the world and he would find it there too easily and take it for granted."

"Then give it to me," said the Salmon, "and I will carry it in my mouth to the deepest part of the ocean and I will hide it there."

"Another excellent idea," said the Creator, "but it is destined that with his power to dream, Man will invent a device that will carry him there and he would find it too easily and take it for granted."

"Then I will take it," said the Eagle, " and carry it in my talons and fly to the very face of the Moon and hide it there."

"No, my brother," said the Creator," even there he would find it too easily because Man will one day travel there as well."

Animal after animal came forward with marvellous suggestions on where to hide this precious gift, and one by one the Creator turned down their ideas. Finally just when discouragement was about to invade their circle, a tiny voice spoke from the back of the gathering. The Animal People were all surprised to find that the voice belonged to the Mole.

The Mole was a small creature who spent his life tunnelling through the earth and because of this had lost most of the use of his eyes. Yet because he was always in touch with Mother Earth, the Mole had developed true spiritual insight.

The Animal People listened respectfully when Mole began to speak.

"I know where to hide it, my Creator," he said. "I know where to hide the gift of Truth and Justice."

"Where then, my brother?" asked the Creator. "Where should I hide this gift?"

"Put it inside them," said the Mole. "Put it inside them because then only the wisest and purest of heart will have the courage to look there."

And that is where the Creator placed the gift of the knowledge of Truth and Justice. (Lane, 1996, pp.105-106).

The wisdom in this passage captures so much of the essence of what is inspiring about studying economic development for me, within the worldviews of Aboriginal peoples and western

knowledge. Respect, love, truth, balance, Earth Mother and Creator--these words embody much of what works in economic development for all people. These gifts are not unique to Aboriginal peoples and yet they are attributed to Indigenous peoples around the world. Many philosophers, scientists and business people have begun questioning their roles in current resource development using methods which so clearly mean destruction and grave consequences for future generations, if left unchecked.

Man's dreams and inventions are wondrous as Creator foretold, but many agree that these dreams have affected the balance and harmony of all living things. For Aboriginal peoples in Canada to participate as full partners in this quest for understanding and for change given the current imbalance of power and control, a fundamental shift in relationships with other Canadians must occur as recommended in the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Vital issues of governance, capacity-building, and economic development are part of the healing process which will result in Aboriginal peoples' full contribution to Canada.

The fire for change in Aboriginal communities is already shining brightly. It has been burning for some time but it is becoming much more evident as Aboriginal leaders take up leadership opportunities and as more young people become educated and committed to change in their communities. Where are those bright lights in the communities and how do they live their dreams? Four case studies will profile the current experience for these western Canadian communities.

Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this research is to examine and understand economic development strategies used within selected Aboriginal communities in Canada. According to Hogendorn (1996), no universally accepted definition exists in economic literature for the term economic development. Todaro (2000) puts forward an holistic definition that is suitable for this research. He concludes that development is a multidimensional process "involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions" (p. 16). The process is tuned to the basic

needs and desires of individuals, family and communities within society and moves away from unsatisfactory conditions of life toward a condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better (p. 16).

In particular, the following research objectives are addressed:

1. To ascertain the place held by Aboriginal wisdom in economic development theory;
2. To document the blend of approaches and economic development strategies currently employed in selected Aboriginal communities;
3. To identify the role of Aboriginal wisdom in selected Aboriginal communities that are striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms.

This work bridges theoretical and applied economic development research. It has been conducted within an empowering context of a participatory methodology that honors those being researched and their contributions to this work, and whose guidance has shaped and crafted this work in many visible and invisible ways.

One of the research foci in the second and third objectives, is Aboriginal wisdom. Elmer Ghostkeeper, a Métis elder, shared his ideas regarding the distinction between Aboriginal wisdom and traditional knowledge in 1997. I have taken this distinction as the basis for my understanding of wisdom and developed the idea. It is based on knowledge gained from age-old precepts of spirituality still held by traditional Aboriginal people today. Wisdom also embraces the shared experiences of individuals and communities as times change. Aboriginal wisdom flows out of spirituality and both are intertwined. Further consideration of spirituality and wisdom is interwoven throughout the research in order to adequately address the second and third research objectives.

In focusing on the blend of approaches used in community economic development, the second research objective acknowledges the influence Aboriginal peoples may exert on conventional approaches employed by mainstream society and in developing their own approaches. Community economic development strategies may draw on aspects of tradition, culture and

wisdom while incorporating aspects of successful conventional mainstream approaches. Each community will develop its own "blend" that meets their changing priorities and it is this 'blend' that is the focus of this research objective.

The third question also refers to communities that are in 'tune' with individual community 'rhythms.' The experience of community leadership that is out of step with the goals of their community members is rarely positive. Working with the strengths of communities and the desires of its members generates needed support for economic development projects. Community goals will change over time. Again, sensitive leadership is in tune with community rhythms for the sake of community-held dreams and aspirations. The role that Aboriginal wisdom plays in the success of contemporary communities will be examined.

Contributions to the body of knowledge in these areas include:

- economic development of Mother Earth;
- economic development by communities of Aboriginal peoples; and
- clarification of inherent connections between applied and academic contributions of this research project.

Academically, this research makes a contribution to the theories of economic development and community participation in development. It has ramifications for scholars and innovators in the area of sustainable development and the role of Aboriginal experience and perspectives. This body of work adds to the newly-developing study of Aboriginal economies, most importantly at a micro level. It is significant for current approaches on alternative methodologies for social science research and qualitative evaluation.

In terms of application, this research contributes to the on-going conception and development of life philosophies within Aboriginal worldviews. It is of practical use to Aboriginal leaders and community developers, corporate leaders and negotiators and to all levels of government employees interested in being part of initiatives for future successful economic

development partnerships with Aboriginal peoples. This information, collected with the assistance of members of each community, has been shared with all contributing parties.

The starting point for this exploration is with Aboriginal worldviews in chapter two. It requires the reader to begin in a place that may be quite familiar for some Aboriginal readers and unfamiliar for others who do not have a background and understanding of Aboriginal culture, tradition and wisdom. It is the starting point which sets the tone, pace and research framework that western perspectives are viewed from beginning with economic development, capitalism and sustainable development in chapters three, four and five. An historical perspective and contemporary insights are provided by a number of authors in a variety of fields in these chapters, including Aboriginal scholars. An research approach that respects Aboriginal people is set out in chapter six and the personal journey of an Aboriginal scholar is noted.

A model used by an Aboriginal economic development organization is presented in chapter three and serves as a framework for understanding some economic development experiences of four communities from across western Canada. Tsuu T'ina Nation, Alberta; Winnipeg, Manitoba's urban community; Gwich'in, Northwest Territories; and Bigstone Cree Nation, Alberta and their partner Alberta Pacific Forest Industry; are profiled in chapters seven through ten.

Finally, the research objectives are reexamined in chapter eleven and final conclusions drawn regarding economic development for Aboriginal peoples.

2. Aboriginal Worldviews and Approaches to Economic Development

Creator said that it was time to bring people to the Earth Mother.

The first to arrive was the Black Nation. They were given the gift of sound and were told that they must share their gift with the people of the world.

The next to arrive was the Red Nation. They were given the gift of the teachings of the Earth Mother and were told they must share their gift with the people of the world.

Then came the Yellow Nation. They were given the gift of teachings of the mind and body and were told they must share their gift with the people of the world.

Finally came the White Nation. Our youngest brothers and sisters and they were given the gift of communication and were told that they must share their gift with the people of the world.

> Perhaps it is time to remind our youngest brothers and sisters that Creator said to 'share' not 'dominate.' The Earth Mother is in great pain. It is time now to let others bring back balance to the way we live. The Red Nation needs a chance to share our gifts so that the Earth Mother may be healed for all our children, their children and for seven generations. (M. L. Campbell, Ojibway elder,1997)

2.1. Introduction

Releasing the boundaries of our own worldviews in order to understand other worldviews requires patience, time, reflection and personal exploration. The written word hints at the possibilities of this journey. It draws people into the process who might never have contemplated such information but it has its limitations. Allusions to emotional, mental, spiritual and physical aspects are woven throughout each chapter to varying degrees. In my limited experience, fundamental teachings are set out in the foregoing story and elder's guidance. Its relevance to my research may be more obvious for some than for others.

It is important to take this story and reflect on its significance from your own experience and draw your own conclusions as part of an experiential process of understanding Aboriginal worldviews. Letting the reader take responsibility for interpreting lessons mirrors one of the ways lessons are presented in the Aboriginal community. Lessons are presented at a level that reflects the student's skills, maturity and readiness and does not have the same meaning for each student.

Knowledge and insight are shared between teacher and student in a two-way learning situation but lacks tidy summaries and conclusions as is more common using a written format. This is the context for understanding the teachings of this elder and discussion of Aboriginal worldviews presented in this chapter.

Contemplating core values for Aboriginal peoples is a complex idea due to the diversity exhibited in Aboriginal society and the holistic approach such an undertaking demands. For me, Elder Campbell underlines the value of cooperation, acknowledging gifts and interdependence of all living things. These ideas form the core by which some Aboriginal peoples make sense of their place in the world and their perspectives on life. There are other common themes across Aboriginal communities but there is also diversity of practice and experience. Despite these variations, T. Alfred, Mohawk scholar, notes:

> *Working within a traditional framework, we must acknowledge the fact that cultures change, and that any particular notion of what constitutes 'tradition' will be contested. Nevertheless, we can identify certain common beliefs, values and principles that form the persistent core of a community's culture (Alfred, 1999, p. xvii).*

Despite the limitations inherent in presenting a list of core values, it is a place to begin a discussion of Aboriginal worldviews. Understanding the historical experience of Aboriginal peoples sets the stage for an examination of contemporary issues of social structures and mores that can be found in Aboriginal communities across Canada. This material forms a preliminary starting point for understanding some of the influences affecting current economic development strategies set by Aboriginal leadership and for an analysis of the research questions set out in chapter one.

2.2. Defining Core Traditional Values

Many lists may be made that attempt to encompass all traditional values that speak for every indigenous person. The context and essence of values that are dynamic and complex cannot be distilled to a single list. Diversity exists within Aboriginal society. Indeed, many Aboriginal

peoples turn away from traditional teachings and seek their guidance from other religions of the world due to the long influence of missionaries. With these restrictions in mind, the following list is a useful starting point for discussion about traditional Aboriginal values and their place in contemporary society. It is a superficial means by which to begin communicating about the very essence of Aboriginal society, which can only truly be understood through living it and talking to people who are living it.

Knowing the limitations of 'writing' about core values does not mean that all meaning is stripped by using this approach. It does set the stage and begins a dialogue on the written page that draws on the experience of Aboriginal scholars provides some illumination and may encourage the search for greater understanding. The following list draws on the teachings and words of several elders and authors, some of whom wish to remain anonymous and some who allow their names to be noted. These values have been handed down from elders to share with the community and come from the Creator so they may be recorded by authors but they may not be attributed to one source (See Campbell, 1997; Newhouse, 1993, pp. 94-95; Alfred, 1999, p. 134; Salway Black, 1994). Dockstater (1993) deals with this issue in his work . He notes that it is not appropriate to attribute information like this to any one person or source nor to present ceremonial knowledge out of a cultural context (p. 9).

- *Honoring all creation by showing respect ...*

Love of Creator and for all living things that come from the Creator is demonstrated by showing respect from the moment one rises in the morning to when one retires in the evening.

- *Treasuring knowledge as wisdom ...*

Reflection, acknowledgement, seeking guidance and respecting the quality of knowing and the gift of vision in ourselves and in others demonstrates wisdom. Wisdom encompasses the holistic view, possesses spiritual quality and is expressed in the experiential breadth and depth of life.

- *Knowing love is to know peace ...*

Caring, kindness, hope, harmony and cooperation are fundamental values. Caring and sharing are shown to one another with an ethic of generosity, collective/communal consciousness and co-operation, while recognizing the interdependence and interrelatedness of life. Recognizing the valuable gifts of the individual, the community and all nations leads to harmony and cooperation. Honoring the individual and the collective by thinking for yourself and acting for others.

- *Courage and bravery is demonstrated in facing challenges with honesty and integrity ...*

The goal is to protect the quality of life and inherent autonomy of oneself and others. Life may then be lived in an atmosphere of security, peace, dignity and freedom.

- *Cherishing yourself as a sacred part of creation is humility...*

Honor all of life which is endowed with the same inherent autonomy, dignity, freedom and equality. Listen and learn from others and do so with a sense of modesty and sensitivity.

The truth is to know all of these things...

To know all of these values is to have balance in one's life. Balance is articulated for many Aboriginal peoples through the concepts embodied in the medicine wheel or circle of life.

Originally of significance to the Plains people, many find that the medicine wheel is a teaching tool of relevance in many contemporary areas of life (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 646). It represents the whole circle of all life and all that is known or knowable. It is linked together with no beginning and no end, and it is often divided by lines that at the centre signify order and balance. It is a teaching, a mirror, a window, a way of life and a healing (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 646). For example, balance may be discussed regarding the individual and the community in terms of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of life with each element of equal significance. Many Aboriginal peoples recognize the interconnectedness of human beings with all of life and acknowledge the aspects of the medicine wheel that could be inherent in solutions to social problems they face. Currently, approaches to health, healing, education and justice are only at the beginning of the journey down this path. With statistics of mounting despair in the main indices of

a healthy society reported by Statistics Canada, Aboriginal peoples' hope lies in incorporating an holistic approach to development that honors an Aboriginal perspective.

In reviewing the literature, it is obvious that striving for a healthy population occupies the priorities of many Aboriginal communities, making self-sufficiency through economic development a significant possibility. The following words put these priorities in terms of individual needs.

> *For a person to be healthy, [he or she] must be adequately fed, be educated, have access to medical facilities, have access to spiritual comfort, live in a warm and comfortable house with clean water and safe sewage disposal, be secure in their cultural identity, have an opportunity to excel in a meaningful endeavour, and so on. These are not separate needs; they are all aspects of a whole.*
>
> *Henry Zoe*
> *Dogrib Treaty 11 Council*
> *Member of the Legislative Assembly*
> *Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, 9 December 1992*
> *(RCAP, 1996, 3, p. 206)*

2.3. Teachings and Traditional Values

Historically, traditional values were passed on to the young people beginning from a young age. These values were embodied in all aspects of their lives. They learned by observing and listening to the elders, their parents, aunts and uncles and members of the community. It was a large interconnected network of community life. Stories were passed down in the oral tradition.

> *Aboriginal historical tradition honours stories, legends and explanations handed down from grandmothers and grandfathers. All of Creation including 'those who have gone before' figure in the oral tradition. Cultural values are shared with the listeners, community issues are clarified, place of a family in the community settled and the broad requirements of a vibrant society are met through these stories (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 33).*

> *Individuals in the story-telling circle have their own understanding of the story meaning that reflects the community, the circumstances and the interpretation being passed on. Oral accounts are not simply a detached recounting of factual events, but rather are "facts enmeshed in the stories of a lifetime" (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 33) leaving room for "many histories" with*

variations reflecting unique relationships within and among communities and with the environment (Lendsey and Wuttunee, 1997, p. 2).

It is impossible to fully grasp the meaning of these traditional values through study of written words. Layers of meaning are exposed depending on the way a story is told, how it is told, who tells it and by listening to the whole story. This results in respect for the interrelatedness of word, thought, belief and action and thus its holistic meaning (Alfred, 1999, p. xvii). The values list must be recognized as a starting point for discussion only.

It is hard to completely grasp the significance of this requirement for personal interaction in a mainstream culture devoted to the written word. In my opinion, great weight is given to words once they are published according more truth than might be deserved. Many traditional teachings will never be published because of the belief that to do so means to give away something that is too valuable and ultimately, is an act of disrespect.

While understanding the historical place of oral tradition and traditional values is important in understanding current issues facing Aboriginal peoples, the questions surrounding the place that these traditional values have in today's society must be considered.

2.4. Traditional Teachings in a Modern Setting

As previously noted these traditional values are at the heart of many world religions and personal belief systems held by many nations. The Aboriginal community is no different than others in its diversity of beliefs. These traditional values are held by many individuals personally and collectively. Some hold these values as part of their religious convictions outside of traditional Aboriginal belief systems. Still others do not give these ideals much thought.

Through my research experience, I have met those who think that Aboriginal peoples who live in urban settings are disconnected from many of the traditional values held in rural areas. I submit that this generalization is invalid for several reasons. There are many urban-based programs, organizations and individuals who continue to follow traditional teachings despite living

in a city. While contemporary society is a different world with many pressures in opposition to traditional values, many are able to hang onto traditional values. An informal survey of a Mohawk reserve community in the early 1990s asked about the importance of traditional values in today's society (Alfred, 1999, p. 22).

The results point to the significance of these values in their community. Ninety-seven percent accepted responsibility for all of creation; more than 80% placed importance on extended family, respect for inner wisdom, and importance of educating their young people; and finally, more than 70% honored the sacredness of children, the importance of family unity, wisdom of the past and sharing and cooperation (Alfred, 1999, p. 22). Traditional values have a place in today's society and contribute to a complete and thorough research study of Aboriginal peoples.

There is a division that, as Taiaiake Alfred notes, is a result of "the intense European effort to destroy indigenous nations" (Alfred, 1999, p. 1). He acknowledges the impact on social and cultural relations that traditional values have but it is the experience of political imposition by the colonial state that divides Aboriginal peoples.

> *Not to recognize that the ongoing crisis in our communities is fuelled by continuing efforts to prevent us from using the power of our traditional teachings is to be blind to the state's persistent intent to maintain the colonial oppression of the First Nations of this land (Alfred, 1999, p. 1).*

The interconnectedness of politics, economy, land and culture cannot be disregarded, be it at the local, regional or national level in Aboriginal or mainstream organizations. Further, the influence of role models contributes to community dysfunction or vitality. What historical and contemporary roles do elders, women and youth have in Aboriginal communities? How may the connection to the land be described?

2.5. Historical and Contemporary Roles and Connections

2.5.1. Social relationships.

Social structures have historically been recorded by researchers such as historians and anthropologists. Their perspectives, gathered with 'objective' research methodologies, provide

glimpses into disparate communities across the country. A European-influenced frame of reference and inherent problems in the "objective" research approach shifted focus from building true understanding to relying on superficial and incomplete descriptions of complex societies. Yet this is the information that was relied on by the rest of the world to 'understand' Aboriginal societies despite the inaccuracies (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 61). Oral history is another source for understanding historical roles filled by each person. Both sources will be relied on in the following brief overview of historical roles and how these roles are characterized today (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 61).

When Aboriginal peoples lived on Turtle Island (North America) prior to contact with Europeans, vibrant and diverse communities existed. A variety of political, social and cultural structures developed under the influence of the environment. Survival required that each person contributed to the family as an essential unit. Individuals were supported in expressing their individual gifts for the benefit of the collective. Following resources in an annual cycle of activity characterized some groups' way of life while other groups were located by abundant resources or took up agriculture which meant that the need for mobility was less critical.

Every community member had duties. Generally, men provided food and handled governance while women looked after the family. Elders were looked to for guidance in all aspects of community life and the young were the centre of all survival efforts, for they ensured the future of the community. Elders were teachers and were responsible for language, culture, health and aspects of governance. Youth gave meaning to all aspects of family and community life and were cared for by the community.

This general framework varied from community to community. In the east, the Six Nations recognized women as the clan mothers whose duty it was to pick the leader of the community and to remove him if he ignored the interests of the community. It was different for the Inuit in the north, who often viewed women as equal but in certain situations they were powerless as they were forced into marriage or had to obey their husbands or in-laws (RCAP, 1996, 1).

In the west, the Blackfoot held women in high esteem as life givers. They played powerful roles in ceremonies such as the sundance. Women had their own sacred societies in the Blood nation and excellence in every important aspect of tribal life brought special recognition (RCAP, 1996, 1). Generally, each nation's structure reflected a unique heritage and history.

Major influences on Aboriginal communities included the influx of Europeans, the signing of the treaties, strong religious influence, an assimilationist government policy that was codified in the Indian Act and supported by the residential school experience. The colonization of Aboriginal peoples led to a break down of many traditional values and the strength of family ties.

The role of Aboriginal women, elders and youth has changed as has the role of Aboriginal men. The evolution of these roles has been influenced by empowerment, mixing of populations, capitalism and the dysfunction facing many communities that are moving to self-governance. Many leaders are products of the residential school system and experienced in the Indian Affairs bureaucracy that was forced onto reserves.

Again, diversity is the key to describing the social structure today. Some maintain traditional ways, some incorporate a blend of modern governance structures with a foundation of traditional beliefs while other communities have replaced traditional beliefs with new systems including ones imposed under the Indian Act. Women's roles have been affected. In the north,

> *notwithstanding the settlement process of the 1950s and 1960s, which put women's roles in a state of flux, Inuit women feel that they are more empowered today and have a larger say in the political affairs of their communities. This is in part the product of their active participation in the numerous councils and committees that are a standard feature of contemporary political life in the North (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 124).*

While positive for some women, other Aboriginal women feel that their voices are lost in their communities. They are afraid to speak up because of sanctions from chief and council. Women's organizations have attempted to change this with differing results.

Presently the women in our communities are suffering from dictatorship governments that has been imposed on us by the Indian Act. We are oppressed in our communities. Our women have no voice, nowhere to go for appeal processes. If we are being discriminated against within our community or when we are being abused in our communities, where do the women go?

Joyce Courchene
Indigenous Women's Collective
Winnipeg, Manitoba, 3 June 1993
(RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 124)

Elders and youth have often lost their voices, as well, in communities. Sometimes elders have formal advisory duties to the leadership and sometimes it is informal. In some cases, only lip service is paid to them while in other situations, they are isolated from the community mainstream (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 127). The health and social statistics reveal the dysfunction where many Aboriginal youth are lost. On the other hand, there are a portion of young people who are striving to complete their education, some while still dealing with personal problems, and then go back to their communities or join the mainstream economy.

There is much that needs to be healed individually and in many interrelated aspects of community in the cities, in the reserves and in isolated Aboriginal communities. Circumstances vary between these communities. For example, in some communities individual rights have been strengthened but at a cost to responsibility for the collective. There are other examples where rights of individuals are regularly ignored in the name of 'community' or segments of the community. Migration out of communities allow individuals to evade these issues, leave the community behind and sever connections with their history leading to generations without claim or connection to their home community.

Integrating values, with one set in partnership and not in dominance, may be one way of building a stronger Canadian society that includes Aboriginal peoples. Contemporary and traditional ways are integrated into today's social, political, economic and familial elements by thoughtful leaders. Others caution that fundamental traditional ways must not be followed blindly and should be subject to scrutiny within a contemporary world. There is not always agreement on

the details of traditional ways, and questions surround just whose traditions should be followed (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 125).

2.5.2. Mother Earth

Honoring the relationship to Mother Earth is a lifetime commitment for many Indigenous people. While there are differences between Nations, there are common themes that define strong ties to Mother Earth. The Blackfoot Confederacy, one of the Plains First Nations, describe their relationship as follows:

> *The land was considered a mother, a giver of life, and the provider of all things necessary to sustain life. A deep reverence and respect for Mother Earth infused and permeated Indian spirituality, as reflected in ...the practice of referring to the land, water, plants, animals and their fellow human beings as "all my relations." Relations meant that all things given life by the Creator —rocks, birds, sun, wind and waters —possessed spirits. According to their beliefs, the Creator had given them their own territory and entrusted them with the responsibility of caring for the land and all their relations (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 62).*

This responsibility meant:

> *that the land was an original grant from the Creator, and it was a grant to a specific people —not a grant in terms of individual ownership, but a grant in accordance with their worldview and philosophy, for 'all my relations'. These relations among all living things were essential in maintaining the continuity of creation, for if the relational network were interfered with, imbalances would occur and the process of creation could come to a halt (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 63).*

This gift of life and the responsibility it entailed was meant to protect Mother Earth for future generations and honor, maintain and protect the cycle of creation.

This connection has been tested over the years. First Nations people were forced to live on reserves under treaty and obliged to attend residential schools under a government policy of assimilation. Métis people lived wherever they could since they were not welcomed by the Europeans nor the First Nations. Nomadic lifestyles of the Inuit were curtailed and community life dominated by the church and government. They were forced off the land and into communities

often for the education of their children.

For some Aboriginal peoples in Canada, today's commitment to Mother Earth is so obvious that it is odd even to speak of. Taking care of Mother Earth is integral to all activities including economic development projects. Often elders help to ensure that the community is reminded of its responsibilities and regularly consulted in the decision-making process. Young people are taught traditional beliefs in communities where this is important.

While the connection to a life on the land is almost gone in most communities, some maintain their link by trapping, hunting, fishing and berry gathering on the weekends and in the summers. These are seen as important times for family and for personal rejuvenation. The words "sustainable development" are not used and instead wisdom and knowledge passed through the generations are relied on to protect the land from overuse and permanent damage. This perspective underlies the contribution of Aboriginal world views to the discussion of economic development in chapter five.

In some communities, Christianity is influential and these traditional ties to the land may be described more in line with Christian teachings. For some there is a theme of dominion over all living creatures that may also be accepted by Aboriginal members. For others, the disconnection to traditional teachings may result from generational impacts flowing from residential school experiences, migration to the urban setting and lack of interest. In many cases, Aboriginal peoples do not hold legal title to their traditional lands, or do not have their rights recognized, and are unable to prevent damaging economic development undertaken by corporations.

In summary, this section has introduced complex histories and social structures of Aboriginal peoples that are rich in texture with far-reaching values and relationships shaped by struggle, necessity and connection with life. A set of values have been enumerated that stand together. They cannot be individually singled out as more or less important in understanding economic development from Aboriginal perspectives. They are integral to an holistic view that is

still relevant in a contemporary analysis of Aboriginal peoples and their development experience.

We see the end result of challenging experiences. It is a people where many are marginalised, struggling to hold on to meaningful personal and community identities that capture shared values and honors existing diversity in ways that truly contemplate their place in Canadian society. Sickness, dysfunctional family situations, poverty, disenchanted youth, lack of control over resources are only some of the obstacles facing Aboriginal peoples. Despite them, there is hope, faith and dreams, and hard workers are striving for healing change that are carrying the 'Red Nation' forward.

A place to begin a discussion of the western perspectives is now possible with the grounding provided in this chapter. Successfully achieving the stated research objectives of carrying this information forward into the discussion beginning in chapter three, with historical and contemporary approaches to economic development by and for Aboriginal peoples.

3. Effective Approaches to Economic Development With Aboriginal Peoples

A story was told a long time ago... An old man told us that, we look at the future, what we should like to see? Four children came from those four directions: a white child from the north, a red child from the east, a yellow child from the south, and a black child from the west. They walked together and they peered in to the mirror of life. They joined hands and, when they looked in there, all they saw was the Creator. That's all they saw. They saw no animosity; they saw no colour; they saw the Creator (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 675).

3.1. Introduction

Economic development approaches that have shown results acceptable to the community are considered in this section. Prior to an examination of those approaches, consideration will be given regarding the meaning of community. A brief overview of historical approaches to economic development leads into a discussion of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' (RCAP) final recommendations in this regard. Many authors have made recommendations in this area that are considered in RCAP's final report. There are, however, several additional authors who add significantly to this discussion.

One aspect consistently attributed to Aboriginal communities is support for the collective as opposed to the largely individualistic approach taken by the rest of society. Within this context, what does the collective or 'community' mean? Aboriginal peoples are grouped in rural or isolated communities because of family connections and shared heritage. People leave these communities for a variety of reasons and live in larger communities including towns and cities. Individual identity is a personal matter and ranges from denial of Aboriginal heritage to full celebration of 'walking the red path' in a way that respects traditional teachings. Connection with the Earth Mother is a matter that varies across groups and individuals that Ghostkeeper (1996) notes ranges from 'living off the land' (integrated into the wage economy) to 'living with the land' (part of traditional economy or incorporating the wage economy with traditional beliefs) and any combination thereof.

There are distinctions imposed on Aboriginal communities regarding personal identity. The

Indian Act, a piece of federal legislation, dictates who qualifies as status Indians (thus creating a grouping that is not tied to community heritage called non-status Indians, made up of Indians who identify themselves as Indians but are not recognized under the Indian Act). Additionally First Nations, Métis and Inuit are recognized as Aboriginal peoples, according to the Constitution Act, 1982. Migration pressures result in a heterogenous community membership. For example, people live in because of education, intermarriage and employment opportunities.

Thirty-five to forty percent of First Nations people live on reserves (small pieces of land set aside under treaties). Those who live on reserve and have status fall under the jurisdiction of Department of Indian Affairs that negotiates funding agreements for governance, housing, social services and economic development. When status Indians leave their reserves, the jurisdiction of the federal government is less clear and the benefits they are able to claim generally decrease. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the British North American Act (1867) generally outline the federal government's responsibility to Aboriginal peoples. Provincial governments have consistently refused to provide special services to off-reserve status Indians although this situation is changing slowly across Canada.

Métis people have no formal relationship with the federal government and today are eligible for the same level of services as other Canadians. Inuit people have a similar relationship as do First Nations individuals with the Department of Indian Affairs and receive funding through territorial and federal agreements. Once a status Indian leaves the reserve then usually all Department of Indian Affairs services are denied and there may be difficulties in replacing these services with provincial and municipal services. Provincial governments differ in the amount of responsibility they are willing to pick up from the federal government for these people since usually there is no additional federal funding forthcoming.

Geographical 'identity' impacts community definition. It is easy to define 'community' for Aboriginal peoples living on a reserve or in a settlement because of distinct boundaries. It is not as easy in Canadian cities. In some large urban centers, Aboriginal peoples tend to congregate in

certain, well-defined neighborhoods whose borders can fairly easily be identified. This tends to be the case in the cities of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Edmonton, Alberta.

In other cities, such as Calgary, Alberta, Aboriginal peoples have some neighborhoods in common but many are so well integrated that a geographic "community" is not so clearly visible. Understanding the parameters of 'community' is clearly complex and figures in understanding 'community' economic development. According to RCAP (1996), 45% of the total Aboriginal population resided in an urban setting with the balance in rural or reserve communities (2, p. 806). The following sections examine historical and contemporary economic development strategies and the challenges faced by Aboriginal communities.

3.2. Historical Record

3.2.1. Changes in relationships.

The basis for the current situation in Aboriginal society is derived from the historical relationship between Aboriginal peoples and Canadian governments as demonstrated by government policy. Of particular interest here is understanding the deterioration of a meaningful Aboriginal economy that prospered prior to European contact and then dwindled by the end of the fur trade. It was then that Aboriginal peoples became a 'liability' as Europeans sought to expand ownership and control across the country.

Treaties were signed with a great deal of evidence demonstrating full knowledge by Aboriginal leaders of the changes that were occurring and the limited options available to protect their people. The government signed treaties wanting a way to open up the land to settlers at all costs and leaders in the Aboriginal community signed treaties wanting to ensure future survival and a partnership that would benefit all parties involved. Several scholars from within the Aboriginal community make the following observations:

> *Aboriginal peoples have always had a strongly held value of self-sufficiency: we have always wanted to take care of ourselves. We have always acted to ensure that we can do this. As you can see there were many ways in which they prevented us from taking care of ourselves.*

Prior to contact, with European newcomers, Aboriginal peoples were self-sufficient. Trade and commerce played an important part in the lives of many tribal communities. It was not until the imposition of foreign values that these practices were curtailed. Our ancestral leaders conducted mutually beneficial trade relationships, supported whole communities, negotiated among themselves, and laid the foundations for productive, fulfilling societies before their skills and practises were cut short by invading strangers.

The records of the treaty negotiations in the late 19th century are filled with the testimony of Indian leaders who knew of the world that was being built around them and who actively attempted to obtain the tools necessary to survive and thrive in the emerging market economy.

We read the Council minutes of the traditional chiefs of the Iroquois Confederacy and hear the chiefs asking, repeatedly, of the Indian agents about the value of their investments and the size of their bank accounts in Ottawa. We see them asking to use their own money to establish loan funds for small businesses instead of being used exclusively for social welfare (Newhouse and Jetté, 1997, p. 3).

Another example of economic activity is outlined:

... in the records of the fur trade, we read of constant bargaining over the price of furs by Aboriginal peoples and the Hudson Bay Company (HBC). The Indians were always asking for more than the HBC was willing to pay. The HBC was forced to put into place a rather complicated system. Indians understood extremely well how the system worked and for whose advantage it was built. They usually got their prices (Newhouse and Jetté, 1997, p. 3).

The context for survival and thriving as communities, continued to change. Legislation including the Indian Act, was enacted for the benefit of Canadians while focusing on Aboriginal peoples to their detriment. Treaty lands were small, removed from markets in most cases, of poor quality with limited opportunities for meaningful participation in the Canadian economy. While charged with introducing agriculture as an alternative for self-sufficiency, government agents regularly did poor jobs in providing farming implements and supporting marketing possibilities. If anything, many consistently undermined the efforts of the government and Aboriginal peoples. If opportunities arose to participate in the Canadian economy, often Canadians were unwilling to conduct business to any great extent with Aboriginal peoples (Newhouse and Jetté, 1997, p. 2).

The Canadian government policy of a social safety net for its citizens changed in the early 1920s with the Depression and became broadly available to all Canadians including Aboriginal peoples by the 1960s. Instead of trying to develop programs of education, training and support for encouraging positive contributions by Aboriginal peoples to the economy, the government chose to use the welfare program as the dominant means of addressing the negative impacts of the residential school system, colonialism, marginalization and general deterioration of Aboriginal peoples. Dr. Fred Wien, scholar and head of the RCAP Economic Development section, comments on this urgent situation:

> *For the on-reserve population in Canada as a whole, 37 per cent were reliant on social assistance by 1981, a figure that grew to 45 per cent by 1995. Projected in the future and taking account of anticipated demographic change, the rate of dependence on social assistance is expected to reach 60 per cent by the year 2010...*
>
> *We are now caught in a cycle where costs for welfare and related remedial measures continue to grow while funds for economic development stagnate or are reduced... The amount allocated for what might be called social problem spending (social assistance, health, housing, policing) has grown from 30 to 40 per cent of total spending in the period between 1981/82 and 1995/96. The amount allocated for economic development (broadly defined to include items such as economic development, business development, and land claims) decreased from 10 per cent to 8 per cent, while the proportion allocated to education and training, has grown slightly from 19 to 22 per cent.*
>
> *The overriding impression left by these figures, and by the experience of Aboriginal communities across the country, is that governments continue to meet economic distress with income support payments rather than investing in the often more difficult measures that would rebuild Aboriginal economies.*
>
> *We desperately need to break out of this cycle (Wien, 1997, pp. 3-4).*

3.2.2. Economic dilemma.

The economic dilemma between government policy and real needs in which Aboriginal peoples are caught, has been studied by scholars, researchers and by the federal government. Many approaches and remedies have been dreamed of and some have been applied. An introduction to these approaches is set out in the following sections, beginning with an historical perspective.

Economies of Aboriginal nations were not always undeveloped. As noted in the previous section, evidence indicates that they flourished prior to contact and trade with Europeans. Cycles of activity followed the seasons and animal migrations, maximizing odds of survival. Excess production in food or other objects was incorporated into elaborate trade networks developed throughout North America. These goods were also used to build alliances or cement agreements between nations. For many nations, economic activity adapted to European contact and flourished (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 780)

Aboriginal peoples participated in the fur trade by providing labor for the trading companies. Some became employees, suppliers of goods and services, and members of a small merchant class. There were boom and bust cycles throughout this period since demand for products was based on fluctuating European markets for whales, forest products, fish, seals and minerals. As the fur trade died, more and more European settlers came, demanding land for agriculture. There was no real place for Aboriginal peoples so land and resources were regularly and arbitrarily removed from Aboriginal peoples. Treaties were entered into which resulted in small scattered communities of Aboriginal peoples, living on very small portions of traditional lands. They had limited access to resources, if any resources existed, and faced an uncertain future (RCAP, 1996, 2, pp. 782-83).

The transition from the fur trade to the move on reserves, with a potential future in agriculture, was extremely disruptive for Aboriginal peoples. The move to agriculture was not met with whole-hearted support from the government or surrounding farmers. Carter (1990) studied the prairies situation facing Aboriginal farmers for the period from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. She refutes common opinions expressed in a number of papers that is exemplified in the following: "It is believed that Indians failed to adapt to agriculture because they lacked initiative and diligence, and reverted to "primitive" behaviour patterns ruled by superstition"(p. 3). In fact, her research of Plains Indians revealed that the occupants realized that they had little other choice and so their attitude was one of willingness to be given the means to farm. They later proved that they could farm but their efforts were systematically undermined by the state (pp. 237-258.

For example, limitations on where Aboriginal farmers could sell their produce were set; seeds, equipment and suitable land were scarce; and, non-Aboriginal farmers often persuaded the government to sell off the productive reserve lands, in order to reduce competition. Aboriginal peoples operated on the margins of the mainstream economy at low levels of income but still enjoyed some measure of self-sufficiency (Carter, pp. 237-258).

In particular, Aboriginal peoples were required to change from a traditional leadership system to an elected Chief and Council system, beginning with the Gradual Enfranchisement Act of 1869. Denial of traditional systems continued to marginalize and force dependency on Aboriginal peoples struggling for survival. Local and provincial governments did not share any responsibility with the federal government for Aboriginal peoples who often found themselves without basic services available to other Canadians.

It was difficult to obtain financing or do business with banks who requested federal guarantees. Business owners did business with Aboriginal peoples as customers but felt no obligation to provide employment or other types of community support. The federal government identified many problems facing Aboriginal peoples, and attempted to remedy the situation. According to the RCAP Final Report:

> *Since 1960, the federal government has pursued at least five approaches [in economic development]:*
>
> 1. *migration to mainstream employment sites, especially urban areas,*
> 2. *business development,*
> 3. *sectoral development,*
> 4. *human resources development, and*
> 5. *community economic development.*
>
> *...the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS), is noteworthy ... because it emphasized the need for co-ordination of programs covering all five areas between participating federal departments. There is considerable variation from one policy area to another, as pointed out in a recent assessment of CAEDS from an Aboriginal community perspective.*
>
> *Over this period, however, policy, programs and budgets continued to be controlled by federal and provincial/territorial governments, and principally*

non-Aboriginal perspectives were brought to bear on development (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 791).

Doug Elias, a scholar and former University of Lethbridge faculty member, equates government policy with ideas of modernization and the underlying theme of assimilation that has permeated governmental relationships with Aboriginal peoples. Indian culture and society, are seen to hinder "real" economic development and any special place for history, Aboriginal rights, treaties, relationships with the land, tradition and pride in one's people "all served to defeat the admission of Indians as full participants in a better world. The attempt to strip those concepts of their power was an attempt to prepare Indians to enter the modern Canadian mainstream (Elias, 1995, p. 9)." The 1969 federal government White Paper galvanized Aboriginal communities. Integration and assimilation into mainstream society were not part of the dreams of many Aboriginal peoples, and this sentiment echoed across the country.

Further, funds for business development became available for businesses *outside the traditional economy* for on and off-reserve people, as well as, Métis people. For a time, funds were also available for specific sectors that were identified as having potential including forestry, fishing, agriculture, arts and crafts and tourism (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 794).

Currently, a shift is being made to local control which allows communities to effectively deal with the diversity of the issues facing Aboriginal peoples. It is this diversity that has not been adequately addressed by the federal government and has contributed to the failure of regional and national policies.

It is important to keep in mind that the relationship with the federal government, the Indian Act and the treaties have had significant impact on the scope of Aboriginal rights and economic development. They have critical consequences on whether or not economic development decisions may even be contemplated by communities since communities often do not have title to land, water, and other resources or are restricted in some way from making decisions pertaining to them.

The Royal Commission concluded that the foregoing strategies failed because predominantly non-Aboriginal perspectives directed these strategies with no significant input from Aboriginal peoples (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 798). As noted, the shift is now towards community control through land claims settlements, court decisions and negotiated settlements. Modern treaties, in the form of land claims settlements and treaty land entitlements, are shifting power back into the hands of the communities. Redistributing the responsibilities and control of Department of Indian Affairs to Manitoba's Aboriginal communities could have a similar impact.

3.2.3. Contemporary realities.

In recent decades, Aboriginal peoples have pushed for government policies to achieve a stronger, more self-reliant economic base. The first major statement on the issues came in reaction to the 1969 white paper and was prepared by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood (MIB). Its report, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*, states:

> *In developing new methods of response and community involvement it is imperative that we, both Indian and Government, recognize that economic, social and educational development are synonymous, and thus must be dealt with as a 'total' approach rather than in parts. The practice of program development in segments, in isolation as between its parts, inhibits if not precludes, effective utilization of all resources in the concentrated effort required to support economic, social and educational advancement.*
>
> *In order that we can effect changes in our own right, it will be necessary to develop a whole new process of community orientation and development. The single dependency factor of Indian people upon the state cannot continue, nor do we want to develop a community structure that narrows the opportunities of the individual through the transferral of dependencies under another single agency approach.*
>
> *The transition from paternalism to community self-sufficiency may be long and will require significant support from the state, however, we would emphasize that state support should not be such that the government continues to do for us, that which we want to do for ourselves (RCAP , 1996, 2, pp. 795-96).*

It gave a voice to Aboriginal peoples that had been muffled and led to a chorus of voices across the country. Revised policies advocated by Aboriginal leaders focused on community development as part of a holistic and comprehensive approach. Healing for individuals, safeguarding Aboriginal rights to land and resources while developing cultural and human

resources were priorities developed by and for Aboriginal peoples. Proposed changes for increased self-sufficiency highlight ways to build on the strengths of Aboriginal and mainstream society. Local input dictates the emphasis placed by communities on individual or communal interests adding to the appropriateness of independence and self-governance.

An example of sensitive capacity-building is discernible through Aboriginal-controlled education institutions that developed to meet the challenge of educating a population that has many needs. Rather than just limiting options to skills that are transferable to an urban setting, programs also meet specific community needs (RCAP , 1996, 2, pp. 794-795). Other shifts in strategies also include a shift in emphasis to the community level in other areas of economic development with *more local control.*

As is noted, while federal and provincial governments try to assist in making positive change, Aboriginal peoples have visions too and have increasingly taken control in directing the means to attain those goals. While many have worked hard and achieved much, it is hard to distinguish these successes within the overwhelming statistics of poverty, poor health and low standard of living that characterize Canada's Aboriginal population. As outlined by RCAP, a major shift in approach and investment of funds by government and the private sector is essential and will facilitate personal development and healing within the Aboriginal community that precedes meaningful growth and independence.

Continuing on the present path according to Wien and RCAP will cost millions in social assistance costs and in the end will be more costly than spending millions of dollars on the Aboriginal community infrastructure for success. The clear message is that education, training and other RCAP recommendations will truly build capacity allowing the Aboriginal community to take on the challenges of the new millennium (See RCAP, 1996; Royal Bank/CANDO, 1997).

These authors contemplate a partnership of healing and real economic development built on greater understanding of the need for substantive change by the Canadian public. In the end,

working together will result in the betterment of all Canadians and most importantly, for all Aboriginal peoples. All have an important role to contribute to this process. In the words of Ovide Mercredi, former Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations:

> *It is no longer acceptable to be just complainers about our social and economic conditions. It is no longer enough just to blame others for our pain and misery. What does it take? How many pennies does it take to stop family violence in our homes? How many dollars does it take to prevent child abuse in our communities?* ***We must begin the healing process for the recovery of our First Nations peoples with whatever resources we have. It must start with us, here in our hearts.*** *Yes, we will need outside support, but* we have to do everything we can on our own, *too.*
>
> *For some time our people have been trying to find ways of being more self-sufficient. It is quite apparent to us that in order to reach that objective, we are going to need the help and cooperation of the Canadian people and the corporate or business communities.*
>
> *Unlike some other First Nations leaders, I do not believe in absolute sovereignty or independence for our people, because I think it is impossible to close our minds and our hearts to the experiences of other people in this country. We cannot pretend that we are the only human beings on this planet or that we are totally independent... not a single nation-state is absolutely sovereign in terms of its economic policy...*
>
> *We live in an era of interdependence. We have to come to the realization, as First Nations, that we have to lift ourselves up, and in the process reach out to other Canadians and their governments to help us elevate our social and economic conditions. We must eliminate poverty and suffering so that we can contribute to a common vision of economic and social progress for all the individuals that should benefit from sharing our Mother Earth (Emphasis added) (Mercredi and Turpel, 1993, pp. 145-146; 154-155).*

Through interdependence comes opportunities for improvement. It is a two way street where benefits and contributions from each partner can have significant impact. These convictions were expressed in RCAP's final report. In further support, Ovide Mercredi states:

> *There is a valid sense of grievance about our treatment in all parts of Canada. Our people have experienced a collective form of societal and economic victimization. Those wounds cannot be healed until we do something to change our*

experience. The wounds are there in my parents, they are there with me and they will be there with my children. If we maintain the status quo, we perpetuate that system of victimization. The only real opportunity for First Nations peoples to start on the road to recovery is to persuade Canadian people and governments to respect us, not as just individuals but as distinct peoples who are part of the family of the human race.

...There is little, in my view, that can be done by individual corporations or by organizations like the Canadian Council for Native Business to help our situation if we do not make structural reforms in the Canadian state. The help provided by business people may benefit a small population in our communities, but the real social and economic recovery can only take place if there is a new relationship with Canada that is based on the right of the First Nations peoples to define their own futures.

Business people can help us deal with the poverty in First Nations communities by working with us to create employment and economic development opportunities and to provide training and education. They can also help us with planning. But we have to change governments first so that we can put plans in place for the future (Mercredi and Turpel, 1993, pp. 152-153).

Scholars have increasingly focused their attention over the past decades on understanding Aboriginal economic development in terms of the current state of affairs and recommending strategies to improve the situation. Much of this literature forms the foundation for the RCAP's recommendations in the economic development section. That is the starting point for the next section. Several approaches will be canvassed that ought to be considered.

3.2.3. Contemporary approaches.

For many of Canada's Aboriginal communities, economic development is recognized as the engine of self-governance. With increasing control over resources and encouragement in the growth of community and individual-owned businesses, many communities are trying to become self-sufficient. It is important to me to put today's situation in a broader context, in keeping with the longer Aboriginal view taken traditionally. As previously described, Aboriginal society is not static. Reflections of changes within this society and the impact these have on understanding, analysis and prediction of behaviour is offered by few scholars.

David Newhouse, a member of Onandaga, Six Nations, and a scholar at Trent University, offers the following observations. He makes a number of significant predictions regarding the future of Aboriginal communities based on current trends, as follows:

- *Many Aboriginal organizations and processes strongly exhibit characteristics of mainstream society.*

- *Urban and reserve-based residents are examining their traditions and reincorporating these traditions into every-day life.*

- *Aboriginal peoples are defining individual and collective identities based upon traditional cultural groups rather than by government legislation.*

- *Businesses do and are predicted to continue structuring economic activities around the western way of doing things and incorporating Aboriginal values into these ways of operation (Newhouse, 1992).*

These trends are the product of independent individual and community decisions and could arguably occur with little or no support from any agencies external to Aboriginal communities. They do deserve, however, to be supported through policies and necessary changes in infrastructure by governments when desired and where possible. These changes are contemplated in the myriad of RCAP final report recommendations.

When examining the current approaches to economic development in Aboriginal communities, examples of some critical differences with western approaches include the role of community in decision-making, the role of elders, spirituality and the connection to the land. These distinctions are not always easily identified by an untrained observer nor are they present in every community, but they are important to recognize because they do exist. Where they do not exist in communities that reflect a mainstream orientation, these distinctions may be recaptured through future goals. Examples of these approaches will be introduced in the case study chapter.

Attitudes to economic development are diverse in the Aboriginal community and are set out in the Royal Commission's final report:

Aboriginal speakers made it clear to us (as they have told previous inquiries) that they are not naively opposed to development or modernity, as is sometimes alleged. They do not want to give up telephones, snowmobiles, or video games. They accept that industrial development is a necessary part of the economic fabric of every country. Indeed, many pointed to their need and desire for greater participation in Canada's industrial economy. But few Aboriginal peoples would choose to participate at the expense of the land and life forms that anchor them in their past and link them to the future.

We also recognize that the traditional ways that once served to limit Aboriginal use of land and conserve resources are changing. Some Aboriginal peoples, especially among the young, have lost their sense of connectedness with the environment and their responsibility to it. Even those who retain this sense have access to technology designed to make exploitation attractive and easy — snowmobiles, high-powered rifles, electronic fishing gear, and so on. We were warned by a few speakers in public testimony that Aboriginal peoples are just as capable of destructive behaviour as anyone else (RCAP, 1996, 3, p. 188).

Aboriginal peoples do not stand alone in their connection and need to protect Mother Earth while surviving and thriving in this society. Many Canadians recognize and personally support efforts to protect the environment. Their values may be articulated differently but the bottom-line, protection of the environment for future generations, is held in common.

The debate regarding resource development is on-going with opinions occupying all points on the spectrum within the communities. The issues are often where economic development should take place and how it should occur. This point is articulated by another presenter to the Royal Commission (1996).

Gilbert Cheechoo, a Cree from Moose Factory on James Bay, pointed out the error of assuming that Aboriginal peoples are automatically opposed to development.

So a lot of people get mixed up...when we talk about resource development: the Indians want to keep their culture, the Indians want to trap on that land when they are sitting on a million dollars worth of gold.

That is not the only thing we are talking about.

There are debates going on in our reserves right now, our communities, about resource development. But a lot of non-Native people don't know that

because they don't take the initiative to find out if our people are talking about these things. They assume that everybody is against them saying, "They want to take our land. They want to take our rights to explore and to take resource development out...."

Resource development is a big issue that they talk about in our communities. What are we going to do? Some people say, "Well, we should go and negotiate and try to get a deal." Some people say "no" (RCAP, 1996, 2, p. 441).

Many leaders are cognizant of the damage that has been done to their lands due to economic development and are very cautious about the projects that are supported. Other communities place more emphasis on employment in making economic development decisions, when balancing that with the impact on the environment. Some communities pass all projects for review by elders councils where the elders use their traditional knowledge in considering the project's appropriateness. This process screens out projects that may be profitable but do not meet the community's standards regarding its responsibility to take care of Mother Earth. Elders often play an active role in guiding their urban and rural communities and helping to determine a balance in economic development that makes sense in their communities.

Elders say that the sickness that plagues so many Aboriginal communities and the threat to the sustenance of life on Turtle Island (North America) posed by environmental degradation result from the violation of natural law. Human beings were not given a mandate to take from the earth without limit. Ignoring that there is a balance to be preserved not only invites dire consequences, but also ensures that misfortune will follow and afflict all those who depend on the generosity of the land, which nourishes us like a mother.

Aboriginal peoples listen to the prophetic messages that they have a responsibility to fulfil — bringing all peoples to an appreciation of their place in the natural order. For them, the prophecies are not relics of the past; they are beacons for the future (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 634).

The Royal Commission documents many Aboriginal leaders and community members who recognize the balancing that is required for being successful in economic development and developing a vision for healthy communities. While there may never be total unanimity regarding the vision for Aboriginal peoples and their relationship with Canadians, one leader articulates his vision in a way that is inclusive and respectful of what each group brings to the whole of Canada.

Ovide Mercredi notes:

> *I can tell you without any doubt in my mind or heart that the people I represent want to change this country in a fundamental way which can strengthen, not destroy it. We want to be part of the riches of this country, both as sharers and creators of wealth. ...But, equally important, we want the right to be different. We want to be able to survive as distinct peoples. To pursue our own dreams as peoples who have been here since time immemorial. We want to reach deep into our past, to secure those values and priorities that are essential for the development of strong societies...*
>
> *There are many resources in this country, and Canadians respond to this with massive resource development. We believe people have forgotten the importance of protecting the environment for future generations. The peoples that I represent, those with an indigenous philosophy, have a worldview that is different from that of the corporate mainstream.*
>
> *We have a view of the environment that does not stop all forms of development, but allows it to proceed in a way that respects the environment and ensures that it is protected for future generations. Our philosophy of economic development is ingrained in our culture. We have distinct beliefs about how we should relate with the planet, how we should deal with development, and how we should respect the planet itself. ... But to respect Mother Earth as a living entity is not easy; particularly when the preoccupation of economic development may well be to exploit natural resources rather than preserve or sustain them (Mercredi and Turpel, 1993, pp.155-156).*

Chief George Johnson, Burwash Landing, Yukon shares a story that illustrates his belief that the next generation of educated leaders must be reminded of their connection to the land as well as the tension between economic development and protecting a sacred connection.

> *Chief Johnson tells how one day, he and his children climbed to the top of their favorite mountain and sat down to enjoy the beautiful valley and lake that could be seen below them.*
>
> *He asked them, "Will your children be able to enjoy this same view with you?" They said "Of course." Then George said, "Won't you let strangers come in and rip up our land? The dollar is very powerful and you might forget what we have shared today. The lure will be strong when you are told that we are sitting on the largest ore body in the territory that extends from this mountain under the valley and the lake.*
>
> *I hope you do remember your ties to the land when that time comes. If you*

must have mines, perhaps you will choose somewhere else that isn't as special to our people as this spot. Better yet, put your money into investments that do not touch this land at all. Invest internationally, like in Saudi Arabia! (Chief George Johnson, 1993)

George's ambivalence to economic development and care in gently guiding the next generation is characteristic of the approach taken to development by some community leaders. Based on my experience, the main objective of many communities is firstly, to be in a position to have economic development options that have not been available to communities in the past and secondly, to develop these options on their own terms for their own purposes. P. Elias (1991) goes further in his analysis of the level of adaptation that is occurring in contemporary Aboriginal communities. Limits of what can be done in a community, within the natural environment and within the Canadian environment are understood by mature leaders (p 35). Elias continues:

Aboriginal people seem to make the point that it is not for others to define their future. They know their limits. They will balance the need for adaptation to the Canadian environment with the need for preservation of aboriginal standards. And they will select among innovations and their own traditions to devise strategies and tactics for economic, political, and cultural development.

This is the context for understanding successful contemporary approaches to economic development by Aboriginal peoples.

3.3. Contemporary Strategies

These themes underlie the economic development goals identified by Aboriginal peoples in the RCAP's Final Report that are reinforced in other literature. Aboriginal peoples in Canada face different challenges than in the United States since treaties, self-government and legislative history has differed. There are however lessons that may be shared for success. In particular, critical factors to economic development are set out by American authors Kalt and Cornell (1993). These factors are derived from research of a variety of Aboriginal communities across the United States. They include:

- *political sovereignty: the degree to which a tribe has genuine control over reservation decision making, the use of reservation resources, and relations with the outside world;*

- *market opportunity: unique economic niches or opportunities in local, regional or national markets that result from particular assets or attributes (minerals, tourist attractions, distinctive artistic or craft traditions) or from supportive government policies;*
- *access to financial capital: the ability of the tribe to obtain investment dollars from private, government or other sources; and*
- *distance from markets: the distance tribes are from markets for their products (p. 8).*

Internal assets are another key ingredient and includes the characteristics of the tribes and the resources they control that can be committed to development. The critical factors are:

- *natural resources: minerals, water, timber, fish, wildlife, scenery, fertile land, oil, gas, and so on;*
- *human capital: the skills, knowledge, and expertise of the labour force acquired through education, training and work experience;*
- *institutions of governance: the laws and organization of tribal government, from constitutions to legal or business codes to the tribal bureaucracy. As these institutions become more effective at maintaining a stable and productive environment, the chances of success improve; and*
- *culture: conceptions of normal and proper ways of doing things and relating to other people and the behaviour that embodies those conceptions. As the fit between the culture of the community and the structure and powers of the governing institutions becomes better, the more legitimate the institutions become and the more able they are to regulate and organize the development process (p. 9).*

Finally, Cornell and Kalt (1993), list development strategy as another critical factor. It refers to the decisions tribes make regarding their plans and approaches to economic development. There are two key decisions:

- *choice of overall economic system: the organization of the reserve economy with respect to such questions as the form of ownership of business enterprises and the approach to economic development (such as tribal enterprises, individual or family entrepreneurship, joint ventures). The prospects of successful development are improved if there is a good fit between the economic system chosen by the tribe and its social organization and culture.*

- *choice of development activity: the selection of specific development projects, such as a convenience store, a gaming operation, a motel or a manufacturing plant. Activities are more likely to be successful if they take advantage of tribes' market opportunities, allow tribes to specialize in using the natural and/or human resources most available to them, and are consistent with tribes' cultures.*

Whether in a Canadian or a U.S. context, it is not likely that a particular nation or tribe will be strong in all areas, nor is this necessary. Different development strategies require a different mix of elements - an Aboriginal nation emphasizing high technology development would want to emphasize human resources development and may be less concerned about distance from markets or the natural resources base. In general, however, the more elements in place, the better the nation's prospects for effective economic development strategies.

It has become clear that in the course of building strong, healthy communities, a giant task is making sure that economic development strategies allow for development that is on terms defined by the community. For example, the terms 'strong' and 'healthy' determine what the community will give up and what they will not; and their priorities so that as one goal is accomplished, another goal is not neglected. These are tasks for effective leaders in consultation with community members that will be in keeping with community rhythms.

The community economic development approach (CED) is reflected in current federal government policy. It fits well into the context calling for broader initiatives to develop institutional capacity at the national or sectoral levels. RCAP concluded that CED's focus on local circumstances from a local perspective is holistic and harmonious with Aboriginal worldviews.

In particular, CED is a comprehensive approach that integrates social and economic goals. Resources on all levels are identified with community support and a reasonable economic development plan is crafted. The focus is on such things as stimulation of local businesses for job creation while building social and physical resources including training, education, housing, transportation, public infrastructure, culture and leisure.

RCAP concluded:

> *The CED approach, which recognizes the local community as a legitimate location for development effort, requires that communities be able to engage in a planning process to articulate social and economic needs and goals, identify institutions that need to be founded or supported, and identify development strategies consistent with local cultural, social and economic conditions. It*

requires that the community have in place a governance process to provide legitimacy and a basis for implementing plans.

The federal government has been sympathetic to CED, but it has experienced difficulty translating that attitude into official action. Budgets for CED and the resulting activities are inadequate, and real control over budgets and development still eludes communities. The Commission's community case studies revealed hamlet councils and related boards with very limited capacity to pursue job creation, training, or community planning. While the need will vary with the size of the community, at a minimum, Aboriginal communities should have some capacity to support economic development in terms of organization, staff resources and training.

...In a review of the experience with CED in the United States, Stewart Perry reported that perhaps the most significant lesson... is that community economic development must be carried on under local direction, according to local priorities, and by mobilizing local resources first. That is quite different from conventional development policy which begins with central decisions in the economic core areas about what should happen in the peripheral regions (1996, 2, pp. 845-846).

CED is one approach to community economic development. The community takes the lead and identifies a path for itself that is worthy of further support. In this scenario, all levels of government are involved in a supportive capacity. The path that is identified is unique to each community. There are, however, development themes or goals uncovered in the extensive research conducted by RCAP (pp.779-780). These themes are an effective starting point in Aboriginal communities seeking economic development. The Canadian experience echos the American research of Kalt and Cornell in some areas but not in others.

- *Secure a sufficient land and resource base for all Aboriginal peoples.*

- *Access jobs that support a decent income and add meaning to people's lives through nurturing self-esteem and identity. Choices exist to stay in communities, move to urban centres, participate in traditional economies, in the wage economy or any combination thereof.*

- *Self-reliant and sustaining economies operate fairly and equally with existing trade networks and economic systems. Economies provide the basis for survival and an opportunity to prosper individually and with the community.*

➤ *Choices about the nature of this economy are directed by Aboriginal peoples and their institutions. Economic development will contribute to the development of Aboriginal peoples as distinct peoples within Canada. The main goals are governance in their communities and stewardship of lands and resources through economic development.*

➤ *Economies are influenced by Aboriginal values, principles and customs in support of culture and identity. Development will be synchronized with community visions of goals and processes of development.*

These broad goals recognize that economic development can go beyond individuals striving to maximize incomes and prestige, the norms in modern society. It is also about maintaining and developing ***culture and identity;*** *supporting* ***self-governing institutions;*** *and* ***sustaining traditional ways*** *of making a living. It is about* ***giving people choice*** *in their lives and maintaining appropriate forms of relationship with their own and with other societies (Emphasis added).*

It must be remembered that discussion of approaches is within a diverse and complex setting. The ideas put forward by the following scholars lead to an understanding of possibilities. It is up to each community, each nation and each people to undertake the next steps in realizing those possibilities. What approaches and processes exist based on Aboriginal wisdom and experience or an understanding of these things in collaboration with the western experience of economic development?

In particular the most relevant recommendations for this discussion focus on economic development. Fred Wien summarizes these strategies in his Royal Bank/ CANDO (1997) contribution. The context for economic development is critical and dictates appropriate strategies:

- *Regain control over the levers that govern their economies through realization of self-government. All levels of government are urged to make room for an Aboriginal order of government.*
- *Rebuild Aboriginal nations as the basis for bringing together a critical mass of resources that allow for economies of scale*
- *Build institutional capacity on the basis of legitimate authority (within the nation), appropriate rules and procedures within a safe and secure environment for potential investors.*
- *Expand lands and resources through establishing clear legal interests*
- *Recognize Aboriginal and treaty rights as one means for expanding lands and*

resources

- *Build Aboriginal businesses through improved access to capital; advice for entrepreneurs; and improved access to markets*
- *Support traditional economies including trapping, hunting and fishing*
- *Overcome barriers to employment through expanding available jobs; appropriate education and training; improving information networks to bring jobs and people together; partnering with major employers and improving child care*
- *Develop new approaches to income support programs that help people break the cycle of welfare dependence (pp. 11-23).*

The need for mainstream economic development strategies in harmony with Aboriginal cultural pursuits and traditional beliefs is recognized. For example, RCAP recommends economic development of natural resources using small-scale, environmentally friendly techniques that will allow for a flexibility in exploiting natural resources that multinational corporations do not currently possess. Additionally, developing a stronger traditional or subsistence economy, involving living on the land and with the land, is suggested as being economically viable since material goods and specialist services are provided in a renewable fashion. These activities also provide meaning for many Aboriginal peoples living in communities.

Aboriginal peoples, like other Canadians, are restricted to the technologies that are available to everyone regarding resource development. There are more environmentally friendly ways of developing resources that have to do with scale and scope of operations and timing of activities (See also Elias, 1995; Loxley, 1992). They may not be widely available and some of these technologies may be very expensive. Sometimes the "best" decision means protecting areas from economic development which are of value for traditional activities despite the profits to be gained from harvesting resources in those areas. Once the economic development decision is made, communities may choose to use sustainable technology and traditional environmental knowledge. They may choose to affirm their connection to Mother Earth as integral to their economic development strategies.

Influenced by western thought and Canadian society, contemporary Aboriginal communities hold onto ways of developing resources that make sense to the leaders and members within the confines of their experience, legal power and control over the land.

It is these distinctions in approach that will now be examined.

3.3.1. A closer examination of the influence of capitalism.

This discussion begins with an examination of the context in which economic development occurs and then considers potential impacts on Aboriginal society. The most popular and well-endorsed economic system in the world is capitalism. It embraces concepts of individual accumulation, mode of production, social class, and private property. It is a dynamic, creative system that teaches people to regard land, resources and their own labor as potential commodities for market. In particular, Newhouse (1993) offers the following definition of capitalism:

> *At the heart of capitalism is a particular view of man and a notion of social progress. Man is viewed as a being who is continually striving to improve his material and social well-being. Progress is measured through a continual improvement in individual material position. Most important, this progress occurs as the result of the actions of individuals, each of whom engages in this constant striving. It is the collection of individual effort which results in this constant striving. It is the collection of individual effort which results in improved collective well-being. Individuals possess capital or labour that can be used to produce profits or surpluses.*
>
> *The goal of every individual is to produce an economic surplus that can be saved for use at a future date, spent on consumables, or invested in order to produce additional surpluses. Individuals may pool their surpluses and use them for that group's good, or governments may appropriate them in the form of taxes in order to produce public goods which are available for all.*
>
> *This notion of individual effort and social competition is important for it is what drives capitalism (p. 92).*

As Berkes notes, over time human social relationships with nature have become more removed and destructive. "Capitalists organized the workers into instruments of profit and they organized the earth as the raw material for labor to exploit (p. 177)." There is a downside to this attitude towards economic development that has been increasingly acknowledged by many researchers. Factoring in limits of the natural world, however, does not fit easily into the capitalism model and the market economy function. Daly (1991) argues for recognition of the lack of connection between sustainability and the 'limitless resources' approach to the market.

The market is sensitive to scale issues at the micro level but it is insensitive to the macro level scale of the whole economy relative to the ecosystem. The fact that the market can substitute relatively abundant resources for relatively scarce ones is a great virtue but does not remove the entropic constraint (p. 277).

The entropic constraint referred to by Daly considers the fact that while energy cannot be destroyed, there are waste products from using energy that are unuseable and in fact act as a limit on resources available for consumption. This reality has not been reflected in many development choices including, for example, accounting for project costs. Costs of using resources, quantifying the impact on quality of life today and in the future, and depletion of resources in the pursuit of profit, among other similar 'costs' are not regularly factored into discussions of economic development projects. Broader recognition of the limits on resources may continue to encourage revision of such activities. In any event, the attention of world leaders has been drawn to discussion of thoughtful resource use in the last twenty years with increasing concern.

An Aboriginal perspective is brought to the discussion by Newhouse (1993) who argues for a predominant Aboriginal view of economic development that accepts the conventional view of development as a process and not an end product then enriches that initial premise by incorporating physical, mental, emotional and spiritual elements to guide the process. Additionally, Newhouse calls for consideration of the process to include the life cycle. His views will be examined further as this approach lends itself to achievement of long-term results and not short term improvements (p. 96). This is an holistic view of development that is generally not realized (p. 95).

Further, Newhouse urges for economic development as an effort shared with the individual, the community and the local government in partnership. Respect flows from partnerships and influences the choice of projects and technology employed since to do otherwise would breach responsibility as a humble part of creation. "One needs permission of the world in order to change it (Newhouse, 1995, p. 96)."

From Newhouse's perspective, human capital investment (not individual capital

accumulation) is the focus of economic development activity. The impact of activity, especially on the environment, is an intrinsic part of considering community quality of life and is guided by elders. The role of elders in planning and guiding economic development efforts is formalized through councils of elders, advisory roles or personal support to entrepreneurs. Finally, wealth distribution focuses on sharing and kindness with expectations that the community and the individual will benefit from economic development activity (1995, p. 96).

What impact will adopting the ways of capitalism without restraint have on Aboriginal society? Newhouse (1998) notes that community views of proper behaviour turn from tradition to thinking in economic terms and valuing in monetary terms. The idea of progress becomes linked to the idea of moving to a better world that is defined primarily in monetary terms and further, that the happiness of all is linked to the "self-regarding pursuit of happiness of each" (p. 8). Economic developers are only now beginning to acknowledge limits on resources in the context of sustainability.

Newhouse argues that capitalism requires a broad community moral consensus and commitment in its favour.

> *One also needs to have this same consensus and commitment to its primary institutions: the market as the primary mechanism for the provisioning of society, the idea of private accumulation of wealth, the idea of defining progress only in economic terms, the idea that each of us in pursuit of our own economic interests improves our collective well being and the central idea of the capital cycle itself.*
>
> *In my view, capitalism becomes more than an economic system. It becomes a worldview and a way of life. It postulates a way for the world to work and provides a somewhat complete view of the order of things. It has over the last 200 or so years developed a set of social institutions which support it and into which individuals are socialized. It also develops a social rhythm for society and defines social relationships.*
>
> *What it does ultimately is redefine the nature of society. It creates a moral system which is used for valuing ends and means. Society then becomes a collection of individuals, each of us allowed to pursue our own needs on the basis that this individual pursuit will result in the greatest good of all... The central calculus of capitalism which regards wealth not just as a stock to be accumulated*

but as a stock capable of being transformed into more wealth. In order to feed this cycle of ever increasing wealth, it creates a cycle of wants and needs which it then seeks to fulfill (Newhouse, 1998, p. 9).

Capitalism has had a profound impact on the economic development of the world because of how it sets the stage for private accumulation of resources. Newhouse (1998) warns that as Aboriginal society rushes to embrace the promises of capitalism, their Aboriginal values and traditions that are the antithesis of those advocated under capitalism, may be lost unknowingly and without a fight. Whether or not changes in capitalism will occur has yet to be seen but there are a number of authors questioning how the future face of economics should look.

Newhouse's view of a "capitalist" economy is significantly different than usually discussed. Possible impacts of this analysis of capitalism, as Newhouse (1995) notes, is that the notion of success in capitalism is broadened. There will be impacts on Aboriginal society with the embrace of capitalism due to the focus on materialism. "The continued use of a material definition of success in Aboriginal society may change this hierarchy (revered role of elders) as those who have material wealth move to the top of the social scale (p. 96)."

Newhouse's caution against adopting capitalism without reservation suggests that economic development for Aboriginal peoples should be a blend and balance of elements which complement a community's long-term plans while supporting a unique worldview and value system. I submit that it is possible to take the best that capitalism has to offer and embrace the best of Aboriginal worldviews in a blend for Aboriginal communities interested in this type of approach. An attempt to accomplish this has been undertaken by the First Nations Development Institute (FNDI), from Virginia, USA which is described in detail in the next section.

3.3.2. Elements of development model.

Community-based economic development theories, according to Sherry Salway Black (1994), need to use tools to assess success of economic development efforts that complement quantifiable measures of assessment and impact. Quantifiable indicators typically include, "jobs

created, incomes increased, loans made, people trained, houses built, goods and services produced" (p. 2) but measures only a small part of the picture. Other measurements are more "inclusive... of human, societal, environmental welfare" and can include "measures of what our communities value"(p. 2).

FNDI bases its approach on the need to acknowledge weaknesses of the typical economic growth model embraced by the larger society and create new models that value life, quality of the environment and what is left for future generations to enjoy. FNDI focuses on a model called the Elements of Development that is "tailor-made ... to reflect the group's values, goals and priorities. Cultural DNA...based on the decoded patterns, ideals, and goals in very different societies (Salway Black, 1994, p. 7).

The Elements of Development model offers an alternative to the usual approaches to "fixing" undeveloped Aboriginal economies. The usual "problems" of inadequate infrastructures; unskilled labour force, lack of access to capital and political instability (as identified by RCAP) contrast with an indigenous evaluation that points in a different direction. Weaknesses in government programs are noted as well as lack of cultural relevance and social disruption and non-existent personal motivation to improve reservation life (Salway Black, 1994, p. 9). Many programs to improve the situation have a common weakness. They devalue or label culture, values and community institutions as obstacles to economic development "success."

For example, the "Indian Entrepreneur Model" nurtures the profit-oriented focus of a select group within a community. Unfortunately there is no basis for interconnections and the support that a local economic system on a reserve requires and usually these individuals go to markets that are more lucrative (Salway Black, 1994, p. 10). Another example "the Chamber of Commerce Model of Development" sees success in attracting outside industry to the community. The drawbacks of minimal responsibility and accountability to the community are important and the continued reliance on outside interests is detrimental to quality community economic development. Both of these examples ignore indigenous worldviews about economic development (Salway

Black, 1994, p. 10).

Effective economic development recognizes the need for strong leadership that understands and supports local initiatives, the kinship system which is not duplicated in western society but brings strength to economic development strategies, and many cultural values that identified in chapter one, may be incorporated into more successful approaches.

Salway Black's work identifies a number of areas contributing to dependency in a reserve economy. These facts must be recognized in developing a new perspective:

> ➤ *Within each Native community, there are household income generating activities, self-help efforts and other untapped and idle resources that can be mobilized for successful economic development.*
>
> ➤ *An empowered Native economy can develop "win-win" partnerships with the surrounding economies; leverage resources; build strong networks with Native development; and enhance existing markets as well as develop new markets based on community knowledge of what people need.*
>
> ➤ *Organizational or group activities modified to generate revenues, can decrease dependency on federal funds and increase the capacity for planning, initiating , managing, and marketing development activities*
>
> ➤ *A diversified local economy decreases the flow of money out of the community, promoting local recirculation of money which enhances continued development.*
>
> ➤ *Economic development must start with the people. It is about leadership, vision and the right to a dignified livelihood for all people (Salway Black, 1994, p. 12).*

This approach takes the recommendations and conclusions of authors such as Newhouse, Loxley, RCAP Final Report, Cornell and Kalt to the next stage by informing a paradigm with an indigenous perspective. FNDI's model is an holistic approach to economic development that approaches the balance taught in the Cree Medicine Wheel (physical, spiritual, emotional and mental). It is a tool that is meant to be modified in ways that are appropriate to each community's values, beliefs and culture.

The Elements of Development model is made up of circles within circles and is summarized in Figure 1. "The circle is an important symbol in Native American society, demonstrating the interconnection of all things and the balance of life. The circle is useful to demonstrate an holistic model by visually indicating that we cannot look at parts of the whole, but must examine the entire picture (Salway Black, 1994, p.14)."

The approach taken by FNDI and captured in the model, empowers the user group because values, history, culture and tradition are acknowledged as important. The interior circle, starting from the centre circle and going outwards, represents the individual, the project, the community and the national Aboriginal populace. The circle is divided into four with each axis representing a major significant relationship or element of economic development, in particular assets, kinship, personal efficacy, and spirituality. Within each quadrant there are three elements of the economic development process for a total of 16 elements that guide the goal setting and evaluation processes (Salway Black, 1994, p. 14).

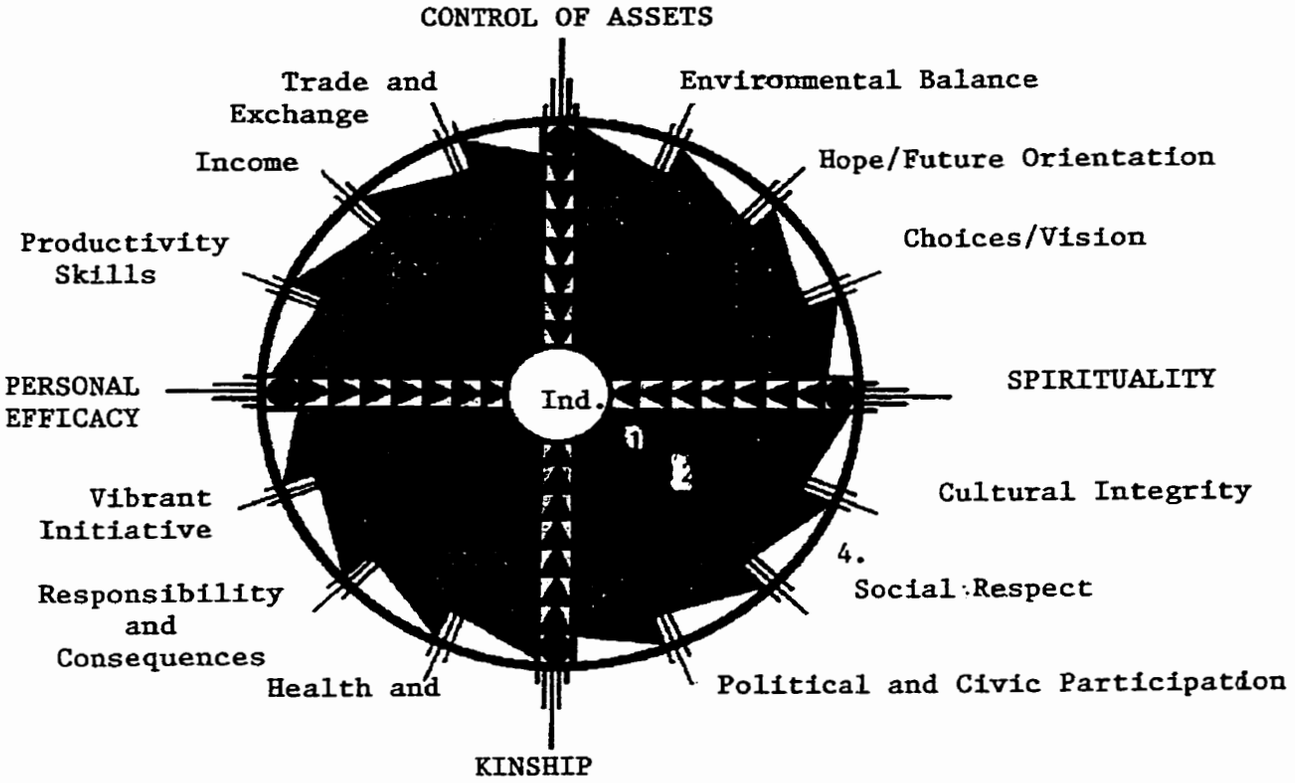
Beginning with spirituality, this element may be a critical part of economic development for Aboriginal peoples as previously discussed. In this context, the model most strongly captures an Aboriginal perspective where a vision of one's self, one's place in the community and in the rest of creation, is the starting point. This vision is a context for understanding economic development choices. Connections are made with values, all living things, respect, dignity and the place for Aboriginal peoples in the world. It is difficult to measure as a part of successful economic development but some indicators might include:

- *instilling traditional teachings in the children,*
- *learning the language,*
- *creating visions for the future,*
- *recognizing and maintaining a balance in life.*
- *For the community .., spirituality can be measured by ...*
  cultural programs, traditional methods and teachings that both empower and develop people (Salway Black, 1994, p. 17).

Moving around the circle, kinship acknowledges the system of "giving, sharing and reciprocity" that exists within Aboriginal communities despite the western models of distribution that have been imposed under the guise of economic development and social welfare. By acknowledging and building on the kinship system, a strategy builds on local strengths. Indicators would include acknowledging a family's activities which meet local needs with local resources and further trade activities within communities and between communities (Salway Black, 1994, p. 17).

Self confidence, or personal efficacy, is next on the circle for Elements of Development. Individual achievements and accomplishments are honoured when they benefit the extended family and community. Children are taught about self-confidence, risk taking, innovation and experience so that the community continues to grow in effectiveness and efficiency. Growth for its own sake, is not valued. From an early age, children are taught to "think for yourself and act for others." This approach creates respect for others that western society has interpreted to be noncompetitiveness.

Indicators of improvement in personal efficacy include increased knowledge, skills, self-confidence, problem solving abilities and positive attitudes. At a community level, indicators may include better leadership, community cooperation, reliability, follow-up and teamwork. On a national level, a positive attitude for achievement permeates Aboriginal society (Salway Black, 1994, p. 17).



Key:

Ind. - Individual
1. - Project
2. - Tribe
3. - National
4. - Ecology

Figure 1 - Elements of development model

Note: From Redefining Success in Community Development:A New Approach for Determining and Measuring the Impact of Development (p. 15), by Salway Black, S., 1994, Schramm Paper on Community Development:The Lincoln Filene Centre. Copyright 1994 by the First Nations Development Institute. Reprinted with permission.

Finally, control of assets is an essential element of economic development which salutes empowerment through ownership and control enabling wealth creation. According to Salway Black, an individual's assets can be a house, a savings account, an education, job skills, traditional rights to hunt, a business and access to credit. Similarly, a community's assets may be programs, land, indigenous institutions, environmental quality, trust funds, traditional hunting rights, access to credit, natural and human resources. At the national level for tribes, assets are trust funds, federal programs, their own indigenous institutions and sovereignty (Salway Black, 1994, p. 16).

In examining the Elements of Development, the quadrant that is delineated by Kinship and Spirituality includes the elements of *political and civic participation* (eg. involvement in community activities), *social respect* (eg. public involvement for better policies and improved media coverage about Aboriginal peoples), and *cultural integrity* (eg. passing down of traditional language and culture). Salway Black suggests this quadrant captures demonstration of empowerment and its personal and societal understanding (Salway Black, 1994, p. 18).

Kinship and personal efficacy form a quadrant that includes *vibrant initiative* (eg entrepreneurship, self confidence, self esteem and creativity), *responsibilities and consequences* (eg. with ownership and control come responsibility and accountability to yourself and to the community), and *health and safety* (eg. reflect local priorities, partnerships tied to kinship, community and health practitioners) (Salway Black, 1994, p. 18).

Personal efficacy and assets include elements of *trade and exchange* (eg. are dollars recirculating in the community or leaving?), *income* (what are the sources of income for community members?) and *productivity* (skill levels in formal and informal community activities). While these are most similar to conventional economic measures this section expands to include informal trade and barter. It would include an expanded definition of employment that integrates cultural sensitivity. Employment options do not stop at wage labor but go beyond to include a

dignified livelihood (Salway Black, 1994, pp. 17-18).

The final quadrant denoted by spirituality and assets includes *choices/ vision* (eg. do people feel they have choices? what are they?), *hope and future orientation* (personal or mission statements that note the effect of today's actions on the future) and *environmental balance* (eg water, air and soil quality, improved waste management systems, integrated resource management programs based on traditional practices) (Salway Black, 1994, p. 18-19).

It is important to understand the context. This model operates within the limits of Mother Earth. It does not dominate nor is it separate so the model is depicted as enfolded within 'ecology.'

This model, with its gift of new types of indicators, brings another dimension to the discussion of community-based economic development and strategies for nurturing Aboriginal economies. Salway Black realizes, as do other scholars, that most programs for Aboriginal peoples encourage them to enter the very market-based, capitalist system which has marginalized them for many years. This approach offers an alternative. Relationships between people, communities and environment with a spiritual underpinning are honored and are the focus for economic development within a context of values, culture and tradition. Many of these factors were labeled as problems or ignored in the regular approach to business and economic development. Now they form the basis for success.

FNDI operates an economic development fund for use by individuals and communities. The Elements of Economic development guide FNDI in assessing a request. Business plans are produced using this model as a basis for the plans. The model is modified to suit the needs and aspirations of applicants in concert with FNDI staff. Since 1993, grants totalling more than $4 million have been made in support of 99 projects that include culture and beliefs (FNDI 1996/1997, p. 45)

FNDI's rationale for new economic development indicators are many and provide the basis for a reassessment or validation for a different approach to "success." Local community involvement in setting goals and evaluation of goals is empowering. These indicators may serve as a catalyst for change through all levels of society. Local values, goals and priorities are set without interference from outside sources. Indicators that examine all kinds of impacts can be documented for justifying further investment. An holistic approach is more meaningful for many Aboriginal communities which helps clarify the future vision and creates an new paradigm of economic development (Salway Black, 1994, p. 23). Specifically,

> *the indicators register increases in civic participation and proactive decision making, income streams within and around the community, assumption of responsibility by community members, and various intangibles such as self-esteem and sense of cultural identity (FNDI 1996/97, p. 46).*

This approach includes all living things and is the starting point for a new discussion on broader issues of impacts caused by entering into the market economy. Capitalism means many things (See Newhouse, 1998) and some of these things may not be what Aboriginal communities define as part of their vision. With FNDI's approach, Aboriginal peoples have tools to begin to journey on their own path, drawing on all the knowledge from within and with mainstream communities, that they may desire to craft their vision for the future.

This model is not restricted for use by communities, organizations or individuals who live on reserve or in a rural setting. It is inclusive of those living in the urban setting too. Some issues facing urban-based Aboriginal peoples are the same as those facing Aboriginal peoples in the rest of Canada including identity, social dysfunction, discrimination, racism, government support, housing, education, and disillusioned youth. For some, these issues are intensified in an urban setting where support networks often have to be forged from scratch rather than drawing on accessible networks of extended family and friends in the home community. It follows that the pressure of being drawn into a market economy is perhaps stronger for urban dwellers.

3.3.3. Aboriginal peoples based in urban communities.

The Royal Commission found a vacuum in research and policy supporting urban-based Aboriginal peoples. It noted:

> *There is a history in Canada of putting Aboriginal peoples 'in their place' on reserves and in rural communities. Aboriginal cultures and mores have been perceived as incompatible with the demands of industrialized urban society. This leads all to easily to the assumption that Aboriginal peoples living in urban areas must deny their culture and heritage in order to succeed-that they must assimilate into this other world. The corollary is that once Aboriginal peoples migrate to urban areas, their identity as Aboriginal peoples becomes irrelevant (RCAP, 1996, 4, p. 519).*

The Royal Commission's research findings support an entirely different perspective. While there are individuals and families who assimilate into the mainstream culture and lose touch with cultural beliefs, there are also many families who want to re-establish or maintain their cultural ties in their new communities. Aboriginal organizations form in urban settings to meet the needs of urban-based Aboriginal peoples in terms of extensive political and social needs. Friendship centres carry much of this social burden in many cities while political organizations for general and specific Aboriginal groups attempt to deal with levels of government effectively.

In terms of effective urban economic development strategies, individuals are involved in entrepreneurial ventures, partnerships, joint ventures, community owned economic development corporations and cooperatives. There are a variety of government programs that Aboriginal peoples qualify for, to access funding and training assistance. However, they face many obstacles including racism, difficulty in qualifying for loans, building up meaningful track records in the business world, strict program guidelines and few role models or mentors. Again, a community of support is often constructed to mentor, advise, support and facilitate the growth of these businesses. This is accomplished through the impetus of Aboriginal organizations, government agencies and the entrepreneurs themselves. With the mainstream market being the place these entrepreneurs usually operate, the pull to assimilate, do business in the same way and to define success by the capitalist model is very strong.

While some literature focuses on cooperative models of business development as very appropriate in the urban setting (Loxley, 1994; RCAP, 1996), it appears that a smorgasbord of choices with appropriate supports seem to be most viable for Aboriginal businesspeople, since that is the reality demanded by the community. Profitability remains key to the on-going viability of business, but there is room to show personal values in the way business is conducted.

For example, this includes making customers feel welcome while avoiding high pressure sales techniques, welcoming those less fortunate who want to talk, being supportive of community activities and being remembered for the unique ambiance of the business. These are not peculiar to the Aboriginal community but they reflect the values of small business people who are successful in ways that differentiate them from big business. Aboriginal businesses may reflect more of their culture and integrate it into the way they do business while being successful on their own terms.

3.4. Summary

In summary, an exploration of the second research objective regarding the blend of approaches to economic development with attention to the first research objective dealing with Aboriginal wisdom has been undertaken in this chapter. The research presented here supports a place for traditional values and cultural beliefs in today's world that cannot be ignored or minimized. The research also underlines the significance of making room for an Aboriginal perspective on values, tradition and worldviews especially when it comes to supporting the move to independence being made by Aboriginal communities across the country.

A community-based approach to economic development follows from the discussion here and from that in previous chapters. This approach recognizes the strength of Aboriginal peoples' perspectives and communities, builds networks within communities, and partnerships with the main economy in an effort to pursue particular community-developed goals using compatible processes. This approach to economic development maintains an attitude of sharing and caring that is a process defined by individual communities. It makes sense, therefore, to use the broadest definition for 'resources' in the context of community-based economic development in keeping with an

holistic approach.

Resources include all things that a community might wish to use in its survival after due consideration for the needs of the current community and future generations for such things as renewable, non-renewable and human resources. The discussion of resource development attempts to view the connections with all parts of community life as strategies are devised and implemented.

FNDI does its best to incorporate the aspects of a modern economy that work while identifying a process that builds on the strengths of Aboriginal communities in building strong communities. Common community fixtures of kinship and informal economy, for example, that were invisible to the process of economic development are now defined as integral to its success. This is a complete turn-around that goes hand in hand with Newhouse's caution regarding whole-hearted acceptance of capitalism without some appreciation for the consequences. By working through the Elements of Development Model, it is possible for Aboriginal communities to maintain the values and traditions that Newhouse is concerned are threatened while meeting the needs for community independence in a balanced and thoughtful manner.

Communities embarking on a relevant and meaningful journey of economic development may embody some of the following ideal concepts set out by T. Alfred (1999) as a solid foundation for success. These concepts are a logical extension of the discussion in this chapter.

> *Wholeness with diversity.* Community members are secure in knowing who and what they are; they have high levels of commitment to and solidarity with the group, but also tolerance for differences that emerge on issues that are not central to the community's identity.
>
> *Shared culture.* Community members know their traditions, and the values and norms that form the basis of the society are clearly established and universally accepted.
>
> *Communication.* There is an open and extensive network of communication among community members, and government institutions have clearly established channels by which information is made available to people.

Respect and trust. People care about and cooperate with each other and the government of the community, and they trust in one another's integrity.

Group maintenance. People take pride in their community and seek to remain part of it; they collectively establish clear cultural boundaries and membership criteria, and look to the community's government to keep these boundaries from eroding.

Participatory and consensus-based government. Community leaders are responsive and accountable to the other members; they consult thoroughly and extensively, and base all decisions on the principle of general consensus.

Youth empowerment. The community is committed to mentoring and educating its young people, involving them in all decision-making processes, and respecting the unique challenges they face.

Strong links to the outside world. The community has extensive positive social, political, and economic relationships with people in other communities, and its leaders consistently seek to foster good relations and gain support among other indigenous peoples and in the international community (p. 82).

With 50% of the Aboriginal population in medium to large urban settings, it is a challenge to adapt these concepts to an urban context. The research presented in this chapter serves as the context for understanding the experience of the communities highlighted in the case study chapters seven through ten and presented in the lessons chapter eleven where their experiences are appraised.

The next section will address issues surrounding the western scientific worldview and the impact it has had on approaches to economic development by western society. Aboriginal and western scientific worldviews will be juxtaposed and the resulting insights presented.

4. Western Worldviews and Approaches to Economic Development

As Berkes (1999) notes, while in the main, Aboriginal peoples demonstrate common approaches, individual approaches of communities differ in numerous ways reflecting their particular history and environment (p.179). The unique perspective brought into focus by Aboriginal peoples will be discussed in terms of the common elements of history, culture, political system and tradition but given the understanding that some communities will not fit neatly into a typology. These experiences have shaped distinct worldviews in Aboriginal society. The same may be said for mainstream society. The two aspects of the mainstream's worldviews that are of interest here are the western scientific approach to understanding the world and how particular values and beliefs have been captured by capitalism and its impact on economic development. These topics will be examined in this section.

4.1. Western Worldviews

History is one place to start in considering worldviews. The Royal Commission has set out a view of history that acknowledges different worldviews and perspectives. In the end, it accords value to differing perspectives held by Euro-Canadians and Aboriginal peoples. For those who disagree or who try to chart these worldviews side by side and compare them, it should be noted that according to one Aboriginal scholar, it is time to end meaningless and unfair comparisons between western and Aboriginal worldviews (Masuzumi, 1998). He notes that one view is no better or worse than the other but may complement each other at times and provide a more accurate view of historical events.

While approaches to time and history are different, RCAP states that these worldviews are important,

> *... not because they represent absolute distinctions between people-cultural worlds are too rich and complex for that-but because they serve to illustrate, however inadequately, that there are different ways of expressing ideas that, at a deeper level, may have much in common (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 35).*

Euro-Canadian worldviews are heavily influenced by the western science approach. For

example, historians using a western science approach rely on written documentation to support an interpretation of events as a matter of 'truth.' A cross-cultural setting complicates the strategies for achieving the goal of accurate and 'complete' understanding (RCAP, 1996, 1, p. 32), rules out oral histories, the basis of Aboriginal 'history,' as valid information sources.

In accounting for all events under investigation, mainstream historians weave their explanations with human beings at the core in a secular, scientific manner that maintains the split with spirituality advocated through the ages by Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Einstein and other influential scientists and philosophers (Lendsay and Wuttunee, 1997, p. 1) There were no written alternative theories and explanations from Aboriginal perspectives until recently when Aboriginal scholars joined the arena by publishing their perspectives in words that flowed from their various disciplines, oftentimes including a unique Aboriginal view borne of their personal experience.

Removing spirituality from the western scientific view in order to focus understanding of the world and how it works has a major bearing on the dominant society's connection to other living things. Objectivity and rigorous documentation are the main tools for discerning meaning and comprehending with logic, accurate and reliable answers to questions about how world systems work.

This western scientific approach has permeated the way research is conducted in many disciplines beyond historical research. The result has been marginalization of the research subjects from the research process. According to Ward (1997), local peoples, such as Aboriginal peoples, are viewed as 'subjects' in keeping with a scientific or positivist approach to research. She notes that this philosophical framework reflects societal values and beliefs and so accepts positive facts and observable data as appropriate measures of reality (p. 5). In particular:

> *The basic assumptions of positivism are four: (1) the aims, concepts and methods of the natural sciences are applicable to the social sciences; (2) the correspondence theory of truth which holds that reality is knowable through correct measurement methods; (3) the goal of social research is to discover universal laws of human behaviour which transcend culture and history; (4) the fact-value dichotomy, the denial of both the theory-laden dimensions of*

observation and the value-laden dimensions of theory (p. 5).

This approach to understanding the world and its inhabitants has shaped many academic disciplines. Values, cultures and spirituality have been compartmentalized and given little significance in this scientific aspect of Euro-Canadian worldviews. There has been some broadening of approaches in some disciplines over time so that values, cultures and spirituality do have meaning in religious studies and other non-scientific aspects of our experience.

Capra, in a more broadly drawn statement of the elements of a dominant worldview held by modern Western society, states that it has become entrenched and influential to the point where these elements are no longer useful and indeed have become harmful to a productive existence:

- *the universe is a mechanical system composed of elementary building blocks;*
- *the human body is a machine;*
- *life in society is a competitive struggle for existence;*
- *the belief in unlimited material progress to be achieved through economic and technological growth, and*
- *the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed by the male is one that follows a basic law of nature [Capra, 1996:6].*

The next section gives an overview of the way humankind's economic needs are met within the context of this Euro-Canadian worldview. The development of capitalism flows easily and is in keeping with this worldview.

4.2. Approach to Economic Development and Growth by Western Society

According to Suzuki (1997), growth in society's demand for consumer goods characterized the beginning of the twentieth century and the continued pursuit of the goals of capitalism. In 1907, economist Simon Nelson Patten espoused the idea that the new morality consisted in expanding consumption and not in saving. Consumption also became the answer for supporting the economy that had boomed during World War II (p. 21).

Shortly after World War II, retailing analyst Victor Lebow declared: Our enormously productive economy . . . demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption . . . We need things consumed, burned up, worn out, replaced, and discarded at an ever-increasing rate (Suzuki, 1997, p. 21).

Continued growth in consumerism is achieved by identifying new markets in third world countries, targeting specific groups for products or encouraging planned obsolescence.

Coca-Cola president Donald R. Keough expressed a quasi-religious attitude towards market opportunity. He said, When I think of Indonesia - a country on the Equator with 180 million people, a median age of 18, and with a Moslem ban on alcohol-I feel I know what heaven looks like (Suzuki, 1997, p. 21).

Constant economic growth is required to meet growing consumer demand. The rationale for growth in consumption and the economy is supported by governments of all countries and the majority of businesses throughout the world. McCann, Fullgrabe and Godfrey-Smith assert that growth leads to increasing wealth and this, through the market system, provides the basis for the satisfaction of all human needs (1984, p. 35).

What does this philosophy mean for humankind and the limited resources of this planet?

A hundred years ago, even fifty years ago, it did not seem urgent that we understand the relationship between business and a healthy environment, because natural resources seemed unlimited. Given current corporate practices, not one wildlife reserve, wilderness, or indigenous culture will survive the global market economy. There is no polite way to say that business is destroying the world (Hawken, 1993, p. 3).

Are we happier and healthier as a result of this philosophy of maximum growth for maximum profits? The statistics regarding stress, addiction, failing families and youth at risk in western society would indicate otherwise as noted by Marilyn Waring (2000). The disconnection from nature and the natural limits of resources is at the basis of the push for change in economic development philosophy at all levels. Many authors from varied disciplines are reviewing the facts and suggesting approaches that could mean a difference to future generations. Some of these approaches will be reviewed in the next section.

4.3. Room for Revision: the Approach to Economic Development and Measuring Success

In my view, a shift in approaches to economic development must be considered. There is room to move from considering a limited number of issues such as readily quantifiable costs in reaching decisions toward an economic development approach that considers these costs but also places importance and attempts to quantify all the costs of development decisions on environment, people, communities and future generations.

Profit, as a measure of success, is important but not the only one. 'Reasonable' profit that honors the limits of the planet's resources replaces the idea of 'maximum' profit. The guiding principle of maximizing (ie. development of resources and profit) shifts to moderation (ie. use resources wisely and profits will follow) or minimizing (ie. use of non-renewable resources; developing renewable resources with little long-term residual impact) as the overarching goals of economic activity.

Some business leaders have taken up the cause of rethinking economic development for reasons as diverse as personal revelation, government sanction or regulation, consumer pressure, or a combination of these and other influences. In this section, changing views in business and economics are presented.

Paul Hawken is a businessman, who presents an ecological analysis of business, in which he argues for business to include environmental perspectives for long-term prosperity. Hawken links a healthy planet with business in an essential partnership that must be nurtured in order to achieve the vision of the future shared by so many people. It is a new era-Ecological Business that follows the Industrial Age (Hawken, 1993, p. 9).

Hawken urges business leaders to rethink the ultimate purpose of corporations. Rather than focussing on making money and viewing corporations as systems for making and selling things

(common maxims of business behaviour), Hawken suggests:

> *the* promise *of business is to increase the general well-being of humankind through service, creative invention and ethical philosophy...We have the capacity and ability to create a remarkably different economy, one that can restore ecosystems and protect the environment while bringing forth innovation, prosperity, meaningful work, and true security"(Hawken, 1993, pp. 1-2).*

Hawken acknowledges that in the past, the need to understand or recognize any relationship between business and a healthy environment was easily dismissed and the limits on natural resources were ignored because they were not obviously depleting.

Today, however, environmental limits to human and industrial activities are a reality, and the hard questions Hawken asks are:

> *How can business itself survive a continued pattern of worldwide degradation of living systems?*
>
> *What is the logic of extracting diminishing resources in order to create capital to finance more consumption and demand placed on those diminishing resources?*
>
> *How do we imagine our future when our commercial systems conflict with everything nature teaches us?" (Hawken, 1993, p. 5).*

Hawken sees a productive business environment that will *restore* the earth using highly effective organizational and marketing techniques of free enterprise (Hawken, 1993, p. 9). Each partner can learn and benefit from the others. What measures of success become possibilities under this new paradigm?

According to Hawken:

> *The language of commerce sounds specific, but in fact it is not explicit enough. If Hawaiians had 138 different ways to describe falling rain, we can assume that rain had a profound importance in the lives. Business, on the other hand, only has two words for profit-gross and net. The extraordinarily complex manner in which a company recovers profit is reduced to a single numerically neat and precise concept.*
>
> *It makes no distinctions as to how the profit was made. It does not factor in*

whether people or places were exploited, resources depleted, communities enhanced, lives lost, or whether the entire executive suite was in such turmoil as to require stress consultants and out placement services for the victims. In other words, business does not discern whether the profit is one of quality or quantity (Hawken, 1993, p. 10).

The most common gauge of success is 'profit'.t Hawken urges that we must now become more holistic in our approach by reflecting the full value of economic development alternatives and acknowledging that business does not exist in a vacuum.

Another common guide for gauging success is a precept that guides business and justifies taking decisions on the narrow basis described in the previous section. This is Darwin's "survival of the fittest." According to Hawken,

The phrase is, in fact, a misinterpretation of Darwinism. Darwin did not speak of survival of the fittest; rather, he described those who survived as fittest for a specific ecological niche. *There is a big difference between those two ideas...*

[Today] the "winners" are the companies that consistently overstep and exceed carrying capacity. Corporate capitalism recognizes no limit and has no habitat (Hawken, 1993, p. 33).

It is this attitude of succeeding at all costs that has become too expensive for us and for Mother Earth. According to Hawken, the new corporate "winner" sets reasonable limits on activities and is responsible to many stakeholders in meeting the challenge that he articulates--restoring ecosystems and protecting the environment while being innovative and prosperous in the context of meaningful work.

Most commonly, scale of operations and growth are the foundation for measuring the success of today's competitive businesses. Changing the way success is determined when considering the aspirations of sustainable development leads to respect for limits of our physical world and to a healthier way of doing business. Tools are being developed but are used by very few businesses. For example, environmental accounting tries to address some of these issues.

It attempts to account for internal and external environmental, economic and societal costs

and benefits. It is interdisciplinary in nature and takes many possible approaches. It may focus on incorporating all costs as a component of product cost including:

> *the cost of extracting raw materials, manufacturing, transportation, product recycling, disassembling, reverse distribution, restocking used material, disposing of waste, etc.*
>
> *[A broader approach might be taken where] an assessment is made of the environmental impact of a product or process over its entire life-cycle (Society of Management Accountants of Canada, p. 11).*

These approaches give hope that some importance is placed on making standard practices more realistic. A complementary philosophy recognizing the need for change, arises from the discipline of economics.

According to Daly, an economist, and Cobb, a theologian (1994):

> *The scale of human activity relative to the biosphere has grown too large. .. population has doubled ... Over the same time period, gross world product and fossil fuel consumption have each roughly quadrupled. Further growth beyond the present scale of economic activity is overwhelmingly likely to increase costs more rapidly than it increases benefits, thus ushering in a new era of "uneconomic growth" that impoverishes rather than enriches (p. 2).*

Criticisms of growth and the cost of economic development are examined by some psychologists, economists and ecologists who come to the same sorts of conclusions (*cf.* Henderson, 1978; Weiskopf, 1971; Polyani, 1957; Schumpeter, 1975). The goals of maximization of return on investment, growth and scale of operations must be replaced with that of minimizing throughput while meeting the needs of the human family.

While Hawken seeks to persuade business people to shift their decision-making paradigm, Daly and Cobb (1994) seek a similar goal by applying pressure on economists. Daly and Cobb suggest an economic perspective that emphasizes "person-in-community" rather than private personal preferences (pp. 7-8). "The change will involve correction and expansion, a more empirical and historical attitude, ... and the willingness to subordinate the market to purposes that

it is not geared to determine"(Daly and Cobb, 1994, p. 8). This shift is away from individualism and towards community but without forgetting the needs of the individual.

Daly and Cobb urge a vision that includes human communities and "the other creatures with whom human beings share the world... the economy that sustains the total web of life and everything that depends on the land " (Daly and Cobb, 1994, p. 18). Their vision is personal, and they express it strongly:

> *...at a deep level of our being we find it hard to suppress the cry of anguish, the scream of horror.. We human beings are being led to a dead end--all too literally. We are living by an ideology of death and accordingly we are destroying our own humanity and killing the planet. Even the one great success of the program that has governed us, the attainment of material affluence, is now giving way to poverty...If we continue on our present path, future generations, if there are to be any, are condemned to misery (Daly and Cobb, 1994, p. 21).*

Daly and Cobb suggest that organizations following a policy of sustainability must commit to financing projects that are sustainable. They must compare them with other sustainable projects. Where there is exploitation of a nonrenewable resource, there should be a second complementary project that will ensure the sustainability of both projects (Daly and Cobb, 1994, p. 74).

Daly and Cobb caution against using evaluation methods that are not inherently sustainable, for example, they suggest using a project discount rate of 5% or less (Daly and Cobb, 1994, p. 75) in direct contrast to the usual rates of 15 to 20+ % return sought by today's Fortune 500 companies. They contend that success then becomes a measure that takes into account the impact on the environment, resources and the quality of living for this generation and future generations.

Researchers in other disciplines who are trying to understand the impact of attitudes on the future of life on Mother Earth are also arriving at similar conclusions. Nuclear physicist, Fritjof Capra, opens his book The Web of Life with a quotation that has long been attributed to Aboriginal peoples. The perspective expressed is poetic and thought-provoking.

> *This we know.*
> *All things are connected*
> *like the blood*

which unites one's family ...

Whatever befalls the earth,
befalls the sons and daughters of the earth.
Man did not weave the web of life;
he is merely a strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web,
he does to himself
(Ted Perry, inspired by Chief Seattle in Capra 1996, unnumbered)

Capra attempts to outline an emerging theory of living systems that offers a unified view of mind, matter, and life. Like Hawken and Daly and Cobb, Capra is moving from a mechanistic to an ecological worldview (Capra, 1996, p. xvii) that has profound implications for "science and philosophy, but also for business, politics, health care, education, and everyday life (Capra, 1996, p. 3)." The problems of environmental concern are well-documented and of paramount importance. All major problems are interconnected and interdependent (Capra, 1996, p.3).

Capra urges a different view that sees all things as interconnected. A grassroots movement begun in the early 1970s called 'deep ecology' best captures Capra's underlying philosophy of his proposed living system's theory [Capra, 1996:7]. Deep ecology places all living things on the same level and ascribes equal value as compared to views that are human-centred with nature as merely a tool with little intrinsic value. "Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic value of all living beings and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life. Ultimately, deep ecological awareness is spiritual or religious awareness [Capra, 1996:7]." This perspective has much in common with Aboriginal worldviews.

Values are affected by the deeper questions that arise with this proposed shift in paradigm. In trying to separate values from facts, science has influenced politics, economics and social structures in ways that are becoming life-destroying rather than life-preserving [Capra, 1996:11]. Now, deep ecology encourages a new reality where life is at the very centre.

Capra predicts that many changes will occur. For example, private profits are currently

being made at public cost to the quality of the environment, the general quality of life and to future generations.

> *A major clash between economics and ecology derives from the fact that nature is cyclical, whereas our industrial systems are linear. Our businesses take resources, transform them into products plus waste, and sell the products to consumers, who discard more waste when they have consumed the products. Sustainable patterns of production and consumption need to be cyclical, imitating the cyclical processes in nature [Capra, 1996:299].*

In summary, Hawken, and Daly and Cobb also reach this conclusion as do many other noted researchers in a variety of different fields. For example, David Suzuki notes that science has proven without a doubt that devastation has occurred and will continue to occur without each person getting involved in the changes that make sense. It has become a personal choice [Rosborough, 1997, D6].

Current research suggests that there is room for a shift in values and approaches to economic development. Aboriginal economic development has common features with the western approach to business for a variety of reasons. Basic elements of earning a reasonable return on investment may be learned and then practised by anyone regardless of their ethnicity. However, the way in which Aboriginal society defines 'good business practices and standards,' are a function of whatever values and traditions are currently held by its members. These may be anywhere on a spectrum between traditional values and western capitalist values including combinations of the two.

Room for these approaches has not been made by the business establishment where the more common attitude is that "business;" "success;" "strategies;" are the same for all Canadians. It is held that those employees, customers, partners or colleagues who hold different personal values must not allow them to interfere with proper business conduct if they are to continue or even succeed.

Each Aboriginal individual and community carries its own bundle of values and practices that blend western and Aboriginal perspectives uniquely in ways that are then carried to the

workplace in whole or in part. When an Aboriginal person is employed in a 'mainstream' business, the choice may well be to leave some of their values at the door of the employer, do their business and pick up their bundle on the way out. While this decision is respectful of the owner and the lodge (place of business) that they are entering, in the long-term the cost to personal beliefs may be too great. This chapter has built on the understanding of a blend of approaches to economic development contemplated by the second research objective and the influence of values encompassed by Aboriginal wisdom in the first research objective.

Capra notes a link to the underlying traditions of Aboriginal peoples with the concept of deep ecology. What do Aboriginal peoples contribute to the discussion of sustainable development? This and other questions regarding economic development and its environmental impact will be addressed in the next section.

5. Approaches to Living and the Land

In this chapter, perspectives that might be characterized as living with the land and living off the land will be examined. These perspectives cross many boundaries as illustrated in preceding examples. There is a connection to the land in the traditions held by many Aboriginal peoples and there is a different tradition that has evolved for western society that now includes sustainable development. These connections will be examined and the contributions of each will be discussed.

5.1. A Spectrum of Aboriginal Perspectives

The relationship to the land and all living creatures is respectful and is integrated into the lifestyle of those Aboriginal peoples who are raised in or have regained this tradition. This relationship is characterized by responsibility and thankfulness for all creatures with life in the animate and inanimate worlds, in the sky, deep into the planet and for the sun and the moon. This complexity is reached for in Aboriginal languages with a depth of meaning that cannot be adequately expressed or fully translated into English. Spirit, emotion, and the mental and physical facets of this relationship are captured in stories, oral tradition of teachers and elders and through living and experiencing the teachings. Thought is given to the lessons learned from seven generations earlier and the impact that choices will have on the next seven generations. It is not a simple connection.

As with all things, the way this knowledge is held varies from Aboriginal person to person. Some are able to express traditional values each day of their lives, while some have been assimilated, perhaps from living in the city for several generations, and have lost this type of connection as a source of responsibility to Mother Earth. Some have accepted Christianity into their lives and their values no longer reflect the traditional values described in the foregoing paragraph. Alternatively, their beliefts may still coincide with traditional values despite external influences.

Others are being resensitized, like many Canadians, to the damage that is being done to the

planet and have a new link with the land. Still others have traditional values that they are not able to demonstrate because community pressure for economic development, revenues and employment benefits due to poverty overwhelm any consideration for the Earth Mother. Damaging options may be the only type of economic development opportunities that exist for some of these communities and short term trade-offs must be made.

Historically, Aboriginal peoples required keen observation of Nature's cycles in order to survive a harsh climate and limited resources. They became masterful at adapting their lifestyle to match these rhythms. For many groups, their oral history reveals the spirituality inherent in their early lifestyle. Many representations were made during the hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples regarding their past and continuing connections to the Earth Mother and what it means to have no control over the damage being done to her in their own backyards (See RCAP , 1996, 1, 2 & 4). There is no question that land plays an important part in the health and future of the Aboriginal community as it has done in the past. The significance is captured in the following quotations drawn from RCAP testimony and research that are echoed in communities across the country:

> *We lived a nomadic lifestyle, following the vegetation and hunting cycles throughout our territory for over 10,000 years. We lived in harmony with the earth, obtaining all our food, medicines and materials for shelter and clothing from nature. We are the protectors of our territory, a responsibility handed to us from the Creator. Our existence continues to centre on this responsibility.*
>
> *Denise Birdstone*
> *St. Mary's Indian Band*
> *Cranbrook, British Columbia, 3 November 1992*

> *Aboriginal peoples have told us of their special relationship to the land and its resources. This relationship, they say, is both spiritual and material, not only one of livelihood, but of community and indeed of the continuity of their cultures and societies.*

> *Many Aboriginal languages have a term that can be translated as 'land'... To Aboriginal peoples, land has a broad meaning, covering the environment, or what ecologists know as the biosphere, the earth's life-support system. Land means not just the surface of the land, but the subsurface, as well as the rivers, lakes (and in winter, ice), shorelines, the marine environment and the air. To Aboriginal*

peoples, land is not simply the basis of livelihood but of life and must be treated as such.

The way people have related to and lived on the land (and in many cases continue to) also forms the basis of society, nationhood, governance and community. Land touches every aspect of life: conceptual and spiritual views; securing food, shelter and clothing; cycles of economic activities including the division of labour; forms of social organization such as recreational and ceremonial events; and systems of governance and management.

To survive and prosper as communities, as well as fulfil the role of steward assigned to them by the Creator, Aboriginal societies needed laws and rules that could be known and enforced by their citizens and institutions of governance. This involved appropriate standards of behaviour (law) governing individuals and the collective... although foreign to and different from the European and subsequent Canadian systems of law and governance — were valid in their own right and continue to be worthy of respect.

Our survival depended on our wise use of game and the protection of the environment. Hunting for pleasure was looked upon as wasteful and all hunters were encouraged to share food and skins. Sharing and caring for all members of the society, especially the old, the disabled, the widows, and the young were the important values of the Mi'kmaq people. Without these values, my people would not have survived for thousands of years as a hunting, fishing and gathering culture.

Kep'tin John Joe Sark
Micmac Grand Council
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
5 May 1992

Even today, Aboriginal peoples strive to maintain this connection between land, livelihood and community. For some, it is the substance of everyday life; for others, it has been weakened as lands have been lost or access to resources disrupted. For some, the meaning of that relationship is much as it was for generations past; for others, it is being rediscovered and reshaped. ***Yet the maintenance and renewal of the connection between land, livelihood and community remain priorities for Aboriginal peoples everywhere in Canada — whether in the far north, the coastal villages, the isolated boreal forest communities, the prairie reserves and settlements, or in and around the major cities (emphasis added)*** *(RCAP, 1996, 2, pp. 448-449).*

In summary, a traditional Aboriginal world view respects the land and all life. The lessons

of observation and experience embody Aboriginal wisdom and this wisdom was relied on for survival for thousands of years (Ghostkeeper, 1997). The rules governing the community required respect, sharing amongst members and caring for the young and helpless. Celebrating and giving thanks for Creator's gifts were commonly observed when starting the day, for a successful hunt and in marking many social aspects of life including coming of age, women's and men's ceremonies, community celebrations, and deaths. The relationship with the land is complex and not easily explained nor experienced for people not born into that tradition. While that tradition continues, it is also changing, as is the wisdom that is relied on to survive in a modern world with its new demands. In today's world, many influences and experiences mean that only a proportion of Aboriginal peoples live with the land and maintain that sacred connection.

When Aboriginal peoples refer to their connection to the land, meaning all living things, a spiritual connection and legacy, they are referring to some of the same things that scholars consider in examining sustainable development and the resources it seeks to manage (Birkes, 1999). The next section examines the meaning of sustainable development in anticipation of a discussion of the nexus of it and Aboriginal worldviews.

5.2. Sustainable Development

The idea of balance in using resources to meet today's needs but with an eye to future generations, a foreign idea in most of the business world, has now got the attention of environmentalists, economists, business people, scientists, policy analysts, researchers and decision makers in a variety of arenas. The debate centers around questions about sustainable development. How is sustainable development defined? How is the concept operationalized at all levels in society from the individual to the international community? A vast amount of literature has been generated around these and other questions.

Recognition of comprehensive parameters of economic development, an essential component in the sustainability of the planet, has not been embraced to any significant extent by the corporate community. This despite the fact that we have a limited window of opportunity to

make significant changes in economic development practices before irreparable harm occurs, with potentially devastating impacts for future generations. This goal of sustaining and nurturing life on earth translates most accurately into the overarching goal of sustainable development. It is important for this research that the concept of sustainable development be contemplated because it recognizes a connection with the earth that is somewhat similar to that which exists in traditional Aboriginal perspectives.

There is no consensus on the definition of sustainable development. According to Moffat (1996), there are more than 60 definitions and this number continues to grow (p. 27). The term 'sustainable development' was brought into common usage by the World Commission on Environment and Development, better known as The Brundtland Commission, in its 1987 report. It issued a challenge to the world "calling for development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations (Serageldin, 1993, p. 7)."

Other definitions exist reflecting interest from a wide variety of academic disciplines and philosophies. For some, sustainable development 'is a process that does not carry the seeds of its own destruction.' For example, this means that an economic development process will have to meet three sets of criteria over time: economic feasibility, ecological supportability and social acceptability (Weeden, 1989, p. 43). Weeden describes how sustainable development can be achieved by stating that the best economic development strategies will incorporate the least possible environmental disturbance, and will

- *match natural flows and processes as closely as possible,*
- *provide a significant safety margin to avoid exploitation,*
- *fine tune approaches for local environments,*
- *use simple technology,*
- *maximize flexibility and mobility in targets of time, space and resource use (Weeden, 1989, p. 45).*

For these researchers, it has become clear that:

> *continued growth on a finite planet is not sustainable; the planet cannot continue to accept the exploitation of its natural resources, or the poisoning of its ecosystems and environmental systems' assimilative capacity, such as in estuaries,*

landfill sites, or the atmosphere (Moffatt, 1996, p. 27).

Alternatively, some stakeholders conclude that "sustainable development does not need to be defined but is something which is to be declared as an ethical principle (p. 27)."

The broader approach to the issue, as advocated by Brundtland's work, is also problematic and subject to critique. It requires global economy participants to acknowledge environmental constraints to sustainable development and that the current level of production is beyond these constraints. Policy makers are left with the daunting task of determining processes and measures that can ensure that this process is accomplished.

On-going debates raise questions in other areas including the theory of sustainability and sustainable development (*cf.* Dovers and Handmer, 1993, pp. 217-222; Lélé, 1991, pp. 607-621). The debate pushes away from a definition and towards a series of ethical principles. For example, some take the position that sustainable development is a process that is poorly defined with a number of contradictions (Dovers and Handmer, 1993, p. 221). How can there be on-going or 'sustained' economic growth when the trade-off is ecological limits that are constantly pushed? What development choices may be made today without sufficient thought given to the impact of the decision on future generations? How are individual and collective rights effectively balanced with consideration for the biotic and abiotic world too? These are hard questions which make fundamental change in world economic development all the more complicated.

Other authors caution that a simplistic approach to the relationship between poverty alleviation and environmental degradation must not be ignored (Lélé, 1991, p.613). Far reaching questions are raised for consideration and include: what is the real place for economic growth and activity within the strategy of sustainable development, especially for those Third World countries that are striving to change living conditions significantly?

Decision-makers who desire sustainable development are cautioned to consider the place equity and social justice hold in their plans. (Some ask how principles of justice and social equity

would be brought to bear if Third World countries currently striving to equal the highly consumptive standards in developed countries are urged to slow down and set different goals, but in the name of sustainable development?) Is there flexibility for different forms of ecological and social sustainability, and different notions of equity and social justice? Is there a chance for real participation by all in the process? This participation may be in decision-making, implementation of sustainable development strategies, and in benefiting from the channels of distribution and meaningful evaluation of the process (Lélé, 1991, p. 613).

While the debate continues, the question of interest here is how an approach to resources based on tradition and spirit relates to a more scientific, objective approach. For me, it becomes more a question of perspective based on values. The question of how the concept of sustainable development and Aboriginal wisdom connect does not distill into a list of characteristics which are then compared. Other tactics prove more fruitful because the underlying foundations of these world views and the bases for these concepts, are too disparate for simple comparison. It is this connection that is the subject of the following subsections. It is the heart of those values held by all who contemplate leaving a long-lasting gift for future generations. In the teaching as I understand it, each of us has the answer but sometimes we need to revisit it. Nurturing and connecting with Mother Earth is not a concept that is limited by race.

5.3. Juxtaposing Aboriginal Wisdom with Sustainable Development

According to Berkes (1999), there is a way to consider indigenous knowledge within the context of sustainability and conservation. He suggests:

> *... it is complementary to Western scientific knowledge, and not a replacement for it. Rooted in different worldviews and unequal in power, Western and traditional knowledge are not easy to combine. It may never be possible or desirable to meld the two, even if Western knowledge is represented by one of the holistic traditions. Each is legitimate in its own right, within its own context; each has its own strengths. ...*
>
> *It... reflects the need for ecological insights from indigenous practices of resource use, and the need to develop a new ecological ethic based in part on indigenous wisdom (p. 179).*

The main lessons that I propose be included in such an ethic include the place of spirituality, values, and wisdom.

5.3.1. Putting spirituality back in

Today, Aboriginal wisdom and traditions embody a spiritual link to all living creatures and sacred land. Life is sacred and many affirm this gift daily. This integrated, spiritual perspective affects decisions from taking an animal for food to identifying traditional activities on lands subject to potential economic development. This viewpoint has limited application in much of the sustainable development literature that echoes a western perspective where spirituality and secular activities, such as science do not easily mix.

For example, Moffatt (1996) notes:

> *... ethical principles underlying sustainable development ...recognise, as some religions do, that all life and landscapes are worthy of our respect and care. ..**these metaphysical views need not concern us here**. What is important, however, is attempting to develop a set of ethical principles which give us guidance when considering the environment and all living organisms.*
>
> *This amounts to developing an ethical code of practice for the rights of nature, which includes humanity. If this view accords with the ethics in one or more religions then, on this point, environmentalists and some religious groups can agree, **but the metaphysical speculation concerning the belief in deities, which necessarily surround all religions, is not a hypothesis warranted further consideration in this study** (emphasis added) (p. 44).(See also Smart, 1989; Engel and Engel, 1990; and Park, 1994.)*

Moffatt and other western researchers categorize questions such as religious subjects (i.e. deities), the differences between religion and spirituality and other such queries as irrelevant to the discussion of sustainable development. A secular approach using an ethical code of practice removes any chance for discomfort and focuses the discussion on issues that may in the end coincide with a spiritual or religious approach but only incidentally. Other approaches have been developed that do incorporate spirituality into their definitions of sustainable development but they are in the minority (See Barg, Hardi and Tyrchniewicz , 1997). In an alternative approach,

Hayakawa (1995) discusses science as much a part of spirituality as anything since it is the search for truth (spirituality) through scientific investigation (p. 417.)

Western thought is founded on this split of religion and science that might be described as a secularization in approach. This separation has been one of the factors that influenced the narrow approach to resource development based on capitalism so that Hawken (1993) notes common features of economic development include a belief in an unending resource base and a total lack of accountability and responsibility by decision-makers to the community beyond their shareholders. Consider what the current scenario might be if spirituality, strong community and broad organizational systems supported a more holistic approach that bound corporate executives, shareholders, government and the general public to high standards of care for the world's resources.

In any event, today's economy rests in the hands of many decision-makers who separate spirituality from their business lives. They consider incorporating a broader perspective that acknowledges spirituality as foreign to their current paradigm and therefore impractical. As Hayakawa (1995) notes, a common reaction to the word 'spirituality' is that it is associated with a dogmatic point of view that imposes answers upon people. Rather, spirituality could suggest a process of questioning in the search for the truth of life that encourages an individual journey (p. 417). In exploring this individual journey, outward evidence points to the practicality of an ethics code of practice that at least, puts decision-makers on the path to making decisions that balance competing interests of humankind and nature.

Given this state of affairs, it is unclear to me that an Aboriginal perspective on spirituality will be easily adopted by the general population nor should it be. It is available for those individuals who wish to make a personal commitment to its understanding but its real strength lies for those Aboriginal peoples who accept traditional beliefs and spirituality. It is a grounding and provides a path of beauty, love, understanding and acceptance that acts as one of many anchors for a healthy Aboriginal community into the next millennium. While this is not the only path for Aboriginal

peoples, it is still an important option in today's modern world.

In general, spirituality or its philosophical underpinnings has a place in making sustainable development work for individuals on a level that has heretofore not been accomplished. The dominant approach underlying economic development today- of making a living off the land (Ghostkeeper, 1996, p. 44)- shifts to a spiritual one of living with the land (p. 44) when understanding of the Earth Mother is placed in a framework that includes spirituality.

Some authors question the basic fundamental structures of modern society within the context of the debate regarding sustainable development. The relationship between economic development and sustainability is articulated in terms of an exchange of sacred gifts. All may participate in meaningful gifting. Ghostkeeper (1993) explains how in his understanding there are three equal obligations integral to a gift. Firstly, there is the obligation to give, secondly, the obligation to receive and finally, the third obligation is to repay. He gives this example.

> *When a hunter goes out and kills a moose, the preparation he usually takes is four days before he actually does the physical hunt. He enters into a time of fasting, a time of vision questing, a time of making communication with the spiritual world, and asking permission from the spiritual world for that particular animal to sacrifice its materialness for our use as food and clothing. At the time of sacrifice, or kill, some of the spiritualness of the moose enters the spiritual world, and some of it remains with the meat of the moose.*
>
> *And the first thing he does upon returning to the community is he shares the meat, beginning with the elders, then with the children, and then with the adults because the moose was a gift from the spiritual world to him, so he has to repay under the three obligations of sharing. He's then obligated to repay by sharing with everybody in the community. As well, when he makes the kill of the moose, at that point in time there's a sacrifice that takes place. The moose released its spirit to the spiritual world.*
>
> *And on a moose there's a bell that hangs below the chin. We call it a bell. He cuts the bell off and hangs that in a tree and that's the communication link between the spiritual world and this world. So that ritual, in terms of the ceremony, the ritual, and sacrifice is a very important one, and a very traditional one.*

With the simple ceremony ... there is a feeling of giving, and part of that feeling embeds the spiritual aspect of ourselves in that particular exchange. We feel something and that is the concept of spiritual exchange. Each of us has a gift- an ability. If you could make your living exercising your gift, you'll lead a happy balanced life. Your work and your spirit become embedded in any object you might create or any deal that you might put together.

So when you exchange an object it becomes more than an object, it becomes a gift. Our spiritual aspect is embedded in that gift and that object becomes a container. It goes from the donor to the receiver. Then the receiver is obligated to repay with a part of his spiritual aspect. And that's the feeling you get from gift giving and sharing with one another.

Respect for Mother Earth and the connection to the land is held by many and crosses cultural boundaries (Weeden, 1989, p. 41). Weeden echos Ghostkeeper's approach and maintains that economic development must involve giving.

The act of giving creates community and demands relatedness in a way that the market can never do. The value of a gift inheres in the commitment of the giver and receptiveness of the receiver, and is not usefully measured by its monetary value. What this means is that the fundamental act of meaningful exchange is as much within the grasp of the poor as the rich, the labourer as the intellectual (Weeden, 1989, p. 43).

5.3.2. Acknowledging wisdom

The relationship that Aboriginal peoples have with all of life developed over thousands of years with much of that wisdom being passed down through elders, teachers and helpers. A very small amount of this wisdom has been described in previous sections and provides the context for this part of the discussion. This wisdom allowed survival in a harsh environment and was shared with European explorers so that they survived. This ancient wisdom has been passed down through ceremonies, rituals, experience, teachings and observation. Until recently, many non-Aboriginal peoples were able to avail themselves of only a small amount of this wisdom, if they were even interested or valued it. More researchers are acknowledging the contribution that this wisdom may offer to deal with pressing environmental issues that threaten this and future generations (See Suzuki, 1997; Capra, 1996; Strong, 1991; Johannes, 1991).

Johannes, (1991) a biologist, notes:

> *In general, contemporary communities which have traditional ecological knowledge exist at the margins or beneath the notice of dominant societies, a position frequently sanctioned legally, if not morally persuasive...Today traditional communities are frequently found in borderlands..Increasingly, isolation offers no escape, however, as the economies of dominant societies reach into these hinterlands to feed upon their resources, often displacing the people who live there, damaging their lands and extracting their resources. In the process, traditional lifestyles are disrupted and traditional ecological knowledge is cut adrift...*
>
> *In a world divided and fearing its fate, there is greater concern for diversity, both cultural and biological, than perhaps at any other time in human history... As we become aware of the limitations of some of the dominant norms and values of our society, and of the habits of mind which accompany them, we can begin to challenge those limits...*
>
> *We have begun to critically re-examine the prejudices of the past, and to look beyond them to a* ***new appreciation of the wisdom and beauty of other cultures and other traditions, including Indigenous peoples*** *(emphasis added) (pp. 42-43).*

New challenges are being introduced for the consideration of communities. These include issues of protecting traditional knowledge, maintaining the integrity of knowledge while sharing it, appropriation of Aboriginal wisdom for profit by multi-national corporations, and a myriad of issues that affect care and control. While modern pressures cause these new issues, many holders of Aboriginal wisdom are meeting the challenges and discussing the role Aboriginal wisdom has within communities and with the rest of humankind. Part of survival has meant change but the questions are how much change? What kind of change? Is the time for change now or some other time?

Putting this wisdom down on paper is not acceptable to many carriers of traditional knowledge. It is felt that something is lost when wisdom is not shared orally which allows the one with the knowledge to tailor the message to the needs or level of understanding of the one who is questioning. Wisdom can also be shared through experience and observation. On the other hand, other carriers recognize that in these modern times, not everyone who wants to is able to

participate in the circle of sharing and understanding. They encourage any method that brings sharing and certain aspects of teachings including the written word, to the greater public. This brings everyone into the sharing circle.

These and other issues are being dealt with by Aboriginal communities and policy is being developed that more truly reflects community values rather than empty acquiescence to researcher demands. This change in the dynamic and often frustrates scientists and university researchers since these debates may block or deny them access to peoples, animals or land that they have studied for many years. Taking back control and sharing information on their own terms acknowledges the drive for self-government within Aboriginal communities.

Issues around the reliability of traditional ecological knowledge and how it may impact on current resource use policies are important contemporary topics for research and discussion. (See Simpson, 1999; Berkes and Henley, 1997; Suzuki, 1997; Johannes, 1991). As Johannes (1993) describes the issues for biologists, the same can be said for other disciplines:

> *Many biologists still have an "attitude problem" when it comes to traditional ecological knowledge management systems. They dismiss the knowledge gained by indigenous peoples during centuries of practical experience as anecdotal and unsubstantiated. However, their own specialized knowledge is based typically on studies carried out over much shorter periods of time under conditions where being wrong does not entail the risk of going hungry (p. 37).*

In the quest for remedying the problems of survival facing this planet, it is clear that Aboriginal peoples play a role. The role is affected by the increasing numbers of university-educated and life-educated Aboriginal leaders and decision-makers. These people are asking questions and taking control in ways that fly in the face of previous experience. A new and revitalized relationship with Mother Earth is being demanded. All sensitive, well-thought strategies are valued in this process of change.

Those strategies based on the accumulated wisdom of all peoples honors Creator's wish to share all our gifts and the value of that wisdom. This wisdom recognizes the natural rhythms of life

and death, and beginnings and endings. Economic development is then undertaken in a thoughtful way that recognizes these limits. Some might label this approach as 'sustainability. According to Ghostkeeper (1997) this is 'wisdom' and not 'sustainability'. The tools for shaping public opinion are more sophisticated and are being used by many groups interested in sustainable development. Partnerships with the rest of Canadians are acknowledged in this quest but great care regarding terms of reference, is being taken.

5.3.3. Putting values into practice at all levels.

Aboriginal communities have survived because of the bonds of common experience, family, values, spirituality and fundamentally similar perspectives. Individuals have responsibilities to themselves, their families and to their communities. A common teaching is to "think for yourself but act for others" (Salway Black, 1994, p. 17). Today, that bond extends in many ways within and between Aboriginal communities across the country and around the world. When values regarding protecting the environment are reinforced at every opportunity, then a chance for successful stewardship of the planet is possible. This bond has weakened in the Aboriginal community as by-products of colonization, residential school, resulting dysfunction and urbanization. The bonds of community for Aboriginal peoples are just as fragile, damaged and stressed as in the rest of the world.

Suzuki has concluded that, while science shows irrevocably that we are on the road to destruction, it comes down to individual choices if there is to be a turnaround (Rosborough, 1997). In his book, The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature, Suzuki (1997) advocates paying attention to rebuilding community connections so that the network of caring and support for the planet may be rebuilt (pp. 169-183).

Acknowledging values as a critical element to bringing sustainable development goals to a personal level for people is a step that may mean the difference to a meaningful life for future generations or mere survival. Aboriginal peoples, who maintain traditional values, are survivors with a joy for living that may be drawn upon by others interested in these lessons. Scholars who

work with the interface between science and traditional ecological knowledge are examining these lessons around values and morals. For example, Berkes (1999) suggests:

A third lesson from traditional systems concerns the potential to forge new ethical principles for ecology and resource management. Traditional knowledge has the power to address some of the shortcomings of the contemporary Western knowledge-practice-belief complex, as identified by various scholars: restoring the unity of mind and nature (Bateson); providing intuitive wisdom for developing awareness of the nonlinear nature of our environment (Capra); addressing the problem of a self-identity distinct from the world around us (Evernden); and restoring a cosmology based on morality toward nature (Skolimowski)...

The challenge is to cultivate a kind of ecology that rejects the materialistic tradition and questions the Newtonian, machinelike view of ecosystems... This is a view of an ecosystem pulsating with life and spirit, incorporating people who belong to that land and who have a relationship of peaceful coexistence with other beings.

5.3.4. Today's generation and seven generations to come.

Capitalism favors the short-term since it discounts the value of a dollar over the long-term. Decisions made following a traditional Aboriginal perspective, examine the impact on the next seven generations. What time frame is appropriate for a new ethic surrounding ecology and economic development?

Aboriginal peoples favor the longer term for a complex set of reasons including the critical place children hold in the community and its future existence. It is fair to leave Mother Earth in good shape so that future generations may use her thoughtfully in order to survive. The need for a longer decision horizon is acknowledged and one of the principles Moffatt (1996) submits is important in this debate pertains to social justice and the concerns for intergenerational equity and intragenerational equity.

If those seeking sustainable development also think that all communities in the world deserve to share equitably in resources then "intragenerational equity," as this idea is labeled, is difficult to conceive of in a context of sustainability. It means that those who have less would be

brought up to the level of consumption that many in the western world enjoy but that has brought us to the crisis we are in today. Another option might be to ask those used to a high level of consumption to reduce in the name of equity, but that would take a monumental effort to achieve. (See Rawls, 1971; Harvey, 1973; Smith, 1994).

Intergenerational equity has an underlying moral principle that focuses on respect for the unborn who are not here to voice their opinions. It is somewhat synonymous with the views of Aboriginal peoples. Future generations must be given the opportunity to enjoy life and not just to survive due to the greedy, short-sighted decisions of their ancestors. This is a key distinction that distinguishes sustainable development and an Aboriginal perspective from other forms of economic development.

Strategies are being devised in order to put these principles into action at the individual, community, regional, national and international levels. With education, individuals and their families can make commitments to reuse, reduce and recycle, several simple principles that however, might, at some point, not be enough. At the next levels, policies are being put into place to encourage positive sustainable action and put sanctions to discourage unsustainable behavior. The participation rate in these efforts on a global level is far from comprehensive. Countries like Canada, UK, Australia, Scotland and others are trying to promote sustainable development and produce measurement guides of their progress.

Some scholars have fallen into the trap of thinking particular behaviors attach to Aboriginal peoples as stewards of the environment. On the face of it, Aboriginal peoples might use resources in ways that seemingly contradict their worldviews and duties as stewards. In fact, what appears to be exploitative can often have other valid reasons within a cultural context that must be explored for full understanding. Authors who have drawn erroneous conclusions include (See Buege, 1996; J. B Callicott, 1989 a and b; Howard and Widdowson, 1996; Martin, 1978; and Widdowson and Howard, 1998). This characterization of steward or opportunist unrealistically sets Aboriginal peoples up for criticism because of the diversity that exists within the community,

as previously noted.

The research focus shifts from understanding the lessons from the Aboriginal community that are valuable in protecting our planet to whether or not a particular action taken by Aboriginal peoples upholds the "special" link of respecting Mother Earth. If the action is suspect then these authors draw conclusions that Aboriginal peoples hold no affinity with the land, the teachings are distrusted and history is inaccurate. Widdowson and Howard conclude, for example, Aboriginal peoples never had a special bond with the land in the first place despite the extensive oral and written evidence to the contrary. There has been a dearth of literature from Aboriginal scholars due to the vastly low number completing a university education. More and more Aboriginal scholars are entering the academic arena with their culture and tradition firmly in hand and are able to address the misinformation that has been perpetrated. The next section examines this final point.

5.3.5. Enrichment through inclusivity of Aboriginal perspectives.

The intolerance of many scientists is acknowledged by their colleagues. Berkes (1999) notes that intolerance exists "toward knowledge and insights that originate outside institutionalized Western science. Scientists tend to dismiss understandings that do not fit their own" (p. 12). This is not the only explanation since scepticism is also a part of being a scientist and comes into play with traditional knowledge, for example, that does not lend itself to scientific verification easily (p.12). The point is that there are many ways to acquire knowledge (p. 12).

In this regard, Aboriginal philosophers and academics are raising interesting questions. Does the term 'sustainable development' mean anything to Aboriginal peoples? What is traditional ecological knowledge and how can it be shared? Again it comes back to issues of relevance and control. In the past, non-Aboriginal academics and scientists have brought their unique world views as they tried to understand and interpret the Aboriginal reality. Now some Aboriginal authors share their personal perspectives and experiences that shape answers to these questions from their distinctive Aboriginal world views. (See Alfred, 1999; Colorado, 1988; Dockstater,

1993; Ghostkeeper, 1993; Newhouse, 1992, 1993, 1995,1997, 1998; and Simpson, 1999).

The following brief summary provides examples of the work undertaken by these researchers. For example, Alfred suggests a model for Aboriginal leaders that incorporates traditional knowledge and values. His vision for the future of Aboriginal communities is for strong traditional leadership. Colorado posits that Aboriginal peoples have a unique view of science based on traditional teachings, values and beliefs. She points to its usefulness and to the necessity that it be recognized as distinct from the mainstream approach.

While science is able to measure this destruction and make an objective analysis that is acceptable to many in western society, Ghostkeeper says that beyond the objectivity of this assessment lies the fact that it in our acceptance of science (factual, objective and secular) is the acceptance of a particular set of values. It is the value judgment that has led us to this point. Science outlines a set of values that western society accepts for the most part, as the guide for our decisions. What if we said that science has its place but we can also accept other value systems that, for example, are more holistic and spiritual?

Newhouse examines the contemporary state of Aboriginal economies and society. He identifies trends and notes the place values and tradition have within these structures. He also examines capitalism and the impact it may have on future Aboriginal economies and societal organization.

Finally, Simpson deals with traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) as a concept derived in mainstream society. She develops a strong position that points to the weaknesses of the current concept in relation to how Aboriginal peoples understand the term. She notes that for reasons of language, spirituality, internal landscape and differing worldviews, it is imperative that control over what TEK means must rest with the Aboriginal community.

As Aboriginal scholars and researchers contribute to the area of community economic

development from a foundation of respect for all life, it provides Aboriginal leaders and community members with information that has been lacking. This information may guide them in their policy-setting and economic development strategies that are relevant to their values and beliefs. Those approaches that elders, teachers and helpers have participated in developing, increases credibility, accuracy and support. Aboriginal approaches may be used by the broader community, as quality of life for future generations, is addressed. It is recognized that all approaches are valuable and have to be considered.

> *Until recently hardly anybody bothered to examine the contents of Aboriginal knowledge, much less take it seriously. Events now make the understanding of this knowledge imperative (Elias , 1997, p. 227)*

This concludes the review of relevant written and oral sources that shed insight into the first research objective regarding the role of traditional knowledge in the economic development literature. On a global perspective, the literature regarding western approaches to economic development noted in chapter four, including the move to sustainability as outlined in chapter five, underlines the spectre of destruction that has become part of our life on Mother Earth. The search for new ideas and approaches to dealing with our arrogance must not stop at the western ways of knowing that are demonstrated in the search for sustainable development, or the approaches taken in physics, biology, ecology, economics, management, etc. I submit, that Aboriginal wisdom, tradition and spirituality introduced in chapter two, have a role in determining our future path.

For Aboriginal peoples, marginalized and disenfranchised, determining their place and role in economic development is unfolding. Strategies for improving their contribution to the economy as set out in chapter three, have the potential to make significant contribution to their own communities and to the main economy. Research by Aboriginal scholars is bringing alternatives to the forefront, thus improving the quality of recommendations most especially, for the future economic development plans of Aboriginal peoples. It is important that specific examples of economic development approaches be examined.

Four Aboriginal communities, therefore, are presented after the research methodology is

described. The case studies address my research objectives: 1) What blend of approaches and economic development strategies are currently employed in these communities? and 2) What place does Aboriginal wisdom hold in economic development theory; and in Aboriginal communities striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms?

In particular, the goal is to examine the following premises within the context of the research objectives:

1. Aboriginal communities engage in economic development in ways that reflect their experience.
2. Aboriginal wisdom plays a role in the way communities develop economically that reflects the role that wisdom has played in that community.
3. The principles of sustainable development are balanced with the needs of the community when economic development decisions are made.
4. Support for developing capacity in its members is recognized in communities, and programs are in place to support this goal.
5. A connection exists between community leadership and successful economic development decisions.

It is important to acknowledge that while each case study will add information for analysis, it is beyond the scope of the research for each case study to provide equal insight into each premise. Instead the totality of the information presented will address this goal.

6. Insight into Ways of Understanding Aboriginal Peoples and Communities

6.1. Effective Research

The goal in selecting a methodology is to select a means of completing research that will best answer the questions at hand. In working with Aboriginal communities, the methodology that is most significant to me also offers ways of incorporating my understanding of my community and

acknowledges the critical role community members play.

I selected a methodology that is based on the principles of participatory action research but allows for community involvement over the short term in a respectful manner. It is a variation of the methodology that is called community participation research (CP). CP recognizes that the words of the researcher are critical and should not be silenced through anonymity or overly theoretical approaches. It supports a practical research approach for the community that is culturally sensitive and seeks inclusivity of community members. It includes the community in the parameters of the project that is being undertaken but not to the extent of full participatory action research methodology.

> *CP is a method of community-based research that involves an outside facilitator or trainer and a small group of community people in a focussed project of short duration, usually from three to six months. It is distinguished from PAR in that it involves less training, less institutional development, less political change, and less cost. ... CP projects have a marked practical orientation, and they often result in the negotiation of co-management agreements, investment plans, or rapid program evaluations (Ryan and Robinson, 1996, p.10).*

CP has been used successfully in a number of land use and occupancy studies that have provided Aboriginal communities with information that directs their strategies for developing natural resources in a way that is consistent with community values and not just solely influenced by corporate bottom lines (Garvin, Hodgeson and Robinson, 1994, 1996; Garvin, MacDonald and Robinson, 1994, 1996).

In the end, relationships between this researcher and a community seek a *balance* that is different than the imbalance maintained in the dominant research paradigm. As Patricia Maguire notes,

> *The dominant paradigm in social science research has become associated with empirical-analytical inquiry. This type of inquiry is usually grounded in positivism, which assumes that the social world exists as a system of distinct, observable variables,* independent of the knower...*positivist social science has come to recognize empirical-analytical inquiry and technical knowledge as the only valid source of social knowledge. It claims this knowledge can be produced objectively, and that research can be value-free (Maguire, 1987, pp.14,15).*

6.2. Status Quo

> *The fundamental question is "who has the right to create knowledge?" The vast majority of all social science research done is characterized by methods which limit analysis, and hence the ability to create knowledge, is left to persons working and living for the most part in isolation from the social realities they describe (Hall, 1997, p. 24)*

Debates around creating knowledge are within the purview of mainstream researchers while the main debates for those Aboriginal researchers following a traditional path is giving thanks for the gift of understanding from the Creator. Hall's account is an accurate description of a social reality that grants no weight or validity to traditional knowledge, elders, Aboriginal women and in general, the wisdom that is the responsibility of Aboriginal society. Voices are effectively silenced.

Examples include researchers who operate in areas occupied by Aboriginal peoples but who do not involve the residents. There is little if any communication. Community approval is not sought nor are research results shared.

> *Some communities have levelled charges of unethical practices at individual anthropologists and the discipline as a whole has been accused of exploiting Aboriginal peoples not only trafficking in their artifacts but nowadays, also by stealing their stories, their experience, and their right to represent their heritage (Globe and Mail, 1989, p. c-1).*

Questioning old precepts and attitudes create ripples of discord within academic disciplines and may affect the work of some researchers. The impact of the unrest is often felt in the communities affected by research. For example within anthropology, scientific humanism's purpose has been to deliver the message that "the ways of our society or of any given society, are not the only imaginable or acceptable ones" (Richardson, 1975). Validating diversity of experience means that the way individuals and communities in society are explored must be reexamined.

Northern communities including Nunavut, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, many with Aboriginal members, support this reexamination since the usual methods of conducting

research about them, their communities and their environment, is less and less acceptable. They have research institutes with protocols that try to rectify the imbalance between researchers and the communities by requiring input, guidance and approval of the communities. For example, the Association of Canadian Universities In Northern Study; the Science Institute of Northwest Territories; the Nunavut Research Institute; the Yukon Science Institute and Manitoba communities with guidance of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, have research protocols aimed at an equitable balance.

It is a challenge to academic disciplines to reexamine "claims of exclusive possession of specialized professional expertise and knowledge" (Dyck and Waldrum, 1993, p.15). Post-positivist methodologies, such as participatory action research and action research, are collaborative, empowering and acknowledge the rights of the research subjects. In this scenario, research subjects develop and influence dialogue and information exchange that shapes knowledge and may develop skills to complete the research themselves (Dyck and Waldrum, 1993, p.15). An inclusive research methodology with room for both researcher and community members, breaks down the walls of academic obfuscation. Accuracy and clarity promote understanding by researcher and community alike.

Inclusive methodologies 'demystify' thus strengthening and validating research results for *all* those involved and affected (Reimer, 1994, p. 26). Cultural, historical and practical realities now have a place in negotiating what is mutually defined as "true" knowledge. Measurement standards become broader and more meaningful to communities and academia. For example, measures of "success" in economic development can integrate cross-cultural perspectives with western social science and incorporate pluralist worldviews to "engender a shift in the direction of the pursuit of knowledge" (Reimer, 1994, pp.27-28).

Participatory action research methodologies strive to achieve the goals delineated in the foregoing discussion but also to go further to become part of the change process as communities identify and solve their own problems with the assistance of researchers. This way of challenging

the status quo is examined in the following section.

6.3. Challenging the Status Quo Through Participatory Action Research

Generally, researchers from the scientific tradition or positivist ideology are only interested in positive facts and observable phenomena as an appropriate basis of research (Stromquist, 1984, pp. 24-25). This means that oral tradition, unique worldviews and perspectives are lost or meaningless within a positivist approach since "the goal of social research is to discover universal laws of human behaviour which *transcend culture and history*" (Lather, 1986, p.260). (My emphasis.) In other words, understanding people can somehow be divorced from their culture and history, which is in direct opposition to Aboriginal worldviews as previously discussed.

Kirby and McKenna, employ post-positivist methods and note that their goals as researchers include demystifying the research process, valuing different kinds of knowledge and making this knowledge accessible to the public (1989, p.24). Researchers, incorporating action and participatory action methodologies, have effectively incorporated community participants in roles that acknowledge and support joint research objectives.

These methodologies have evolved through economic development work in applied anthropology, rural planning and education (*cf.* Fals-Borda, 1992; Freire, 1970; Gearing, Netting and Peattie, 1960 as cited in Van Willingen, 1993). Generally, the action researcher involves the researched and seeks two results: solutions and action on problems of interest to the researched and new knowledge of interest to the academic world. Participatory action research (PAR) adds another dimension in that the researched become the skilled and capable researchers through training incorporated into the research plan and they "own" the research question and the results (*cf.* Barnsley & Ellis, 1992). People in the community have ownership of the research process and are integral to the process which becomes invaluable. Research results are not the goal but instead are the tools for the community in meeting its own goals (Barnsley and Ellis, 1992, p.11).

Research makes a difference in the lives of people who are given a voice. Opportunities

arise for exploring questions of importance to the community. Direct answers to issues are achieved as well as, spin off benefits including clarification of values, development of a local research skill base and increased understanding between all parties (*cf.* Castleden, 1992; Reimer, 1994; Ryan, 1995; Ward, 1997)

These methodologies provide the following additional and important philosophical perspectives:

- voices that have a right to be expressed;
- important input into some portion of the research process as well as skill development in areas including the research design, data collection, analysis and results; and
- the right to "own" the research results.

6.4. The Personal Journey of a Modern Aboriginal Scholar

The important elements of my research approach corresponds with my personal beliefs and values. It is influenced by the philosophy of PAR and more specifically, community participation research. It is, however, unique since it allows for the exploration of a question across a number of Aboriginal communities for a short five to ten day period. Respect for the people I work with, is inherent in the research process. Communication is open and a reciprocity exists for sharing ideas. Community participation research methodology builds on the underlying concepts of PAR but is adapted to fit the parameters of a cross-sectional research project.

My personal training is extensive in the western scientific tradition of research in the area of economic development, finance and Aboriginal communities. This project gives me the first opportunity to bring a personal understanding of my heritage and culture developed during the life of the project. This growth has influenced my work and is integral to the process which is demonstrated in extensive use of material from Aboriginal scholars, the celebration of spirituality and the gratitude for the participation of community people in this project. My personal awareness has broadened in many areas of my Aboriginal heritage since this project was started and has

influenced my understanding of appropriate research methodologies. These methods and the associated research objectives are summarized in Figure 2.

I determined that a question around understanding economic development in Aboriginal communities, my area of research, would have broad appeal from an academic perspective but more importantly for Aboriginal society. I then approached selected communities and invited their participation. This is contrary to PAR where the community generates the topic of research. However, this approach suited the goal of studying a cross-section of communities. PAR in its ideal, has the researcher being approached by the community and then working with the community over an extended three to five year period to accomplish mutual goals.

I started on a journey that began with learning how to ask questions. With an elder or a teacher (anyone is a teacher and can share lessons of what to do or not to do with others), there is a proper way to ask a question. I was unfamiliar with this protocol and in taking advantage of an opportunity to learn how to ask a question, the door to greater understanding opened and I walked through it. I have had the opportunity to sit with elders, teachers, sing, drum, heal and participate in ceremonies in ways that were unknown to me. I believe that this personal journey has helped me begin to understand the gifts I have to offer. The journey has just begun but I am pleased with the positive impact on the quality of the work that I am able to gift back to the communities, as well as, to the business and academic worlds. My journey and choices are mine to understand and

Research Objective	Method
1. To ascertain the place held by Aboriginal wisdom in economic development theory	➤ literature review ➤ self-reflection
2. To document the blend of approaches and economic development strategies currently employed in selected Aboriginal communities	➤ oral histories ➤ literature review ➤ direct observation ➤ individual interviews and discussions with community experts
3. To identify the role of Aboriginal wisdom in selected Aboriginal communities that are striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms	➤ oral histories ➤ self-reflection

Figure 2. Summary of research objectives and methods employed

they are not the same as those faced by anyone else. Other Aboriginal scholars add to this partnership with academia in their own ways and a critical mass of skilled researchers is slowly building (See Colorado, 1988; Ghostkeeper, 1993, 1996, 1997; Joe, 2000; Salway Black, 1994; Alfred ,1999; Dockstater, 1993; Newhouse,1992, 1993, 1997, 1998; Simpson, 1999).

In conducting my work in the communities, I relied on personal contacts to approach a community. This is in deference to the over-researched experience of many Aboriginal peoples. I approached the chief, or the president of organizations in Winnipeg, to determine whether or not the community or organization would participate in the project. If he or she agreed, I asked for his or her input in developing a representative list of possible interviewees who would contribute to a balanced view of the community including elders, youth, women and from perspectives of economic development, social services and spiritual guidance. Each participant whose words were quoted, reviewed the draft and had the opportunity to edit the results.

My use of the community participation approach shows proper respect for Aboriginal community member participation in the project and the right for them to control the information that is placed in the public domain. Participants are named in the work, if they choose, so that role models are easily identifiable to other communities on a similar path of development. Elders were shown respect with tobacco, gifts or honorariums in keeping with community protocol. Visits were long enough for one or two interviews of ten to twenty five people in each community. These members were the community experts who I needed to speak to in order to fully research the issues of economic development. Recognizing their knowledge is in keeping with an Aboriginal way of learning (Simpson, 2000, p. 178).

Research of secondary information sources can be useful in identifying community issues and aiding in critical analysis. Grassroots native papers can give perspectives that researchers, new to the communities, would be unfamiliar with. In this study, secondary sources were limited since most of these communities remain low-profile and their experiences removed from the public eye.

There was no training of participants, as promoted in PAR, only discussion, an opportunity for review and control over the final product content and distribution. It is collaborative and cooperative. I honor the voices of my community and respect their directions. Learning is two ways and opportunities to take advantage of learning from whatever quarter is realized in this approach.

The limitations of the interview process relating to reliability and completeness of information gathering must be addressed through the review of completed work by *all* interviewees. It is possible that a cross-section of opinion is not representative, that interview information is incomplete or inaccurate and the analysis is deficient especially regarding sensitive issues. These are the risks of this approach that are offset by seeking advice from a variety of community members.

This includes those individuals who do not support the local leadership and their approach. In some communities, there is an open attitude to dissenters while in others, there is no tolerance. Dissent is an inescapable part of development (Loxley, personal communication, May 4, 2000) and the effectiveness of the process must be questioned if it fails to recognize or does not attempt to work with the dissenters in a constructive manner. This approach of seeking balance in perspective is vital. In addition, the benefits of having the community buy into the process of research and the benefits from sharing success stories and hard lessons cannot be underestimated.

In choosing to take a survey or cross-sectional approach rather than an in-depth analysis of one community, I have limited myself in the methodologies available to me including traditional Aboriginal ways of learning. Most of these methods take a commitment of time and include apprenticing with an elders, learning from community experts, experiential learning, listening to story telling and oral histories, participating in ceremonies, taking time for spiritual and personal reflection as well as long-term observation (Simpson, 2000, pp.176-181).

I used observation to a limited extent but I did not spend a significant amount of time in each community. My main approach was reliance on community experts, self-reflection and I limited the expression of my work to my personal experience and insight. As a result, I am able to offer insights into economic development occurring in a range of communities that until now have been removed from the public domain. I may provide a forum and give voice to those who have been silent in the greater world. My work offers an opportunity for these communities to share

their successes and hard lessons with their neighbors and with those who to seek to work with them in business or through levels of government.

This description of my journey touches on the points of relevance to this discussion. The greatest gift, for me, is knowing I have more confidence in self-reflection that is inclusive of my academic experience but is not restricted by it. People across many disciplines are working towards fundamental change in the process of economic development because we know that we have not yet got it quite right. While Aboriginal people have a long history here, their problems are seemingly more noticeable than anything they might have to offer regarding economic development.

I cannot share all that I am learning but this is an invitation to a discussion for those who might wish to explore this process. It is time for Aboriginal people's voices to be heard in this discussion forum. Many times the decision is made to make broad conclusions for the larger community. In this work, I have chosen to follow the lead of the communities. I offer my research for the understanding that it brings. I can only speak from what I know and learned. I choose to let each community define success in the ways that are meaningful to them. I want to describe those choices without relying on a commentary on their veracity. I honor and respect their choices, goals and hard lessons. I want to set out these experiences so that other communities and interested parties can take from the ideas as appropriate. I also want to examine linkages between a number of disciplines in the context of economic development and I want to draw the Aboriginal experience into the circle.

This work is a platform to shine the light on a number of communities across the country and the strides they are taking in economic development. They set the pace, the message and define success on their own terms. They are striving for strong, healthy communities for their children and dignified lifestyles for their communities. They do not proclaim answers that will solve all problems and neither do I. Some do not share their experiences since they truly believe that each community must find its own way. They have shared some insights here for the sake of their

communities.

Their words are important.

They put the meaning into the statistics that are the norm in measuring economic progress. Their words take this analysis beyond the comfort zone of numbers. Their words help us understand their struggles and their triumphs beyond the scope of the normal experience or understanding of Canadians.

Four communities and their economic development strategies are introduced in the following section. I have shaped my experience with each of these communities into chapters. I have chosen those voices that will be heard in describing the experience of economic development. It is a collaborative sharing of their messages. These are followed by a chapter which summarizes conclusions and captures reflections on this research project.

7. Indigenous Economics Has Values Added

Indigenous economics: the science of dealing with the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth in a naturally holistic, reciprocal manner that respects humankind, fellow species, and the eco-balance of life.
First Nations Development Institute (FNDI)
Virginia, USA

The beginning quote summarizes a definition of indigenous economies that captures many ideals. It is grounded in FNDI's more than 15 years experience with individual entrepreneurs and community enterprises. They assess projects, provide funding, professional support and evaluation. The value of understanding Aboriginal economies in Canada manifests in a number of ways. There is literature that examines Aboriginal economies on a macro level. What do Aboriginal economies look like? Are they mirror images of a capitalist economy or is there something different present? What are the "values added" if any?

Tsuu T'ina Nation, Alberta provides insight into a community that has an economic development vision that has been carried by the same leader for many years. It is not a resource-rich community but it does have opportunities that have been built upon since it completed a housing development project on the extreme edge of its lands. Many opportunities are being taken advantage of today including a golf course, business park and tourism. It is located on the outskirts of Calgary, a major Canadian city, that provides a number of opportunities and challenges.

7.1. Tsuu T'ina Nation, Alberta: A Sustaining Vision

Tsuu T'ina people, who are Athabascan, are related to Dene in the north and Navajo, in the south. A story is told of a serpent monster who lived under the ice where Athabascan people were crossing.

It had a horn on its head and a small piece of horn was sticking out of the ice. A grandmother was carrying a child on her back. The child saw that horn and began crying for it. Half of the people were already across the ice and the other half were just getting onto the ice.

The child's grandmother started chipping away at the horn in order to stop the child from crying. She awoke the serpent monster with the vibration of the chipping. The monster stood up and broke the ice and separated the people. Many people perished including the child and grandmother. Similar stories are told but the Navajo talk of a buffalo and the Dene from the Northwest Territories say it was an elk horn (Eagletail, 1994).

The theme of separation and independence continues when after the signing of Treaty Seven in 1877, Chief Bullhead (Chula) moved his people north to the place where the reserve is currently located on 27,600 hectares, on the southeast edge of Calgary, Alberta. Chief Roy Whitney (personal communication, 1994) notes, "If we were to survive we had to survive as our own people and Chief Bullhead fought for this area as a location for our First Nation and that's how we settled here."

A prophecy was made when the Tsuu T'ina people moved and a new marker was placed claiming new reserve lands. A medicine warrior named Eagleribs said in the future he saw boxes surrounding this reserve. Boxes were building themselves around the community. He said that this was going to be an opportunity and the time for the community to teach the people building the boxes about the Nation. According to Hal Eagletail, a young adult and economic development staff member, (personal communication, 1994), "We were to support ourselves with them as customers, through economic development. Several portions of reserve boundary lie across the street from Calgary homes - the boxes."

Surviving in their settlement was a challenge. When the treaty was signed there were 1500 members. Disease had decimated the community by the 1930s, leaving 170 survivors. According to Roy, the elders describe the way this challenge to their survival was met:

Our old people got together and said our people were to start marrying now if we were to survive as a people. That's when our people started marrying into other tribes. The men brought the families back and the women went with their husbands and left to go to the other tribes. There is quite a mixture now and in some places we were called the 'united nations'. We have 79 people that speak the Athabascan dialect, the Dene tongue. We are working to incorporate it into

our school and into our administration.

Following these instructions saved the community. Of a total of 1300 members in 1996, approximately 920 live on the reserve (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1999). Five hundred are less than 18 years of age and 60 are over the age of 55 years. This leaves 400 Nation members available for employment. According to Peter Manywounds, Commissioner for Business and Development, (personal communication, 1994) , the unemployment rate is approximately 6% when all projects are fully operational. This rate fluctuates throughout the year because some of the work is seasonal.

In 1996, the following statistics set the educational profile of those members who were 15 years or older. Of those members with grade nine or higher, 57% had graduated from high school. Of the 26% membership having some non-University training, 81 % had a certificate or diploma and finally of the 37% membership who had University training, 65% held a bachelor's degree or higher (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1999).

Band-owned projects include a gravel company, a housing development called Redwood Meadows and a small gas well project. Further, a business park, a golf course, an explosive device disposal company and construction projects such as several schools and an office complex provide more employment for Nation members.

Tsuu T'ina Nation follows the advice of its elders and its leaders. They essentially govern themselves in all ways and all times but like other First Nations do not speak of it in terms of "self-government."(For example, Sakgeeng First Nation, MB as noted in a personal conversation, Chief Jerry Fontaine, 1998) The elders have counselled against speaking about self-government because the way they understand that term does not coincide with the way it is used by the government. It is not necessary to speak of that term because the Nation leads the way quietly by developing bylaws and other legislation that guide economic development on its lands, on their terms.

Darrell Crowchild, Chief Commissioner for Tsuu T'ina Nation, (personal communication,

1994) describes his understanding of his community's perspective and self-government:

> *We look at self-government from the perspective of a traditional government. Decisions and the ways decisions are made aren't all written down. Now we're taking the next step and writing it down.*
>
> *We looked at self-government a few years ago when the federal government brought it forward. Almost all the First Nations were scrambling in a sense and talking about membership codes and self-government. We've gotta grab onto something and protect ourselves. I looked on it as almost a tactic that the federal government used against the Indian people to get them to give in to a way of protecting themselves or their Nations. I thought that it would lead to a breakdown of barriers but we would become weak. Dangle dollars and programs in front of our faces so that we jump.*
>
> *I think that the only way that is ever going to work, is if we define it for ourselves and with sense and respect for other communities. It won't work to have one definition for all communities across Canada.*

As with many communities, social problems exist and the community is working to solve them. People must be healthy for economic development initiatives to succeed. According to elder, Rose Runner (personal communication, 1994):

> *My heart gets very heavy when I think about the community and what is going on. There is violence in the homes, personal problems and people are crying out for help and people are not hearing it.*
>
> *What I tell my children is that, you are very important. You are uniquely made and the Heavenly Father made you so special that you are not like anyone else in this whole world. You are priceless and your life is priceless. Deal with your life first and look at yourself before you help your family.*
>
> *It is up to the individual, to work on themselves and to think about their families first before they try and help others. I don't think you can help anybody if you are not helping yourself. You know, you gotta find a peace within you, before you can learn to give it.*

7.2. Economic Development

A community with a vision has a direction and can articulate a path to accomplish its goals.

For Tsuu T'ina Nation, the goal in 1994 was to move away from dependence on government. The main strategy was to heal community members and develop economically viable projects that earned revenue and provided employment. They wanted their young people to work in the community in positions that have a future.

Comments by key decision-makers follow, and include the community's chief, a councilor holding the economic development portfolio, the chief commissioner and the manager of economic development. They provide insight and glimpses of personal vision guiding these individuals.

7.3. Administration

Roy has held his position since 1986 helping develop the connection between a strong community and its leadership. He believes in all aspects of the community: social, cultural, traditional and the family. He comments on the process and the goal for economic development:

> *Any development or program that we have started, I have always ensured that we go back to the old people first and we start with prayer to ensure it has the cultural and traditional strength. They will say this is what you should watch for and gear towards for the future. Any new adventure we begin that way and we involve the old people at the very beginning. It's really important to the community.*
>
> *Our main goal is to be self sustaining. We want to rely solely on ourselves and as a First Nation to meet the needs of this community. We want to create jobs and supporting infrastructure. We tell our young people to seek an education that will create independence and self esteem. They can come back to this community and know that there is a job or potential for a job waiting for them.*
>
> *Self sustainability is not self-government but it will give our next generation the ability to make decisions on the needs of their own community. They will use financial resources that are made available to them from this community.*

Steve Runner is council member and holds the Economic Development portfolio. He is a successful rancher who echos concern for young people and the need to generate revenue to achieve independence. He calls for balance in bringing all the community together to enjoy the

results. There are many other issues (personal communication, 1994).

> *Our members have money in their pockets, but at the same time, social problems are not being dealt with. We have to slow down and deal with these problems. We have had many deaths among the young people from alcohol-related accidents and from suicide.*
>
> *Other challenges that face our community include the proximity to Calgary. It can be positive due to economic development opportunities but it also means that drugs and alcohol are close. Further, the City of Calgary ties us up with their plans to use some of our land. For example they wanted to build a highway bypass and they negotiated for three years. We had environmental and cultural studies done, and in the end it held us up for eight years.*

Darrell Crowchild, brings a perspective of a member who has lived a traditional lifestyle from a young age and brings those values to the community that he has worked in for most of his working life.

> *The future of our community is an issue that has been talked about for a number of years by staff and council. Where is the Nation going to be in ten years, twenty years or forty years down the road? How are we going to get there?*
>
> *Our biggest issue is looking at our own people. What skills and education do we possess in the community? What is needed for our people to enter into business arrangements? How do we get the majority of our own people actually running businesses, programs, and projects? If we require outside expertise, then we must bring these people in but have training in place so Tsuu T'ina Nation people are running the whole show in the end.*
>
> *In order to answer these questions and reach our goal, we put all the projects we had on the table. We tried to identify where we need to improve education and training levels for our youth and adults so we could best utilize our people for the Nation's operations.*
>
> *We looked at upgrading education levels, established a committee and within four months we put together a whole plan. The upgrading program was running by September that year. Thirty people joined the upgrading program. Within a month we were up to sixty people and we capped enrollment.*
>
> *Key people in social services, education, economic development and employment formed a committee to help develop the upgrading program. A coordinator was hired, who handles regular negotiations with Mount Royal College, the University of Lethbridge, and the University of Calgary, for direct*

purchase of programs.

Next we invite our young people to apply for jobs with the Nation's programs and companies. They are matched with experienced personnel and receive training and guidance so they succeed. We give them opportunities to learn about the Nation and its operations, to work with various Nation members and companies which gives them encouragement.

There have been wonderful turnaround stories in our people who are now inspired to be come part of the Nation's workforce. They want to contribute to the Nation as a whole. There are now peer role models who inspire other young people to work hard and join the Nation's vision. It's very exciting.

Another important part of the plan is to help those Nation members who want to start a business, operate an on-going Nation business or get training in a specific company. We provide training, advice or opportunities to encourage these people.

My vision for the Nation is very positive. Enrollment in post-secondary education has risen from six students, five years ago to more than thirty-five and I see this continuing. I predict that more people will train in areas of community wellness and help turn negative things into positive things. Lifestyle patterns will change for the better.

I think people will go into business and do something for themselves and their families. I see a lot of family units pulling back together including the larger families. It is very emotional to see the pride and excitement about progress in turning their lifestyles around.

This change means we will have a community that is close; where we are healed; where we can deal with our lives; where people can learn how to deal with their family lives; and help each other.

Tsuu T'ina Nation is one of the leaders in terms of taking a Nation in a direction and reaching goals. We have many accomplishments that no other Nation has even considered doing. It gives me great pride to consider all of Tsuu T'ina Nation's achievements. It is overwhelming.

Often experts from outside of the community, provide objective insights into the workings of the community. Trez McCaskill (personal communication, 1994) has consulted with Tsuu T'ina Nation on management staffing issues for a number of years. His background is with the Department of Indian Affairs. He identifies strengths in the Nation:

They recognize the potential of their own members. For example, I feel very pleased to have been part of the recruitment of Darrel Crowchild. Darrel has untapped potential. Lack of formal training is offset by his grasp of the Nation's vision and his fifteen years experience working with the Nation. He has an appreciation of the government and other agencies, and he's very good with people. He handles the responsibilities that the Nation has given him. They have hired other key staff too. I offer a number of options and they choose the best option to address the situation they're dealing with.

Beyond the Nation members, I think that this community's well off with many resources developed for their membership. They've taken whatever resources they have and managed them properly.

There are eleven businesses including reclamation, rental and lease of the land, Department of National Defence work, and the development of Redwood Meadows [golf course and housing development]. Nation members have an opportunity to advance and grow with these companies which is really quite an accomplishment.

Jeanne Crowchild, Company General Manager, (personal communication, 1994) is proud of the opportunities her children will have when they are adults. She states,

We want to benefit our children. When they grow up they're going to take over everything. They will see things differently and I hope that they remember their roots, culture and identity.

The future will be good if we work towards unity. My children are taught about the importance of unity. They see our family come together to discuss important issues in the community and to decide how we will vote together. They have seen how we can work with all people while still remembering our culture. This is what my father taught me.

Our national organization, Assembly of First Nations, has to communicate with communities across the country to build unity. Now, all they do is argue. They forget our common goal. We can take the best things from each other and give the best things so we are strong as nations.

Carol Gottfriedson, band member and management consultant, has a long history of working in the band office. She too acknowledges that the work is for the children of the

community (personal communication, 1994) but things have not come easily to the community.

> *Nonetheless, I see us being just as competitive as the people across the road (mainstream society). I think that they realize that now too. Our Nation has always had to work for what we have and I think that's helped our success.*
>
> *Our cultural perspective has also helped. A young person came to me. He confessed his concern that the old people say hard times are coming and we should be prepared. He said this talk frightens him. I shared the way it was explained to me. What we are doing now is preparing us for those hard times. We will succeed and compete with the non-Indian population. We're preparing our children and we're working towards something that they can have. They'll be able to look after themselves.*

7.4. Codification of Tsuu T'ina Approach

In 1985, the community reached a point where the leadership wanted to structure the operations of the Nation in a way that was understood by community members and government and business interests. This included a board structure that is outlined in this and the next section.

Peter Manywounds (personal conversation, 1994) notes,

> *Our cash flow has increased steadily from 5 million dollars a year in the late seventies, to 15 million dollars in 1990 to 45 million dollars in 1994. Staff, Chief and Council, board members and the community recognized the need to restructure to more effectively manage all projects. At our last count, we had 298 separate profit centers within the Nation.*

Tsuu T'ina does not have an abundance of natural resources available for economic development. They have one gas well that generates a significant cash flow when industry prices are high. The cash generated through various projects was dramatically affected by the Finance Administration Act in 1987. Peter notes,

> *This key document supports the whole operation and is central to the way banks understand the way we do business. Each department has a Board of Directors made up of community members and two councilors. Membership in the Board of Directors changes as some council members change. Council members are the shareholders of record and hold the assets in trust for all Nation citizens.*
>
> *The overall direction and the corporate structure is secure because the*

Nation membership see a record of success through financial benefits and jobs. Nation citizens vote changes to the Act or to development plans. I don't believe that they would be prepared to make a wholesale change for political expediency. We've proven this structure and process works, to ourselves as well as to the outside business community. We would not jeopardize our current projects or walk away from our past achievements.

The Nation passed this Act to increase certainty. Many communities are concerned about the impact of a turnover in political leaders on administration matters. With the Finance Administration Act, decisions might take longer because of the learning curve but it is useful in maintaining consistency.

Further certainty was achieved when Nation citizens approved the Tsuu T'ina Heritage Trust Fund which divides Nation-owned company profits at year-end. Peter describes the process:

For example, assume the ten companies generate a profit of three and a half million dollars. A formula process approved by the Nation dictates that I get 15% off the top to operate my Economic Development program and carry out the economic development work that needs to be done on new start-ups.

Of the remaining 85%, one third is transferred to Nation citizens directly as a dividend payment. One third is transferred to Chief and Council for their budget priorities. The final one third is retained in the Trust fund as our capital pool. Over a period of time, we have built that up to point where it becomes our equity for example, in the multi-purpose building, the gas bar or the golf course. The key to the process is that money is shared equally among the citizens, Chief and council and the trust fund. It's always equitable and the balance stays in the fund. People get immediate benefits but the Nation retains capital monies which can't be used for any other purpose except economic development. Dividends to community members have averaged from $700 to $1,000 per member.

While this process does not leave the capital, as financial institutions recommend as a prudent business move, the community maintains a cycle of funds that remain for economic projects. If Nation members spend their dividends within the Nation, the money recycles in the community in support of Nation businesses with spin-off benefits. It is a sustainable approach to economic development.

The management structure is critical to the Nation's success.

7.5. Managing Nation Businesses

Determining the role of the manager of a Nation business and the level of interaction with Chief and council is a balance determined by a community's history. Tsuu T'ina Nation learned what worked for their community when Redwood Meadows, their first major project, faced difficult problems. It required Chief and council to handle political negotiations while the day to day operations were left to the manager and a small board. Peter Manywounds (personal conversation, 1994) remembers:

> *Our leadership, management and elders saw how well the structure worked. It was a good lesson for us and it's still evolving. Roles became clearer so elected decision makers have the final say except in matters concerning land within the community. The whole community decides those matters.*
>
> *With regards to budgets, council approves each item, line by line, so that they are familiar with all operations. They work with the Treasury Board that holds band capital and makes sure the budgets are properly set up and aligned for the whole Nation. Once those budgets are approved then the chair of each board of directors works with the board and company management to make decisions such as the timing of expenditures, type of purchases, and timing of on-going projects.*
>
> *Council receives monthly financial statements but are not part of company day-to-day operations. Major budget changes are approved by Council.*
>
> *The Treasury Board is appointed by Council with three commissioners and four council members. Its role is to manage the cash of the Nation and to monitor expenditures. It is a unique body performing a watchdog function. There is nothing like it across the country. One of the terms and conditions in the Finance Administration Act that affects the Treasury board is that because it's the watchdog, four council members sit other than the four who have signing authority. They have no authority to spend money, or to replace Council's role.*
>
> *Authorized spending limits for each level of operation are clearly set out in our Finance Administration Act. The board monitors operations and if a manager is overspending, or something doesn't seem proper, they investigate. In the event*

that issue can't be resolved between the Treasury Board and the responsible board for that program, corporation or economic development program, then it goes to Council. It also advises Chief and council on spending priorities.

You can appreciate with ten companies, five or six economic development projects and 20 or 30 departments, that there is some fairly fierce competition for capital dollars. The Treasury board ranks all capital requests based on priorities set by the Nation and then makes recommendations to Council.

Relationships with off-reserve entities had begun to change years earlier. The move towards independence from Department of Indian Affairs, for example, began in earnest in 1967. According to Peter Manywounds, Chief and council put their foot down and told Indian Affairs that they weren't needed here all the time. If Chief and council needed advice then the Department would be contacted.

Peter notes,

From that point, which was over 20 years ago, we have been making all the decisions here, albeit with advice from Indian Affairs or other people. We've made the decisions and we've developed and grown. Over that period of time, chiefs, councils and staff were wise enough to recognize that operations have to be constantly evaluated and re-evaluated.

After the Redwood Meadows experience, the board-type of organization grew. It is unique to Tsuu T'ina Nation. Peter explains:

We have six boards that report directly to Chief and council. We have a Department of National Defence to handle relations with the Canadian Forces base. We have the Nation Administration board which handles all of the Nation-funded programs: housing, membership, roads, lands, and all service delivery. The Inter-governmental Affairs board handles all government-funded programs: social services, education, health care, Spirit Healing Lodge, and a number of others.

Development projects are incubated in Economic Development and fall under the purview of the Economic Development Board. Once a company is determined to be self-sufficient and fully operational then a formal transfer of responsibility is made to the Companies Board. Peter

comments,

> *I work with two boards --the Economic Development board which is responsible for all economic development in the community, and the Company board which is actually the operating board for all of our corporations. The relationship between the Economic Development and Company boards is close.*
>
> *For example, the commercial centre is now a viable operating entity that was started under the guidance of the Economic Development board. A week and half ago, the boards met and we did a formal transfer by resolution and authority was passed from the Economic Development board to the Company board.. It is a significant project worth over $2,000,000 a year in cash flow.*

Generally, two council members are appointed by the Chief to each board, and three citizens at large are also appointed by the Chief and council. For example, people with a background or interest in economic development will likely be asked to sit on that board. Peter states,

> *With a small community like ours everybody knows everybody else, and knows their background. It's not that difficult to be reasonable about who is selected. We have various advisors who sit on our boards who may not be band citizens.*

7.6. Training and Employment

The goal set by Chief and council is to train and employ band citizens for all positions within the Nation. Economic development initiatives and Band companies focus on training whenever and wherever possible.

From Peter's perspective:

> *The philosophy of the Nation is to maintain control and is demonstrated by the fact that Nation citizens hold most of the senior administration positions. Some of the finance and accounting positions are held by non-citizens but everyone else including the general managers are band citizens.*
>
> *Some former managers didn't understand and came in thinking they could do almost as they chose because they knew best. We ran into real problems with*

some bad decisions that were out of our control. As a result we made a commitment that we weren't going to do that kind of thing again.

We do partner with advisors and companies who share their expertise. We've got advisory staff in education, a company that acts as an advisor on our construction projects, and our agricultural joint venture makes room for farmers who have farmed here for years. The list goes on.

Human resource development however was recognized as a priority early on. Chief and council emphasize the effort needed in training our citizens on the job or in special training courses. Our upgrading program had sixty students in 1993, and 28 graduates with Grade 12 equivalency in April. In less than a year we delivered people with training. Twenty eight people were subsequently employed in the band structure or continued to post-secondary education.

7.7. Insights for Success

Roy is clear about his community's needs. When he deals with a bank that does not share the community vision, he is cautious.

He explains,

Development proposals that are accepted by the community, fit the needs of our community. Conventional knowledge in the greater society may not agree with our wisdom and knowledge. The banking industry may react to a proposal by saying tough economic times mean we're leery of this type of development and it won't succeed. I say, where are we going to go? We'll always be here. We're not going to create an industry, a company or a business that isn't going to survive for our people. They turn us down just because it doesn't fit into their conventional knowledge of development.

What we've had to do is take a two tier perspective. We identified conventional knowledge for bankers and funders. We also know the wisdom of Aboriginal peoples in this community. We develop two packages of information with one meeting the needs of our community and the other for bankers. It brings the balance of their way of thinking and melds it with ours without affecting how we do our business within our own community.

Roy notes a big difference between the two approaches is that the community puts people first. Education or employment opportunities with cultural and traditional values carry great weight

in determining opportunities for the community. Profitability is important but it is not the determining factor in choosing suitable projects.

Roy explains,

> *If a project is not financially viable then it doesn't meet the needs and human values of our people in providing bread and butter for their children. While it is not first priority, it is a factor we consider in developing our economic needs. We want to be financially secure and successful.*
>
> *For example, the multi-purpose complex needed projects that ensured the retail and commercial aspects of the building were secured so that the building would become viable. Once we secured proper leases then we were able to go into our community and say that it is financially secure and we have that safety net. Next we incorporate our people into that safety net to ensure that we meet the needs of this generation and the next seven generations.*

This approach values the quality of the environment for their children's future needs. Community communication and decision-making processes are critical as the future of the community is determined. Peter describes Tsuu T'ina Nation's approach:

> *Chief and council hold two day Nation member meetings semi-annually where they talk about all the business in the community. Staff present reports and discuss all the current and planned projects. Motions are made by the citizens from the floor that issue directives to council on particular matters.*
>
> *Once a year we hold shareholders meetings where each company or program sets up a booth that is staffed by management or employees. Any Nation member can come in and get specific information. It is not a big meeting where people might be too intimidated to ask questions. They may ask for specific details about economic development projects; Nation companies; future plans; or get information about getting involved through training or education.*
>
> *They note any concerns on suggestion sheets. Suggestions are complied and directed to the appropriate board. They may be good ideas for making things better or increasing benefits for citizens. These suggestions are usually implemented by the board. Alternatively, if it's an idea that has merit but is beyond the scope of a particular board, it would go to Chief and council for further action at council's discretion.*
>
> *Our doors are always open to shareholders. We've got nothing to hide from our public. That's a difference that we sometimes have to point out to non-nation*

citizens. It is Nation business and Nation members have the opportunity to look at the plans or the books anytime. We don't make that offer to the general public.

While the communication process has been given a lot of thought, Chief and council review it regularly and suggest improvements. Peter comments,

Reviews result in directives to improve communication with Nation members. Members need to get answers but the sheer volume of reports on these operations is staggering for council members to assimilate and explain projects in detail. We work with these projects every day so we can help by providing complete information to Nation members.

Besides consistency in leadership which is helpful in building strong communities, this process also has room for dissenters to voice their opinions effectively. There are inevitable disagreements and these must be heard. That is the first step in dealing with them effectively.

7.8. Project Genesis and Economic Development

Tsuu T'ina Nation has developed a process of evaluating projects with the guidance of Chief and council and the assistance of staff and Nation citizens. The process has been influenced by hard lessons and history.

All members are given the opportunity for input into projects. The Elders Committee give advice and feedback, once a project is determined to be feasible. The community also has the opportunity to give direction on feasible projects since projects may still be cancelled although they are feasible.

Many unsolicited projects are submitted to Tsuu T'ina Nation and also project ideas are generated by staff and by Chief and council. These ideas are vetted by the Economic Development department through a strenuous screening process that determines their feasibility. This process will be discussed in greater detail section 7.9.

Feasible projects are brought to Chief and council. Roy describes the consultation process:

We start off with the council and elders. I seek input personally to be sure

that our planning has strength and wisdom. We carry the knowledge of the old into the new. Their guidance forms the root to a new tree that we are working on with each project. Then we involve the young people in the building of that tree.

Darrell oversees the Elders program that keeps all elders informed and gives them the opportunity to contribute to Nation business. He has strong personal feelings for the program:

I have been very, very fortunate to take care of the elders program. Few people have such a chance to get to know the elders. I am privileged to understand their concerns, to listen and talk to them and know how important they are in our lives and within our Nation. We meet once or twice a month and I arrange for consultants to help explain technical language so they know exactly what is going on within the Nation. Program and company managers come in and speak to the elders too.

Carol notes that land is a critical part of the feasibility analysis.

We look at land issues that have to be dealt with including designation of the land. In some projects that part of the process can take almost two years. It has to go through votes in our membership and through community workshops. Nation citizens are fully aware of project plans now and in the future. This process includes everyone and is one of the strengths of Tsuu T'ina Nation.

Nation projects currently in operation vary in size, industry and location. They are described and then the screening process for new projects is outlined.

7.9. Nation Project Investments

Peter describes some of the Nation's projects.

Redwood Meadows golf course has the longest profit history. Redwood Meadows, a land development project, has shown a profit since 1988. These profits were delayed because of a number of problems including marketing and regulatory problems.

The gravel operation, which is not on designated land, has been very profitable. It's the closest pit in this quadrant of the city, and although the quality of material is not number one, our location, access and competitive pricing make it very marketable.

The Wolf Flats Ordinance Disposal Corporation clears land of leftover explosives so that the land is reuseable. There are not very many people in this field. Our advantages were the fact that we owned the land and have strong corporate capability. We hope the land will be reclaimed in 1997-98 but we continually discover that the project is bigger than first realized. In any event, the very involved process is repeated three or four times leaving a minuscule chance that an explosive is missed. The lease with the military runs until the year 2005. Getting the land cleared is part of the process of regaining use of that land. We will farm it once it is reuseable.

Its proximity and location to the city makes it is a very valuable piece of property. One possibility, if we decide to develop, is a new ski hill that would have the longest run near the city. It would be twice or three times as long as Canada Olympic Park and twice as long as Wintergreen, two local ski hills.

We're in the process of trying to expand that company to bid on and secure contracts in other parts of the world. Our goal is to operate a year-round company with contracts in climates where we can work over the winter months and spend the summer period here.

7.10. Screening Process

The process for prioritizing economic development objectives and screening projects has developed over a long period of time. Outside consultants developed master plans and the community made decisions. Unique opportunities exist because of the proximity to the city of Calgary. A thorough screening process identifies opportunities worthy of pursuit. It has taken tough experience to get to this point. Peter recalls:

There were some fundamental changes in philosophy and attitude that began many years ago that led us to where we are today. The first change occurred when I was young and not directly involved. We would make decisions knowing that we were going to make mistakes but we'd make the mistakes ourselves and learn from them. That was a very fundamental choice that the community took in the late sixties and early seventies.

The second important decision was fundamental. Instead of trying to create employment as the main goal, which is what the government has been trying to sell, a conscious decision was taken in 1980 that we weren't going to try to create jobs for the sake of employment. We were going to create businesses for profit. If we couldn't create a business that was going to make a profit, we weren't going to do it because we believe and I think we've since proven, if we create a business

that makes a profit, we create stable long-term employment for citizens.

We had tough experiences with the Redwood Meadows housing and golf course project. It taught us that we could meet problems with banks and legislation that were costly but we persisted and succeeded. Steve Runner was the band manager in 1982 and he felt that there was a real need to divide economic development activities from band management and delivery of programs and services. That change was accepted and we operated that way for about 8 years. It gave us time and the impetus for planning and development. We thoroughly examined different projects without being controversial about it.

Many solicited and unsolicited business proposals are submitted for consideration by the community. It becomes difficult to know what projects should be developed without a community vision for the future of Tsuu T'ina and a process to evaluate submissions. Projects in 1994 include a recently-completed multi-purpose building that is magnificent, another golf course on the drawing board and a business park on a strip of land bordering the community boundary.

According to Peter, they receive six to eight proposals a week from all kinds of people with more than 100 going through a thorough screening process. This screening process is rigorous and set out in Figure 3. Few of the 100 proposals make it through to the end. Peter explains,

We don't have to jump at the first deal that's offered to us, the one that may look great on the face of it. So we go through this process that we have put on a chart and taken a lot of time to develop. We also work on our own including a hotel and a twin arena complex. It's in those first four steps where 99% of the proposals are screened out as being unsuitable. We then reach a decision point as to whether or not we continue the process. Quite frankly, we don't want to waste time on a project that is not going to work.

SCREENING OF PROPOSALS

A business proposition is made to the Nation. Eg. Proposal is submitted; offer to lease is made; joint venture opportunity.

1. Do we want to consider the proposal?
An initial screening process begins involving the general manager of economic development, the project officer trainee, and one of the finance people. If the project is $250,000 then in house staff evaluate it. If it is a $5 million project then external consulting advice is sought. Ninety percent of unsolicited proposals are screened out. Reasons include that it's not feasible; it doesn't fit with Nation plans; or it's not a suitable use that would receive approval.

Business plans may be financially feasible, with good rates of return; good management and financing and still be screened out. For example, a welding operation looked impressive but it did not meet the by-law requirements regarding environmental concerns.

2. If a proposal is borderline then it is passed to finance and economic development managers.

3. If a proposal has passed initial screening, then more information is sought. A comprehensive business plan including information on management, products/services, financing and cashflow projections must be submitted. This information is necessary to move the proposal along and also demonstrates the seriousness of the applicant. Confidentiality restrictions are in effect so the information is secure.

4. The finance and economic development managers review the new information. Further screening occurs. For example, joint venture proposals must be structured in favor of +50.1% ownership in the business to maintain operational control.

5. Proposals are then submitted to the Chief for review by Council, the elders committee and the community.

Figure 3: Summary of Tsuu T'ina nation's investment screening criteria

Development of a planning process was a collaborative effort between Tsuu T'ina staff and their auditors. This joint effort formalized the informal processes already followed by the Economic Development staff. The results are well-planned five-year projections for each Nation company giving better control over human and financial resources.

Peter gives more detail,

> *Our five year plans are reviewed and updated annually for each company. The Economic Development department oversees several approved projects. Time lines for the Buffalo Run golf course indicates that we'll start construction in the spring and we're scheduled to be fully operational by the following spring. Those things are all charted out on bar graphs and include time frames, decision points and responsibilities. Charts show the schedule, where problems may have cropped up and what's been done. There is no way that you can manage large projects without these tools.*
>
> *In my opinion, the Chief and council, made decisions and set policies that allow us to get on with the work without political interference. That is probably the most significant difference I find compared to a lot of other tribes.*

Difficult issues can arise where politics and business collide and are the undoing of projects for many communities. The original housing and golf course project called Redwood Meadows, provided many difficult learning opportunities. Peter elaborates,

> *We had experiences with Redwood Meadows that tested our policy at that time that was we'll make the decisions and learn from our mistakes. We learned that Chief and council can't micro manage business because their motivation is political. To try to apply that motivation in a business world doesn't work. We have tried mixing politics and business and we've proven through some fairly major mistakes that it's going to cost us money.*
>
> *There are problems but the system works. Sometimes it frustrates the politicians because they feel they are not being listened to but on the other hand it has been proven that the system works. We are making money and so that while there are problems, politics don't enter into the day -to-day operations. Council issues the directives and we implement them. As long as we successfully carry out the directives issued by Council, politics is left out of the business side of the Nation.*

Other safeguards exist to protect community interests. For example, Chief and council are

bound by the limits outlined in the process of deciding uses for designated lands. According to the Indian Act, Nation members vote on a proposal through a referendum process. They agree to designate the land for specific purposes. For example, the business park, the golf course, the multi-purpose building, and the commercial center are specifically designated through this process. Neither the Nation nor the government nor anybody else can do other projects beyond the scope set out in the referendum. At the end of seventy-five years, all interests revert back to the Nation. Peter observes, "We don't carry financing on these projects for longer than twenty or twenty-five years anyway so lending institutions are paid out well before the expiration of the designation term."

Projects must also conform to the community land use bylaw that is administered by the planning commission. It is a very detailed guideline approved by the community and provides details on a variety of issues covering economic development on designated land. Peter elaborates:

> *Our bylaw covers the same things as any municipal land use or zoning bylaw and includes such things as the height of structures; setbacks from roads; architectural controls and guidelines; signage; handling waste; and restricting development so it is compatible with the area. It is sanctioned by Chief and council so it's got some teeth. A group of community members and consultants make up the Planning commission that is separate from the economic development and company boards to minimize any chance of conflict of interest.*

The bylaw is complete and allows for monitoring of all economic development on the Nation. Once a project has been vetted successfully by the Economic Development department then it is submitted for review by the zoning committee. Chief and council handle any dispute. It is part of the system to ensure economic development benefits the community. The vetting process is described in greater detail.

Hard decisions have to be made sometimes. Decisions take the circumstances, the individual and the community into account. Peter comments:

> *We've learned collectively that good business and management skills by themselves aren't enough for this kind of a setting. Politics and sensitivity to community members is always required. This is a small community. You must understand that a member employee may require discipline, suspension or*

dismissal as may happen with any company, otherwise you can't operate efficiently and make a profit.

On the other side of it, you have to deal with sensitivity because, hey, we all live here and we're not going anywhere. In the city you fire someone if the job isn't done properly and you never see them again. Here, you may let a person go but they have to understand what happened. If they made a mistake then we try to help them correct it, with the emphasis on helping people to be successful. In this size of an operation there's just no way that you can expect everybody to perform 100%.

Peter adds:

That's the theory, and I'm not saying that every person is on board. In almost two years that I've been here now, I've found that everybody is eager to help because they understand and are comfortable with where we are going. They see the fantastic opportunities we have although our younger people need to be more involved in making successful careers for themselves.

7.11. Our Strength is Our People

Darrell reflects on the place of culture in Tsuu T'ina Nation.

We have faith in our young people and we keep our elders involved. Our culture is always with us and we often don't realize it. It's in the way we have a meeting, or the way we meet with people, and the way we approach the issues. We are trying to bring back our language and regularly we seek guidance from our spiritual leaders. We begin our council meetings with prayer. We always give thanks to the Creator for all the gifts he has given us; for the life he has given to our people; for helping us throughout tough times; for giving us the strength to go on and go beyond; and we give thanks for the elders we can rely on for advice, guidance and the language. Our family is also our strength. We are all related and our strength just builds and builds and builds. We still have a lot of work to do to address social problems but there are a lot of positive things about us.

Family is very important to many Nation citizens. Jeanne Crowchild, Company manager, reflects on the important roles of family members in the community.

As a woman and a mother, I tell my daughter to remember who she is and that she will have to work harder than her brother will but she can do it. I have role models who are women, like my mother. They are very strong, independent people. My father and my grandfather are my role models and give me another way of looking at things. If I'm unsure of one person's advice I'll go to another person for advice. I'll think about both perspectives and then I act based on a

combination of the advice.

Elder Helen Maguiness shares her thoughts on the importance of land to Nation elders and to the community.

> *The community asks us to go to them and sometimes we don't like what they are doing. We are very scared for our land. The land is very sacred to us. We don't want to even let go of five acres. I don't even know how big five acres is, but we are very stingy. There are a lot of young people that will be eighteen, or nineteen and when they want to get married, they have to build a house. We think that we are running out of land and it is getting crowded. We are thinking of the future for our grandchildren and their children. We want them to always have the land. If they sell it, our land will be gone and the money will be gone. We have got nothing. So we try to tell our young people that. Don't let the money fool you, because we don't have much land. We got pretty country here. There is snow on the mountains in the winter too and it is pretty.*

With the scarce land, some Nation members are unable to obtain housing on reserve. They are effectively cut off from their community while hoping that one day there will be room for them. The question arises as to how the Nation can address this issue to the benefit of all involved.

Hal Eagletail, talks further about the land, its protection and the Nation's sustainable development philosophy. Tourism is another Nation focus.

> *We tell people that we're open for business and we mean it. With regards to our business park, we're only open for business up to the quarter mile line. We're inviting people into our territory into the business park, but not to go west.*
>
> *Our tourism project is another good example of how we restrict access to our territory. Access is very controlled. Bus tours only go to designated locations and they're always accompanied by a tour guide who is a Nation member. Public access to our businesses is carefully monitored.*
>
> *The bottom line philosophy is we're going to take advantage of what's available to us for economic development but we're going to preserve about 98% of the reserve for the community for the members to enjoy as they choose, without interference from the outside. This philosophy is very key to our members being comfortable with what we're doing.*

7.12. Women's Contributions

Women are acknowledged as a strength in the community. They offer strong support, leadership in the family and community as well as guidance for the young people. With this important resource comes advice from women who are in positions of authority. It is like many communities in supporting a dominant male perspective.

Delphine Pipestem, the director of the Adult Learning Centre, is currently a graduate student in the Environmental Design program at the University of Calgary. Her first degree is in political studies and management. She states,

> *Women are our biggest strength in the community. Although there are no women on council now, there have been in the past. The majority of management positions are held by women and it is the women who recognize the need for more formal training and are going to school to further their education as indicated in the post secondary and upgrading statistics. They are willing to enhance their skills and take on the challenge. I feel this is due to the inherent strength of native women, they hold the community together because they hold the family together. They value the community as they value their family. There are a lot of social problems in our community and it is the women who have the strength and the courage to bring these issues to light. The healing of our community is slowly being integrated into the overall community development process and it is usually the women who are most involved in the healing process.*

The programs that Delphine feels were started by and best demonstrate the strength of Tsuu T'ina women include a wellness program, a program to deal with child apprehension and counselling skill training program for educators. In particular, the wellness program came out of a desire by a group of women to address community social problems, including the drug use and high suicide rates among their young people. Another group of women spear-headed the Early Prevention Program in order to work with families and avoid child apprehension. Finally, all education staff received counselling training to help children in Nation schools.

While economic development concentrates on profits and employment, these women focussed on the healing that is necessary for a successful journey to self-reliance and self-sufficiency. These programs help members feel good about themselves and completes the circle.

Other band citizens confirm the strength of women in Tsuu T'ina society. Hal Eagletail notes,

> *I believe women are the secret to the healing of every First Nation. If women were to create a society amongst themselves that would address the concerns of economic development or cultural preservation there would be unbelievable power to effect change.*
>
> *I believe in our culture the women's role has always been important. The way I was taught is that woman was given the opportunity to bring life into the world, and man was given the opportunity to make song with the drum. The song reflects all human emotions whether it be happiness, sadness, jealousy or frightfulness.*
>
> *There are many critical areas in living where the woman and the man maintain a balance of input into decisions which our leaders must remember. Women are strong and tend to operate most community wellness programs but it is important that there be balance and that men become more involved in our community's health.*

Carol Gottfriedson, band administrator, recalls the advice her father gave her when she assumed her position in the band office.

> *It's hard to be accepted in different positions as a woman, and so I went to my father. He told me to be very careful in making decisions. The young people are capable of looking after themselves and remember any decisions will affect the little ones. Make sure that they can carry out your decisions and that they do not hinder the little ones in any way.*

7.13. Summary and Commentary

Tsuu T'ina Nation's story of success is of a community that has chosen to follow its own path as noted in the first premise and examined in the second research objective regarding a community's blend of approaches to economic development. Community elders counsel that 'self-government' is a term not to be used by the community, since the meaning of the term is very different for the Nation compared to the meaning used by the government. This has meant that Tsuu T'ina Nation has asked its leaders to achieve a vision that is their own. It allows Nation members a chance to be part of the community's future through education and employment opportunities. While it has not been a path without obstacles, it has not been dictated to the Nation

by outsiders, and its lessons have been taken to heart by its leaders, in keeping with the fifth premise of a connection between a community's leadership and successful economic development.

Land is sacred and is protected for Nation members and new families. Everyone has an important role in contributing to the health of the community. Like many communities, Tsuu T'ina Nation faces challenges of dysfunction, addiction, poverty and low skill levels. Education takes place in the community for youth and adults wanting to upgrade their skills. Apprenticeship opportunities provide young Nation members with experience and promotes a vision for their future in the community which is recognized in the fourth premise focussing on building capacity.

A local treatment facility helps Nation members deal with health issues. Women's voices are strong and help promote healing through successful community healing initiatives. All of these initiatives demonstrate a vibrant community with a vision of sustainability for the community. Business ideas are carefully scrutinized along profitability criteria but also in terms of employment possibilities and the impact on the environment. Community input, including elders, is critical in making final investment decisions, as noted in the second and third premises. The third research objective is addressed by elders, leaders and Nation members and examines the role of Aboriginal wisdom in this community.

Tsuu T'ina Nation is living its vision for a healthy, strong community and on its own terms. According to Hal Eagletail, Tsuu T'ina remains a quiet success story for a reason that is in keeping with the first premise. He explains,

> *We are more comfortable with being quiet about our successful developments right now because we don' t want to be held up as an example for other First Nations. Once that happens there is the risk that other communities are not encouraged to follow their own path.*
>
> *Our path is not a guarantee of success for others. Each community must develop their own direction that capitalizes on local opportunities. We share our success with those who come to visit our community rather than put our stories in the media. I am proud of our philosophy of good business since we are trying to balance our cultural distinctness with economic growth.*

8. Winnipeg's Aboriginal Community: Coming Together

With an estimated 50-70% of the Aboriginal community residing in villages, towns and cities throughout the country, important questions arise. How can a population with a shared heritage develop with strength? How can Aboriginal peoples meet the same dreams for self-sufficiency as their brothers and sisters on reserve or in settlements? Can the challenges of poor education, poverty, and lack of opportunity be overcome in a large, anonymous city?

The power of economic development in an urban setting is only part of the solution. Many services support the urban Aboriginal population including community and government-sponsored organizations in social services, employment and education. Winnipeg had the largest urban Aboriginal population of all major Canadian cities in 1991 and 1996. It is a reasonable place to examine these issues facing urban Aboriginal communities across the country.

In Winnipeg, there are many Aboriginal organizations that were established to meet the needs of the Aboriginal community in adapting to urban life. According to the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, in a 1998 internal report on Population & Labour Force Dynamics, Aboriginal peoples are expected to make up15% of the provincial population by 2001 and 10.4 % of city of Winnipeg (or 73, 800). Unemployment is three times that of the rate for the general population or 21%. Of that the Aboriginal youth unemployment for those 15-24 years of age, is twice the rate of all city youth or 28.9%. While over half of Aboriginal women participated in the workforce in 1991, at 18% unemployment rates for this segment remain at twice the overall female rate. Aboriginal adults are projected to represent 9-10% of the Winnipeg labour force in 2001.

These projections point to large challenges and opportunities facing the country. Aboriginal peoples will impact the country as their potential is developed, but will cost the country money if social and economic issues are not dealt with effectively. What approaches are being taken by the

Aboriginal community in Winnipeg as they move to make positive differences?[1] Who are some of the leaders and what strategies are being used? But, first of all, what is the vision of and for the community?

The Winnipeg scene is vibrant and unique and many people have contributed to this. Among them is economist, John Loxley (1994, 2000), whose work suggests what is successful and strategies for building on its strengths. The province worked with the Aboriginal community and developed the Urban Aboriginal Strategy. George Campbell, chair of the sub-committee coordinating the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, and Brett Eckstein, senior analyst for Manitoba's Environmental Development unit, share some insights into an interesting process. The Aboriginal Centre was conceived of by the directors of a number of non-profit Aboriginal organizations, who brought people and Aboriginal organizations to a single location in an inner city district with a high Aboriginal population. Wayne Helgason, executive director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, and Bill Shead, former director of the Aboriginal Centre, share their project startup memories and its current status. Part of the vision for the centre was an Aboriginal business centre. Sean Kocsis, executive director of the Aboriginal Business Development Centre, and Len Flett, director of the Aboriginal Business Centre, are integral to the success of the Aboriginal Business Development Centre and share their insights.

The political element is less clear regarding urban-based Aboriginal peoples. Historically, status Indians, living off reserve, have had their legal ties to benefits broken. In that vacuum, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg (ACW) was formed to meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. Over time government policy has become less clear and program dollars may be available to Manitoba Métis Federation and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs as their communities move to accept responsibility for the needs of all their members, no matter where they reside. This

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There are a number of significant local and provincial groups that are making a difference. Only a few were selected for this study in order to set the context for some significant projects. There are a number including the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business who are doing significant work in this area but are not included due to resource and time constraints.

puts three organizations in direct competition for these dollars and their urban-based constituency. Conflict is inevitable and evident. Mary Richard, former president of ACW, Sean Koscis, current director of ACW and George Munroe, ACW board member, comment on the Aboriginal Council.

The youth are an important part of the process and their organization of Aboriginal Youth With Initiative, Inc. (AYWI) is described by Lawrence Angeconeb, Heather Milton and Clay Thomas Müeller, AYWI staff. AYWI have plans for more active youth in the decision-making process and making a real difference through needed projects. They have a unique structure and interesting projects on the go.

Understanding diversity and how to make room for everyone's vision is important in comprehending Winnipeg's experience. It is dynamic, energetic, and with the usual discussion about the best way to accomplish goals. The projects and programs will be examined in the following sections. They give the reader some sense of the breadth of experience that is Winnipeg's Aboriginal scene.

8.1. The People Speak: Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The federal and provincial governments are redefining their obligations to Aboriginal peoples as the urbanization trend continues. The costs of services to Aboriginal peoples are steep as each tries to determine a "fair" distribution of this obligation. However, effective policy does not stop at the obvious jurisdictional questions between governments but instead moves beyond and asks how these needs can be met effectively and creatively, with room for all those people who want to contribute to solutions.

The Manitoba Roundtable for the Environment and the Economy, made up of individuals from the community and government, was established by the premier of the day (1989-1999) to review all sustainable development policies. According to Brett Eckstein, senior analyst for the Sustainable Development unit, the roundtable process has some advantages that make it attractive and has been studied by other jurisdictions including the Clinton administration in the United

States. Individuals sit as individuals and not as representatives of their organizations. This allows for more freedom of discussion since individuals are not binding their organizations with their comments and can thoroughly canvas ideas under discussion.

Brett (personal communication, 1997) notes some of the unique features:

> *It is at arm's length from the government but as much as the round table is a creation of government and has seven cabinet members on it, the discussions are amazing, in an open and relaxed atmosphere. The Premier openly disagrees with cabinet ministers and members of the round table. Cabinet ministers and members of the round table disagree with the Premier. It is a real healthy atmosphere for discussing larger issues. There is a lot of consensus among participants who represent diverse groups such as labour, business, environment, Aboriginal peoples and consumers.*
>
> *There is a close working relationship with government with cabinet ministers being part of the consensus process. Understanding and support may build for an otherwise challenged document. The prior discussion helps in improving support that might not be generated if the government is left out of the consultation process. The grass roots consultation has to occur at the same time. This holistic approach makes the round table process a test bed for new policy issues and promotes a process which is not bogged down in political baggage. Round table and grass roots issues that are discussed in this think tank become familiar with cabinet members who have increased sensitivity and thus there are benefits for all parties involved.*

An Aboriginal advisory committee was struck in 1996 as part of the roundtable strategy to develop a strategy for Aboriginal peoples. George Campbell was named chair of the committee, and brought to bear a wealth of knowledge and experience of his Aboriginal community. He suggested that the roundtable examine Aboriginal issues that affect the sustainability of the community. While the issues may be relevant to other parts of the province, a decision was taken to restrict the strategy to Winnipeg.

George noticed an unchanging disparity between Aboriginal peoples who were employed and had decent housing and those who suffered in poverty. George (personal communication, 1998) recalls:

I was very concerned with what was negative. It is our people that come to Winnipeg to find their place and try to start a new life. They found difficulty in their home communities and didn't fit into this society in Winnipeg. Seeing our people fall by the wayside made it impossible to ignore. I suggested we review what was going on and what things might or could be changed that would benefit our people. A committee was formed to develop an urban Aboriginal strategy with a group of Aboriginal members to act as an advisory council.

I think this council was important as was our forums with grassroots people. Youth were targeted since they are the future of our community. We held workshops in the area where our Aboriginal peoples live. We had six workshops with well over 1000 people attending. Great work resulted from these workshops by the participants themselves. Mostly Aboriginal peoples attended with a good representation of non-Aboriginal peoples too. We have to work together and our final report picks up the essence of what the grassroots people were telling us. There is nothing new or startling but it is a comprehensive strategy that brings the report findings of education, housing, safety, economic development into focus.

While the federal and provincial governments decide who must meet the needs of the urban Aboriginal community, the Manitoba provincial government acknowledges the need to go beyond current ineffective institutional processes and reexamine delivery of services. Development of the urban Aboriginal strategy through the roundtable process is an opportunity to not only build capacity and move forward with a broad base of discussion and input, according to Wayne Helgason, executive director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg, but it speaks to building a strong, sustainable community.

Wayne (personal communication, 1997) notes:

Aboriginal peoples want a pleasurable lifestyle like everyone and the freedom to be Aboriginal in the way they want including practising cultural beliefs and associating with who they want and in the manner they want. I don't think it means being absorbed into the mainstream society but I think it means being involved and setting their own definitions and boundaries on their terms.

8.2. Building an Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The process of building an urban Aboriginal strategy remained apolitical while jurisdictional issues remained unresolved. Support for the initiative was garnered from various departments in the provincial government as well from the city of Winnipeg and the federal government. Statistics formed the basis of the early discussions. The focus was on trying to understand what these

statistics meant to the community.

Brett Eckstein remembers:

> *We didn't want to start with issues so we looked at some of the statistics as the basis for our discussion paper. It was hard putting some statistics down on paper. For example, six out of ten non-Aboriginal peoples own homes. Only two out ten Aboriginal peoples own homes. What does that mean when you realize 43% of Aboriginal peoples live in the core area. Where do the others live? They are living in the suburbs that are supposed to be more affluent but there are affluent people living in the core area too. So what does that tell?*
>
> *The statistics around single parents indicate that primarily single mothers tend to live in the core area. That is where people say the problems are. You must remember housing is cheaper in the core area so that is why you would tend to live there. It makes sense because if you look at immigration of other groups. Where do people go when they move to the city of Winnipeg? Generally into the core areas or cheaper housing if they were poor.*
>
> *My grandmother moved to Winnipeg as a single mother and found a room in an attic in the core area. You know it was cheap. I think that little has changed and some reasons underlying the statistics are no different than for other people.*

A series of workshops were held where grassroots people joined other participants in discussions in a process that built commitment to the results through involvement. The large group of 200 or 300 people were divided into groups around the issues. They worked together to develop a presentation to the plenary session. Dinner was shared and then presentations made at the end of the evening. Their feedback formed the basis of a draft report that was discussed at the next workshop. George enjoyed seeing the youth step in as facilitators in various discussion groups. Comments and feedback were collected and a final strategy recommended. Brett compiled the information in the draft report. He comments on the process:

> *We did very well. We spent $40,000 which is very reasonable for the amount of people who participated. We had over 1000 people attend six meetings. We tried to create categories for issues that roughly followed the categories for sustainable development. It formed an holistic framework for completing draft documents.*
>
> *The government policy people wanted something that could be implemented so while there was focus on getting feedback on the drafts there was also focus on an action plan. Objectives were identified for each target. We looked*

for a time frame with benchmarks for where we are today that could help us in setting reasonable objectives. For example, questions were asked about statistics for single parents in the core area? If that changes, do we solve all of the problems?

There are problems in the suburbs that are very similar to what goes on in the core but they really are not concentrated or you see them and you don't hear about them. How do they fit in?

Implementation of the plan had to be discussed including who had responsibility as well as details about monitoring, evaluation and reporting. What is the mechanism for actually getting this stuff done? This was important because I would say that the number one problem is cynicism when dealing with government, in the Aboriginal community. They have been consulted and consulted and nothing changes.

The Aboriginal Advisory Council was integral to this process. The members were involved from the beginning and were called on whenever possible to provide guidance to the roundtable sub-committee. The main goal was to get the process moving forward and maintain the momentum once the final report was published. It is a unique process that has not been undertaken in other urban centres.

George Campbell notes some essential factors must be in place to make this process successful:

Well I think first of all, the community, in this case the Aboriginal community, had to want to participate in something like this. That is why we had to do a lot of work to introduce the idea up front. People had to understand what was going to happen in the process. Once we got the message out in various ways people showed up because they were interested in being a part of this unique idea of participating in developing strategy.

This strategy is their own. They can claim ownership of it. Government authorities allowed this to be an apolitical process. It was great to be able to publish a document that was really from the grassroots speaking to those in authority. I think that we were successful in accomplishing our objectives. We kept it status blind so that we wanted to hear from anyone who is Aboriginal. We didn't break our discussion groups into groups according to status – First Nations, Métis and Inuit. That was a plus.

The implementation of the final recommendations focuses on the responsibility of all

groups in society including individuals, families, communities, corporations and the various levels of government. It will not succeed otherwise. This consultation will be one of the most successful roundtable consultations, in Brett's opinion. A policy application document was released on July 7, 1999. A memorandum of understanding was signed by the provincial and federal governments.

Some expected that the community would whine about their problems and demand money be committed for more programs. This did not happen. It became obvious that there are gaps in services that require an investment but the overwhelming feeling was that the participants wanted to be part of the strategy and make a difference. They want to be treated as equals with something of value to say. They are living the problems and the solutions are important to them. The connection to the grassroots is critical and the need to bring partners to the table in order to make significant change is essential according to George.

These final recommendations follow along with conclusions reached in other studies, for example, the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Focus on environmental concerns are woven throughout the recommendations that focus on poverty, low education, housing, safety issues, employment and economic development. The difference with this work is that the grassroots can buy into a strategy that they helped form and the Sustainable Development unit, through Brett's work, informs those in senior levels of government about the urban Aboriginal strategy. The unit has some freedom that allows creativity and effectiveness to thrive in their work.

While the Aboriginal Advisory Council disbanded upon completion of the final report, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg has agreed to help monitor the progress of implementation. Other organizations will also see that the recommendations are properly executed. This partnership will continue, thus ensuring the effectiveness of the process.

The urban Aboriginal strategy workshops were held at the Aboriginal Centre, in the heart of the North end. This district is home to many Aboriginal peoples and the Centre is one of the projects that is helping to build a cohesive Aboriginal community in an urban setting. The next

section will outline the history and current status of the Aboriginal Centre project.

8.3. Gathering Community: Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg

In the seventies, Aboriginal community leaders conceived of a plan that would bring services for Aboriginal peoples together in the Neeginan (Our Place) project. It took until the late eighties to take the project from a dream to reality. In 1988, directors of several large non-profit organizations providing services to Winnipeg's Aboriginal population, began talking about ways to replace the high rental costs with more reasonable lease expenses in their own building. It made sense, and a study suggested they could purchase an existing building or build a new one. Canadian Pacific Railroad had a CP station for sale in a central location.

The historical significance of the CP building reached beyond the Aboriginal community to new Canadians and to those with an appreciation for fine architecture. Bill Shead, former chief executive officer, (personal communication, 1998) notes:

> *It has enormous historical importance to Manitobans because it is the site where many immigrants came by rail through the CP railway station. Many soldiers, sailors and airmen left from this railway station to go over seas in World War One, World War Two and the Korean War. There were others who simply got the train to Winnipeg beach or took it across country. There are a lot of memories within the building.*
>
> *From an architectural standpoint, it has real importance as it is one of the few architectural examples of the Maxwell brothers work in Winnipeg and perhaps in all of Canada. There is a need to preserve the architectural heritage of the site and it was designated a heritage site.*

Wayne Helgason was the director of Mamawi Wichi Itata Centre Inc., a family social service agency, at that time and involved in early discussions. He reminisces about the process:

> *We had to be seen to be more than deliverers of service. We had to articulate a vision and work towards a vision of having much greater impact with the little resources that we had. As Aboriginal peoples, we look to the ways we support each other, where we purchase, where we go, and how we create enterprise. Spending money on rent is one of the ways we can work together. I contacted other major Native social organizations and asked them how much they spent on rent. It didn't take long to determine that we were paying a lot in rent*

without long-term return.

Our services would be improved if we were better linked. We were sending people from Mamawi to other organizations for employment and training. Maybe we had an obligation to locate our services together which would help our clientele save on bus tickets. We secured funding and hired a consultant to complete a social and situational analysis of the CP building.

The project's scale was overwhelming. It was a big building needing lots of work but the analysis concluded the building was structurally sound and the mechanical system was old but sound. The impact analysis concluded that in terms of the community, it was important to work together in one place. Health and well-being were priorities followed by training and employment. We tried to assess whether or not to go ahead.

We hadn't done any fundraising and no government wanted us to do this. The provincial minister of Native Services, thought it was a good idea. There was no talk, however, of support from the infrastructure program used by other cultural groups to secure community centres. We decided to go ahead and purchased the building for $1.1 million.

We went to five Aboriginal organizations and asked their boards to pass a resolution to be in the hook for $10,000 each. We made the offer to purchase with funds from those resolutions and from the city and the federal department of National Historic Sites and Monuments. We had enough to purchase the building and operate it for several months at a cost of $8,000 per month for heat and electricity.

Discussions arose in the community about the project including the long-term viability and risk associated with investing in a large building versus directing efforts to funding other projects and programs on a smaller scale. In any event, the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg, Inc.(ACWI) was incorporated in 1990 as a non-profit organization and the historic CP building was purchased in December, 1992. A board of directors was elected and restoration work was begun. ACWI members, who applied and met the criteria of being an Aboriginal organization, purchased shares and then incorporated ACWI Heritage Corp. It is a registered charity that facilitates the fund-raising activities of supporters for additional restoration and to operate a large rotunda area suitable for public events. The decision to renovate an existing building is in direct support of sustainable development initiatives that reuse and recycle available resources.

Bill stepped into his position and saw his mandate was to accomplish three goals. He had to manage risk one step at a time. His first priority was the physical building. Hiring a building maintenance engineer set things in motion. His second priority was to develop a business plan and an architectural development plan in order to secure funding. Finally, the administration of the project was secured by setting up office in the Aboriginal Centre. Bill's case study (1997) of the Aboriginal Centre provides more insight into the purchase and refurbishing of this project.

A major retro-fit of the building was required but they did not have the funds. Wayne recalls their strategy to make leasing space available:

> *There is a little program available through Unemployment Insurance where people work, do not get paid but they maintain their benefits. The sponsor gets $100 per week to get hammers and nails. We took 60 Aboriginal men and women into this program. We got them to tear down walls and clean up. We saved over a million dollars. Then funding was secured to upgrade the building to meet fire regulations.*

> *One of our stipulations to the contractors who were bidding, was that 70% of their workforce had to be Aboriginal peoples. They said that they couldn't meet that requirement. We insisted that they consider the 60 people who had demonstrated some capacity in the previous project. When this upgrading project was finished, we came in under budget and had an average of 90% Aboriginal employment.*

In looking back on this project, it provided Aboriginal organizations with the opportunity to work together beyond their programs, which the system does not encourage. Wayne notes that they had to operate from a place of equivalency, where differences didn't matter. He remembers that they avoided talk of division, like seniority issues, but rather they tried to cooperate.

Wayne shares thoughts for others trying to undertake projects involving major cooperation.

> *It is hard to give advice because in many ways it is timing. The resources came together and we didn't compromise. The cycle will come back around and if not now then it will be a good project later on.*

> *The vision was for inclusivity. Stick to that or you will start to die or at least sink. We had a funder who wanted to give funds for only one group in*

opposition to our philosophy. It was hard because we need the funds but we did not compromise. We all had a vision for a good future and that helped us to stay on track.

We considered the political ramifications of the project. We didn't ask permission of the non-Aboriginal government so we didn't ask permission of the quasi-Aboriginal government groups. We informed them. We kept them online. We always invited their participation. I met with the leaders who were informed but not active. We tried to focus on the business aspects too. It makes sense to pay a reasonable rent and be accessible to your clients. There is a sustaining benefit that goes to the organization that is not there if they are just paying rent. We encouraged having more responsibility and control over the property.

The support for projects can come many ways. Sometimes I would rather have someone's commitment than somebody's money. We have shown that the fears that many bureaucrats have need not come true. I was told that one politician received advice when first approached by the group was that here was another Indian group with a big idea when half of them run off with the money or half of them won't perform or they don't have the experience. We have the experience and we know better.

This lack of support persists today. I am told by some senior officials who are non-Aboriginal and who really believe that now we can do things, that people are nice to your face or they want to argue with you but they won't. I like the people who will challenge us because those are the ones who will ultimately make you stronger anyway. It's the ones who don't seem to have an opinion except in other circles such as those cocktail parties where we're kind of laughed at. We have to stay strong.

The most gratifying thing was to see the people who came with substance abuse problems or who are working off fines under the fine option program and they have become so committed to the project that it restores their lives. I see them doing anything they need do to make it work. It is gratifying because I don't know where they would be without this project. There lives are so much more productive.

Be persistent. Be clear in vision, simple and inclusive. Be specific about your expectations and be prepared to answer questions. There is a certain distinction where we have to do things our way and know the rules of how to play the game. Hold onto your priorities but know how to accommodate the people you need.

The Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg provides focus for the community, and many of the

original organizers provide consistent leadership of the project facilitating project viability and success. There are still many organizations who operate from locations throughout the city. They are integrated into the community. The Centre provides an alternative that is also welcomed. The variety of services located at the Centre range from employment and training, family services, and language preservation to artists' workspace, communication services and women's advocacy. This project meets the objective of locating key services at the convenience of clients. The project is financially successful although there is still controversy around the suitability of focusing so many resources on real estate rather than the major concern of programs. Dissenting voices provide the opportunity for the underlying rationale to be revisited and improvements made if necessary. Loxley (2000) does have concerns that centralization of services, especially while relying substantially on public monies results in higher risk than is necessary for a project such as this. Care must be taken to further strengthen the financial viability of the Aboriginal Centre.

Bill notes,

> *The impact of this project has been far-reaching in the Aboriginal community. A significant piece of property is now owned by Aboriginal organizations. There are extensive opportunities for education and training in the Aboriginal Centre. Employment opportunities, business support services are available as well as government, administrative and business services in a convenient location.*

The only political group located at the Centre is the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg. This group is the subject of the next section as an organization specifically targeting urban Aboriginal residents.

8.4. Political Representation: Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg

The Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg (ACW) was formed in 1990 by the amalgamation of two organizations that served the needs of urban-based Aboriginal peoples. One was the Urban Indian Association and the other was the Winnipeg Council of Treaty and Status Indians. The rationale was that an urban-based organization would be most effective in supporting the rights of Aboriginal peoples who live in the city of Winnipeg. Artificial legal distinctions bind the activities of many Aboriginal organizations that focus on only one group - ie First Nations or Métis. ACW

tries to bridge distinctions byfocussing on the Aboriginal heritage of their members and not specific group membership.

Up to that point, negotiations of any significance involved the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Métis Federation and the provincial or federal government. There was no mechanism for putting forward the concerns of urban Aboriginal peoples. ACW stepped in to meet this need. Mary Richard, president, (personal communication, 1997) notes:

> *We would not allow government to divide us. We were Aboriginal tax payers and we had to be given recognition for our own. If I walked down the street who cared if I had a number or not. I was an Indian and we were all in the same boat. It does not take a lot of money as we only get $44,000 per year from the province.*

In the mid-nineties, self-government talks were underway but again without any significant input from the urban population. Mary's focus shifted to making sure that urban needs were voiced in the proper forums. She met with the leadership in Aboriginal organizations and in organizations who serve an Aboriginal clientele in order to educate them about the need to participate in the process of self-government. Mary recalls:

> *I told them that the Federal Government had a policy on self government and that if we did not get involved that the policy would be implemented and without any input from us. We called a meeting of all these groups and met with over 100 people and discussed priorities for Winnipeg self-government.*

At the same time, ACW was developing a network of supporters with City Council and the province of Manitoba. AMC and MMF declined to be involved since ACW did not represent every Aboriginal person in Winnipeg although MMF did attend the prioritization session. This is an indication of the tension that exists between the organizations as AMC and MMF determine how they might best represent their urban-based members.

Mary demonstrates her leadership philosophy in facing this criticism and in the way she works to accomplish the goals of ACW:

I just don't pay attention to those kind of things. I keep going.

When the people say we want to do something then ACW does it. I don't care if there are five or ten people. If I deal with five people, then they know five more people and the circle gets bigger and soon there are 50 people.

My background is community development so we work to make people aware of the situation by planning with them. We strategize with them, provide training and help them carry out their plans.

The goals of ACW focus on issues that affect urban-based Aboriginal peoples. ACW acts as a forum for discussion of all issues and promotes the development of new and positive directions. It is concerned with culture, interests, lives and identity of Winnipeg's Aboriginal peoples. Racism and prejudice are targets of education programs within the context of promoting harmonious race relations with all Winnipeggers. Many Aboriginal peoples face the same problems in the city. They have no land base, they are scattered throughout the city with some concentration in the inner city and many of their children have little or no connection to their family's home community.

The leadership of any organization impacts on the way the organization accomplishes its goals. ACW is no exception. Mary Richard and George Munroe, vice-president, have philosophies which have a significant influence on ACW's success in meeting these goals. These philosophies will be noted where appropriate. Particular projects are prioritized by the Board with membership input in order to accomplish ACW's goals. For ACW, these projects include the signing off a Memorandum of Agreement with three levels of government; nurturing initiatives; the Neeginan project; and support of the youth.

With the poor representation of urban Aboriginal peoples that was previously mentioned, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was a priority. As George (personal communication, 1998) notes, it affects ACW's legal position but the usual negotiation process is slow to change as contemplated in the MOU.

We recently signed a tripartite agreement with the federal, provincial and municipal government. that gives us a little more authority to be able to speak to the different levels of government. The agreement gives us access to the federal and provincial governments who we did not have access to before, in a legal sense. Before they tolerated us but now they have signed an agreement so they have to deal with us. They were not willing to deal with us up until a few months ago. It is taking to time to change.

It is a unique agreement that has the potential to give a voice to urban concerns when federal or provincial organizations and departments come together. ACW's standing is formalized and it is hoped that the Aboriginal peoples of Winnipeg will benefit.

In addition to the MOU, a number of projects have their genesis in the work of the ACW, and/or receive support from ACW. Mary notes that the organization is not interested in controlling anyone since their job is to help people to think for themselves. They do not take anything away from the people they work with because it is important to have the opportunity to do things within their own group. ACW steps out of their way so they can take over. This is a significant philosophy for encouraging capacity building and a sustainable approach for building a strong community.

ACW is a political organization and a special interest group. It does not provide services to its members. Instead, one strategy it follows is that it brokers its political clout to the benefit of projects that help urban Aboriginal peoples. In a role akin to the United Way, ACW encourages groups to remain autonomous while associating with ACW's fundraising expertise. This allows a group of projects to find greater likelihood of success in pursuing funding due to ACW's political expertise. These groups include health issues, legal initiatives and youth empowerment.

According to Mary, the youth are actively involved. "We don't allow Aboriginal Council, MMF and AMC politics to get in the way of our youth. I just step out of the way and they can negotiate better than I can." Besides knowing when to let go, George identifies other successful strategies:

We have been able to talk with the three levels of government without dividing our community nor categorizing the problem into a federal or a provincial concern. We speak to the government about problems that face all Aboriginal peoples including poor housing, unemployment, gaming, poverty and many others. We face them together as a community rather than get into different jurisdictional issues.

By and large, we have been successful. One of the things I like about the council is that whether the government or anybody else approves of what we are doing, the authority comes from our constituent members who gather together at different times of the year and tell us to go ahead. We started with having a good relationship with the grassroots which is the basis for everything that we have done.

It is also important to have the non Aboriginal community working with you and working behind you. We have been very successful in making inroads with the Chamber of Commerce, city council and the chief of police. We meet with different ethnic communities in the city.

The organizational structure has nine elected members and an elder. The president and vice-president work full-time for ACW (augmented by consulting work) and then each member holds a portfolio ranging from women's issues, business development and justice to children, employment and the penitentiaries. Terms range from one, two and three years. Community consultation is the backbone of ACW's approach.

When an issue arises, advice is sought from the community and implemented by ACW. George recounts:

We had an issue with an elder who was abusing his authority. He was alleged to have sexually abused some young girls at a youth centre and charges were laid against him. We called a meeting with the elders and said, Look, how do we prevent stuff like this from happening? It reflects on us as a community. So they suggested that we set up a council of elders that will deal with any issues having to deal with elders.

They will deal with their peers rather than having outside people dealing with the issue. So we set up a council of 14 elders from different parts of the community in Manitoba. Whenever issues come up that have to deal with tradition, culture, or history such as abuse of power and authority of elders, then the Elders council deals with it.

Consensus building is an important part of determining a direction for ACW that will benefit the community. Issues are introduced at a meeting then members, who are Aboriginal and living in the city of Winnipeg, break up into smaller groups and discuss it. Everyone voices their opinion then the group opinion is identified and shared with the gathering.

George notes:

> *We know it is impossible to make everyone happy. We don't vote and try to get 51% because we are never going to get it anyway. We take the consensus from each group and generally there is an agreement that this feels right for the community to be going in a particular direction. We have had tremendous success in using that approach.*

Every member's contribution is important especially the women and youth. Women are significant in supporting organizations and in helping make them successful, and ACW is no exception. From contributions through board work to office administration, their work is appreciated. ACW deals with issues of poverty, unemployment and lack of training that have dogged Aboriginal peoples but today these issues have changed in intensity. The gang issue was not contemplated 25 years ago. The groundwork for these criminal activities come from the community's dysfunction. George says that people do not realize the kind of struggle that he and others are involved in across the country in rural and urban settings. One question that has arisen is the need to focus on being more representative of the urban Aboriginal population by focussing on building a stronger member base and enhancing the organization's credibility.

According to George, it was twenty-five years ago that he and other community members recognized the dysfunction and saw the division in the community. In order to deal with it, the Neeginan project was born. The project timing and funding has not been workable until today. ACW has picked it up so many years later in order to reinterpret it and make it a reality. George recalls the original premise:

> *In order for us to deal effectively with all the social and economic problems facing our community, we decided that we were going to come up with more comprehensive plans. Neeginan was born. We included housing, economic development issues, social services, education, and training and employment. We have to put it together in a way that is going to deal effectively with these problems*

in a major way and that is how Neeginan developed originally. That was what we were looking at 25 years ago.

Today it is still involves total community development. It is housing, economic development, social services, education, and spiritual and cultural development. The anchor is the spiritual and cultural center that we are building right on the corner of Higgins and Main Street. From there, will radiate all the other developments in phases.

The ACW leadership changed in 1999's election. For George and Mary, ACW needs to stay in touch with the community. It is important to help people get their dreams of a program or service to the community off the ground but then step aside so they can carry on. That independence brings the greatest satisfaction. Passion for making change is important. The rate of change will continue and perhaps accelerate as it is expressed in a productive manner. The Aboriginal community's support for ACW will have to move to financial support so that ACW's voice is from a position of strength and not a voice that can be compromised because of reliance on outside funding. ACW must remain inclusive and minimize divisions in the community for whatever reason.

The move to new leadership after the election has not been smooth. While it is outside the scope of this project to examine this period of transition in detail, Sean Kocsis, the new president, looks forward to building on the work of previous administrations. He has proposed a plan for building membership to a point that truly represents Aboriginal peoples in Winnipeg. He wants to build membership and public discourse at ACW meetings.

ACW has a proud history that its members clearly hope continues. The nurturing of young leaders by those who have experience is important in a sustainable approach to building a strong organization and community. It is in keeping with the Aboriginal tradition and ensures strong leadership through new ideas and training while holding onto significant history. Besides the issue of leadership transition, issues arise around the roles AMC, MMF and ACW will play in the lives of urban-based Aboriginal peoples. Resources are scarce, but it may be that the pie is cut up among the three based on membership for AMC and MMF, and location for ACW. ACW meets

the needs of all urban-based Aboriginal peoples regardless of where they come from.

Another part of the dream of a hub of Aboriginal activity in the north end has been the development of a business centre. The Aboriginal Business Development Centre is reviewed in the next section.

8.5. Building Capacity: Aboriginal Business Development Center (ABDC)

8.5.1. Starting point.

The ABDC is located in the Aboriginal Centre. It has a board of directors that includes Sean Kocsis, a lawyer and business consultant, and Len Flett, Vice-President for the North West Company. Len brings significant retail experience in the north, and Sean has worked with many Aboriginal communities in Manitoba. Both bring knowledge and sensitivity of the needs of their own people to the ABDC.

Len (personal conversation, 1998) recalls the early dreams regarding a business development centre.

> *Our vision was to clean up the image of that particular area. Mainly because our own people were involved in it and the image of Winnipeg was the image of you and me. We figured that when we put all of the organizations into one location that the economic impact would start to radiate from that particular center and a lot of other businesses would be attracted there. A hotel and restaurants would want to take advantage of the new economy that was developing there. A ripple was what we were looking for and it is starting to happen. The Aboriginal Centre and the proposed Neeginan development project including the roundhouse and other business projects make it very timely to have an Aboriginal business center.*
>
> *The target for the business center is new entrepreneurs with the business center itself coordinating and providing information. The ABDC will be a place where business people can go and get information and assistance with business plans and advice for business loans and so on. We are looking at in incubator system so new businesses can locate right in the office. The biggest issue will likely be breaking into mainstream markets so opportunities for Aboriginal peoples are maximized.*
>
> *The ABDC is a program of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg. We do not*

have the support of any other Aboriginal political organization since they have different mandates and different constituencies. That has never been a problem because overall we do have public support. The migration of people from the northern reserves is not going to stop. The reserves can't support the growing population. People are going to migrate from the reserve to the city and back to the reserve again because Winnipeg cannot provide all the jobs and training they are looking for.

The main problem right now is that people are migrating from the reserves with absolutely no preparation for securing jobs or entering into the job market. While people do the best they can with what they have, the ABDC may be able to help young people especially, until these same services are established in the communities.

When the need for someone to head ABDC was not easily met, Sean was invited to step in by the rest of the board and make sure the project was on its feet and running in the black. He agreed to look after the ABDC in early 1999. A proposal had been accepted by Western Diversification Fund, that provides the majority of the operating funds.

In reflecting on his experiences with First Nations communities, Sean (personal communication, 1999) sees a number of challenges that must be overcome. He notes:

We're handicapped to a large extent because we lack capacity-- the skill base. We use a model that is foreign to us– it is like putting a round peg into square hole. The result is that government is not as efficient or as effective as it could be had we had our own models to begin with. We have few role models who are successful.

I worked for an individual who is a successful self-made millionaire. You would probably see very little different if you compared him to a self-made millionaire in mainstream. The bottom line is very important, the work ethic is essential and the results are almost all that matters.

Bottom line driven is fine, but there is a down-side because there is abrasive and aggressive behaviour that sometimes comes with it which doesn't fit well in small communities with high unemployment. I think he has paid a high price personally because his style doesn't fit. He is a generous man so I think that he has given a lot to the community but it is more than he has gotten back.

Sean's other experiences dictate that his approach is to make his own organization run as efficiently and effectively as possible. The mixing of social objectives and business objectives does

not work at ABDC nor at another organization where he is president of the Board of Directors. It is useful to examine his experience at The Andrews Street Family Centre (ASFC) to provide context for some of the approaches taken at ABDC. ASFC's social objectives are partially funded by its successful catering business. The catering business operates abiding by proper business procedures thus maintaining the social/business split. Sean notes that his experience has been very rewarding:

> *I am most proud of the Andrews Street Family Centre. It is a tight, efficiently-run organization that produces measurable results where the community is happy and the funders are ecstatic. We are under review 24 hours a day. We never block or obscure that viewing so the funders come in and see the books at any time. We go through operational and management audits on a regular basis and the ASFC passes with flying colors, time after time.*
>
> *The ASFC board wanted a president who had business experience and board members with specific expertise. It is a very social service oriented organization for the mostly Aboriginal families in the area but they do have to generate income. They had a catering company that is now back on track. It operates efficiently following business guidelines.*
>
> *The board and I allowed an environment to develop where positive things could move forward. No dishonesty, only integrity and the truth among the board and between staff which is key. We encourage risk-taking, without penalty. Positive reinforcement recognition systems have been put in place. Personal evaluation reporting systems, picture board for public acknowledgment of hard-working staff, and staff retreats that is tied to performance. The number of incidents that warrant reward is increasing.*
>
> *When wastage was a problem no one had any reason to point it out. The common attitude was that people are trying their best and that is good enough but when you are in a business then it is not good. Errors have to be pointed out and eventually tolerance for errors has to decrease. That has happened. Wastage has dropped considerably.*

Sean brings his experience and training to bear on the operations at ABDC.

8.5.2. Service delivery

As with any organization reliant on external funding, ABDC looks to meeting the terms of its funding agreement without forgetting its purpose. Its purpose is to facilitate and promote the

development of Aboriginal business. To that end, the business centre does not want to reflect a bureaucratic type atmosphere for clients who come in for assistance. Instead, it is as user-friendly as possible. Aboriginal clients meet with Aboriginal staff. They may consult for as long as it takes including after hours, and if weekends are more convenient then accommodating appointments are made. Clients may live in the city or they may be on-reserve and looking for the type of information available from ABDC. The Centre is also becoming an information source for community events. Requests for information are met when possible.

The staff of four and the 10-13 volunteers meet high standards in their quality of work and their work ethic. Sean notes community volunteers have been invaluable. "Without the volunteers, this organization would not exist literally. It's the volunteers who made this place survive when there was no funding. Volunteers meet our new clients and give them a tour and an introduction to the centre. They also answer phones, do typing, review proposals and advocate on our behalf." Sean dedicates seven days a week to the centre and so is readily available for clients seeking his level of expertise on their first visit. Sean must demonstrate the demand for ABDC's services to his funders and more importantly inspire the confidence of the community.

Start-up occurred in early 1999. By April, ABDC had served 8 clients. In November alone, they saw 109 clients. They have experienced steady growth without an advertising budget. They have relied on word of mouth and poster displays in common areas. Their current rate of business has stretched the capacity of their human resources almost to the limit. A recent staff addition helps ease the load. This record has allowed ABDC some flexibility in reporting on their performance.

Most other mainstream service providers deal with clients who have at least their high school diploma and some idea of business and a good idea of what they want to do in a business. ABDC's clients are in the pre-business phase and are building capacity through their personal assistance . Sean explains:

> *Our client tends to have little or no high school with three or four clients who are totally illiterate. We're starting from behind. If you have a good idea but*

you don't have the wherewithal to read or write then it is very difficult. There are exceptions. One lady, who is illiterate started a janitorial service for cleaning homes and offices. Generally, our client has less education and no knowledge whatsoever of business and tends to come from a background where business role models were missing.

If you are unaccustomed to working 14 - 15 hour days without pay, 7 days a week – the culture shock is often enough to cause the idea to fail. We hand hold, counsel and provide a range of services that cannot be found at any other service provider. It is the pre-business service that you don't find anywhere else. We have to because our client's ideas would fail.

Sean explains his perception of "success":

The government funder's definition of success is numerical. How many numbers of people do we serve? How many businesses were created and how many employees were hired? The trouble with that approach is that they don't look at it in a timeframe.

Another question might be, Are those people we served a year ago still employed? Otherwise it becomes a numbers race with other service providers as opposed to a race for a better quality approach.

Since we are doing well, we have flexibility to create a new measurement. We broaden the definition of success because we also ask, how much time do we actually spend with a person? We could just spend 10 minutes but that won't meet the needs of our clients. We have people who are totally illiterate and no sense of the uphill battle they face. After a lengthy discussion they begin to realize that. Three clients have acknowledged their weaknesses and gone back to school. In many respects, this is a total success because it is capacity building.

Finally, another way to measure success is to track jobs and businesses for one year and see if they are still in business. This tracking system needs staff so we can't use it. It would however, add another dimension to measuring success.

We track the numbers of clients served, businesses started and jobs created and we note the amount of time we spend with a client.

ABDC's success stories include business owners who have expanded their businesses. Others have started businesses that failed but a number of them will start others because of the learning experience. Many learn lessons on the job. Women and youth are comfortable using the

Centre's resources. For those wanting successful and affordable business ideas they can scrutinize a list that cost $500 or less to start.

8.5.3. Community interest.

At this point in the Centre's development, the board membership is being revisited. From Sean's perspective, strong business acumen will make the difference for ABDC's success. It must be driven by its mandate and be held accountable to its members. A strategic planning session will help focus activities. The annual general meeting will be open to any Aboriginal person to maintain a strong grassroots orientation.

The federal government is supportive of the Centre and a strong case has been made for continued funding. Sean comments on the impact of the environment at the Aboriginal Centre:

> *Numbers are fine and funders have been very happy but they don't like the politics. We are in an environment particularly in this building that is very politics-rich. Any program that does well is seen enviously. We are not rich but we work hard to make our area presentable. We set very high standards. Politics have entered into this arena and our funders have heard that and they are concerned. They wonder whether if this program will be able to demonstrate its past record in a politically rich environment.*

This tension is not uncommon between programs, individuals and families in Aboriginal communities. It is often a key factor that subverts effective capacity-building (people leave), consistency in leadership (people leave) and community cohesiveness. How can dissent be handled so that relationships survive the inevitable disagreements?

The original funding agreement asked that ABDC be self-sufficient in three years. This is unrealistic and was asked despite the fact that similar service-providers in the mainstream do not face a similar constraint. If anything, ABDC has a strong position that their clientele deserve a big helping hand and a secure future.

8.5.4. Future.

Sean predicts steady growth for the Centre. He states:

There needs to be an increase in the number of Aboriginal businesses for true economic growth for Aboriginal peoples. ABDC is a necessary service providing education, training, and business advice. Where should we focus? Many people that are coming here are in pre-business. Should we focus on them or should we focus on two or three of the real winners and make sure that they win and they win big? Our resources are stretched and if we try to provide everything to everybody we will fail.

If we do focus, then we cut out a whole section of people who need us. Right now we can serve anyone who comes in the door. These questions will be determined by the board in a strategic planning session. Networking with other organizations is going to be critical. For example, if the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business invites their members to mentor our clients then we will facilitate it. The future need is strong for ABDC. People are excited.

Len agrees. His vision for ABDC sees expansion into financial services. "The whole project will also take root in its community. You are going to see a vibrant Aboriginal business community in that particular part of the city that will be a showcase for the city as a whole." It has set the stage for a viable, effective vehicle for building capacity, new businesses, employment and increasing the flow of capital through the Aboriginal community.

The last group that will be explored is the contribution by the youth to making a strong community.

8.6. Building For the Future:Aboriginal Youth With Initiative, Inc. (AYWI)

Concern over crimes related to gangs of young people was on the rise in 1996. A call for action brought responses from many sectors including the community's young people. A series of forums drew on young people's opinions resulting in a better understanding of their vision for a more productive future. A youth council was one strategy where young people could be involved. AYWI evolved from that year of effort to provide other organizations with the youth perspective as well as develop programs to help youth surmount the obstacles they face, through educating on process, developing capacity and commitment, and bringing a fresh energy and perspective to helping youth.

AYWI's mandate is to network and build strength with the organizations that impact

Aboriginal peoples in the areas of justice, education, policy, and economics. In late 1997, a group of young people were trying to make a difference. Lawrence Angeconeb, the coordinator is 21 years old. He has taken part in several local and national youth groups and has skills in Aboriginal community development. Heather Milton is the assistant coordinator. She has done community work for about three years in Winnipeg and in BC. Clayton Thomas Müeller, 20 years, handles communications and networking in the community. He enjoys creating opportunities for young people.

AYWI is currently sharing office space with the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg. They receive support and advice from ACW. They also participate when a youth perspective is required. They also give input on youth matters to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Manitoba Métis Federation. Lawrence feels that it would have been much harder without ACW's support. In Lawrence's opinion, it would have gotten more discouraging and more frustrating to complete tasks for the young people functioning within AYWI.

Lawrence has been involved with groups where the timing was not right because of external crises, (Oka in 1990), and then lack of funding. Now funding is available because of the attention and priority given to youth issues. Their initial budget was $90,000 with three staff and five volunteers. The start up year is expensive with office computer and supplies eating a large portion of the budget.

The initial priorities are to contact organizations in the areas of policy, justice, economy and education and establish linkages. If a young person has to go to one of these organizations, AYWI wants to assist them in getting the help they need and share resources with the organizations. Heather (personal communication, 1997) describes the positive reception to AYWI:

> *It has been a really good response. Every organization we have talked to is amazed by our youth and what we are doing. Like it's gone over really well. Like it will totally fly.*

8.6.1. Effectiveness.

Identifying the ways that AYWI is productive is important for those who want to build on

AYWI's compelling experience.

➤ *Involving Young People*

It is a challenge to meet young people and engage them. Clayton knows that he has to break a common barrier where young people listen to what everyone is saying and do not contribute. It means educating them on the opportunities they have and giving them options to help them get out of a rut.

He also faces the obstacle of convincing people that young people have a part in what they are coordinating. It is a partnership that must be sold to different generations. This means with organizations and in families. Parents must sign membership forms for children under 16. This gets them involved by introducing them to AYWI.

➤ *Building on Information*

AYWI chose to build on the information collected from the youth in their community. They did not want to create another study on young people.

➤ *Fostering Balance for Men and Women.*

A traditional balance of strength existed in Aboriginal society between men and women. Heather recognizes that much of the work empowering young women has to be with other young women who understand their roles in the community. Roles are not often taught in the family home thus making them difficult to identify. Youth working together educate and empower each other.

Lawrence and Clayton recognize the power of this union. AYWI benefits when women are in leadership positions. Young women see strong role models and are attracted to their

organization.

➤ *Tradition*

The clan structure provides the basis of the structure for the board of directors. There are currently seven board members. Each issue that comes before the board is looked at from an holistic view. Each board member brings the gift of their clan to the discussion or their particular expertise resulting in a comprehensive approach to the issue. In that way, the best decision is arrived at for AYWI.

➤ *The Message to Youth*

Get involved and make a difference. Clayton feels that trying to educate young people on how to become involved in determining their futures is critical. "I would be very choked if I could have played a part in determining my future but didn't (personal communication, 1997)."

Formal education and practical experience is the best blend. Each contributes to a young person's future success.

8.6.2. Message to other youth groups.

Many messages go out to those youth thinking of starting a similar community group. The following thoughts fall out of AWYI's experience. Capacity building occurs with those young people who get involved in their community. AYWI gives their staff the opportunity to meet and work with people in various organizations throughout the community.

Commit your plans to paper but as Clayton suggests, "Don't limit yourself to what is written on paper and what one person thinks you know." Build networks of people who support your work. In getting everyone's opinion and building consensus, work at seeing how it fits together.

Celebrate the gifts of each person who has a part in the organization. Diversity has to be celebrated. Many forces will try to divert you from your goals but the secret is to get back on your path and minimize the diversions.

Lawrence (personal communication, 1997) notes that you can't take anyone or anything for granted because if you do, it may be one of the greatest opportunities you have missed. Become very resilient in your work. Discouragement is always there in anything that you do. Learn how to understand it as a learning process from each mistake. "I have been through seven youth councils and I have seen a lot of young people come and go. The timing is right for AWYI to succeed ."

Don't duplicate services, projects or efforts if possible so get involved in any workshop, process or project that supports your objectives and share resources, encouraging a sustainable approach to making a difference in the community. Encourage your staff and volunteers in ways that let them know their contributions are appreciated. Encourage their participation and take care that communication is open and often. Reaching young people requires a thoughtful style given it is young people talking to young people. Focus on the common ground and not diverse opinions. You can build something useful on the common ground.

No one will hand you things on a silver platter. Clayton urges, "You have go out and grab it, drag it and pull it towards you. Work hard for it. Nothing comes easy in life. You can't sit around all day waiting for opportunities to happen, you have got to go out and create those opportunities. Good things will happen when you work hard." Don't give up.

8.6.3. Future plans.

Lawrence and Heather identify youth employment issues as AYWI's future focus. Lawrence hopes that AYWI will offer employment opportunities. Heather notes that dealing with employment issues will address economic issues that are at the heart of many problems for today's

young people. She notes:

> *The economy is the base for all communities and when our communities historically fall apart. We were all colonized and they took away our system of trading, which was our economy. I look at all of these young people who have all of these brilliant ideas but are not high school educated.*
>
> *I think that it is very important to utilize them because they are so brilliant and they think so broadly and moderately compared to the generation before. I want to hire all of these people and have them do something that makes them feel good about themselves. My own personal goal is to look after my family. It is my responsibility to look after my family before I look after the community. I understand that I look after my personal life then my family, my community, and then my nation.*

Clayton's focus is on developing a network of youth across the country. Take AYWI's structure and then encouraging youth to use it as a model so more people get involved.

Finally, AYWI is striving for financial self-reliance, as part of their self-sustaining goal. It is their dream to generate enough revenues to support their programs shortly after the first year. This might be consultative fees with the business and non-profit sectors or nominal membership fees. Building an organization that becomes self-sustaining, takes time and commitment. Youthful enthusiasm is critical but limited resources may be difficult to access, so the question arises how successfully AYWI will be in facing these challenges over the long-term.

Their parting words are, "We will succeed."

AYWI is supported by young people who are dedicated to making a difference for their peers. They have the advantage of their youth, persistence and their membership in the community that they are trying to serve. AYWI faces the struggle of motivating their volunteers for a sustained period of time and securing financial support. Their network of supporters will be a great asset in those periods when progress seems minimal or even "two giant steps back." Their advice for other youth groups is based on their experience and freely given to the community. AWYI seems to have everything they need to make a difference.

8.7. Summary

Nurturing cohesive, supportive community in an urban setting is a tough proposition and this discussion of an urban community has addressed the second and third research objectives regarding economic development approaches and the role to Aboriginal wisdom. Winnipeg's Aboriginal community is dynamic, visionary and tenacious. The government is involved in driving or supporting efforts. The provincial government secured an urban Aboriginal strategy based on extensive public consultation. The federal and provincial governments are involved in funding the Aboriginal Centre, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, the Aboriginal Business Development Centre and the Aboriginal Youth With Initiative. These dollars have helped take dreams down the path to reality.

Each project and organization meets needs in the Aboriginal community in ways that reflect the experience of the leadership and targeted membership. There is no doubt that many community people in all walks of life support one or more of these groups. Many of the public meetings that might be called in the course of a year are well-attended or overflowing with interested participants, evidence of building strong organizations and community as set out in premises one, three and four. The drive to build a core of activity to spark the community has had mixed results. The Aboriginal Centre houses many organizations but there are many who do not operate from that base. This mirrors the reality of living in an urban center where the Aboriginal community is spread out. Development builds on previous experience as noted in premise one. It is very difficult to meet everyone's needs using a centralized approach when a decentralized approach is more effective. The Aboriginal Centre will be part of the hub of community activity, given its central role in the Neeginan project. The Centre has some controversy associated with it and the high risk it represents, but it is proving its viability each year it remains in operation and profitable.

Boards and executive are filled with individuals with years of experience and years of education. Some are newer to the Winnipeg scene than others. Their effectiveness varies depending on how political motivations color their activities. For those able to bridge experience, differences of opinion and build relationships, the leadership has a positive relationship with

successful development decisions as noted in premise five. The current status of ACW and the future status of ABDC are cases in point. This is not news in Indian country. It is a test for persistence and the strength of convictions that many face at some point in their careers. It will inevitably impact Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. It is the sign of an evolving and healthy community when the normal tensions are handled with sensitivity and creativity.

ACW has a solid record for working with the urban community. The urban community will decide who best represents them, given the competition between AMC, MMF and ACW. It is in leadership transition but it has experience in the previous leadership to draw on to take advantage of all its assets and new leadership with a vision to support, in promotion of the fifth premise. ABDC is building on a strong foundation of service and support of potential entrepreneurs and business owners both on and off-reserve. It is meeting a need that is unique to the Aboriginal community for insightful support to particular needs of new entrepreneurs with less education and previous training, in an effort at capacity building in line with the fourth premise. The wheels are in motion for a successful organization.

The energy of AYWI is not outshone by the promise for youth who take up the invitation to get involved and make a difference. Their efforts support a strong community that is sustainably developing its talent. The staff have personal stakes in the success of their organization and they speak from the heart. They want it to work and they are committed to making it happen. Their voices will be heard.

9. Gwich'in Nation, NWT: Living With the Land

While self-government is a term that means many things across Aboriginal communities, many elders are still alive to reminisce about when it existed in their communities. Johnny Charlie (personal communication, 1995), a Gwich'in elder (now deceased), recalls:

> *Back in the early 40s, it was Native self-government. The chiefs say what you do when you hunt. They say when to stop hunting in the spring, when to start trapping in the fall and they know when the minks are prime. The chief would say, OK you don't set your trap until about the 10th of November. They would say when to pick up your traps and you had to pick them up right away because if you waited one week the chief would find out and be on your back.*

Connection to the traditional ways of living with the land has been passed down from parents to children. It is no different in Gwich'in communities located in the western Arctic in the communities of Fort McPherson, Tsiigehtchick (Arctic Red River), Aklavik and Inuvik.[2] These memories are important and are shared by the elders.

Hannah Alexie (personal communication, 1995) recalls,

> *I was taught all my traditional values of the land. My mom taught me how to make dry meat and do house chores, working with moose skin, caribou skin and all these things. My dad taught me how to hunt and how to set traps. I liked going hunting and trapping with my dad, rather than staying home working with moose skin or sewing.*
>
> *The role of men and women are quite different. Men must be strong in the community for their children's sake, stand up together, go hunting and teach their children how to go trapping and hunting. The women's job is to teach their children how to work with moose skin, caribou skin, making dry meat and how to set a tent up, how to set spruce boughs in the tent, what kind of wood to use, how to set rabbit snares and how to set traps.*

Mary Teya remembers the close support she received from her parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. She spent six years at residential school and she went right back on the land when she returned home. She notes (personal communication, 1995):

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[2]This research focuses on the community of Fort McPherson.

I consider myself very fortunate to have all that. I have good self-esteem because I have both cultures. I am part of both worlds with my life out on the land as an Indian, my culture and my tradition. I also work at the Department of Health for the government. I feel good about what I'm doing.

Living in the modern world has impacted on the community in many ways. The connection to the land has changed but still continues. Trappers do not live on the land extensively. Trapping, fishing and gathering is done on weekends or in the spring for several months. Significance of the land to Gwich'in today, in terms of a sustainable resource for the future through responsible stewardship for a quality environment, is not to be downplayed. Sarah Jerome, a Gwich'in member, explains:

The land is our life. The land is the bank. The land is what we support ourselves on. If you look across Canada and at people in other countries who do not have ownership of their land, who cannot go out and live off the land, they're sort of like ... they're lost (personal communication, 1995).

It is important to understand the connection to the land expressed by their leadership. Joe Charlie, former chief of Fort McPherson, has some formal schooling and he has lived on the land as a hunter/trapper. He is sensitive to the tensions that many of his community face in maintaining a traditional lifestyle and the modern world full of technology and resulting need for healing.

He states:

A lot of our young people are caught in the middle. This is the generation that elders have told to keep your traditional lifestyle.

Yet on the other hand, modern technology is pulling them in that direction too. Many people like to live on the land, but they can do it only for so long then they have to come back into town to have their TVs, have money in their pockets and drive their vehicles. They need to have ways to figure out what they really want in life. Figure out their goals and how to reach them.

We are building a healing lodge to help. This is a perfect example where our people took the initiative to say that our people have a problem. We have to start healing before we can start on our healing path (personal communication, 1995).

The healing lodge is their first major investment after a land claims settlement and is

summarized in the next section.

The challenge for any leadership is to meet the needs of the community today while balancing approaches with the traditional ways of the community. What is the Gwich'in way? How do members balance tradition with the contemporary lifestyle that is part of the modern world? Several members share their insights.

Joe comments:

Well, that's a pretty hard question, a lot of our tradition, we just go by the basics, the necessity, I guess you could call it. The Gwich'in way is if you're hungry, go out hunting; if you're tired, you go to sleep; if it's daylight, you wake up. That's the way people are always. They didn't worry about money since money had no value to them. They just go with the four seasons and the way Mother Nature went. That's a pretty hard question to answer, I think.

Mary Teya adds:

The Gwich'in way for sure, is we're friendly and we share. We always make it our business to get to know people and share.

Joe makes his personal observations:

I have the better of both worlds now. I'm the chief of Fort McPherson, I have a computer beside me, I have a phone, I have my own desk, and I'm living in the modern world. But if I didn't want this job, I can most likely go out on the land and feel real good about it and stay out there, because I did it for 15 years, and that's something I treasure.

I guess I'm a very spiritual person and I always thought, down the road, times are going to get tough. I always said that when I first came off the land, I said I was going to work in the community for just a couple of years, and now I feel that I've seen what I wanted to see in the community, and I don't like it. I truly believe that people who live on the land, are the most well-off people.

In the community, you worry about bills and you're controlled by time. You get stressed out on that, like you as a researcher, for example. You have a time schedule for me and you had a time schedule for the principal of Chief Julius School. You cut her off so you can make time for me. You're always structured around time.

If you're out on the land then you just go by your instincts. You sleep when you're tired, you eat when you're hungry and you go when it's daylight. There is nice, clean fresh air and there is no stress, none whatsoever. I think that's the lifestyle I like.

The Gwich'in way is changing but concern for the environment remains interwoven and as life-affirming as breathing. According to Dolly Carmichael (personal communication, 1994) people look after themselves more than before.

In the smaller communities, I've noticed that people basically look after themselves. They come to the band when they need help. I don't see people just helping each other, as much anymore.

Hannah Alexie has noticed the Gwich'in way changing too but also sees room to be hopeful.

Most of the people are going the white man's way. The role of our culture is slowly drifting away from us, but not that much, cause I see most of the people still sticking to their traditional way. Whether they're doing it good or not, I won't say but it's still there.

The roles of men and women have changed within the community. The influences have come from outside of the community and have often been beyond the control of anyone. For example, the decline in the fur trade had a particularly sharp impact on the community. Sarah Jerome, former school principal, offers her views of changes in the community.

We went through a transitional period during the 1970s when the whole subsistence economy of the community went to a wage economy. The trapping lifestyle of the trappers was phasing out and the wage economy was coming in. This is where a lot of women in the community who had education, time to get the jobs and who were willing to be trained, got into the wage economy. They gradually became the breadwinners of the community. This left our men in limbo. There was no more trapping to be done and they didn't have the skills or the education to get into these job situations. They were just stuck.

For a long time Fort McPherson was recognized for the women who were working within the community. We had leadership positions and made decisions because we were the ones working. I know that a lot of the men were not comfortable with that, but they had no choice. They automatically turned to the next thing they could think of, which was drinking. This created a lot of social problems within the community.

It wasn't their fault. Many didn't have the education or skills to get jobs. Some had skills to work with oil companies during the oil boom. They worked in the Delta Beaufort region in exploration. They were not skilled but they made a lot of money in a very short time frame. I remember being afraid and wondering what were we going to do with these people when the oil boom is over but I needn't have worried. We were working towards our land claims at that time and some worked on the claim. When the land claims were settled, we got into trucking and road maintenance and we could start putting our men into positions where they were working.

Traditional spirituality was also impacted but more so by the presence of western religions. This is an issue for those communities who seek to recapture traditional spirituality and add it to the spiritual perspectives that are honored as they live First Nations government.

After twenty seven years in the community, Piet Van Loon, the mayor sees very little, if any, tradition practised in the community. He explains (personal communication, 1995):

Everybody to some extent spends time on the land and there are a couple of dozen people who are full-time on the land. They have extended families who have the tradition of being out on the land. I think the tie to the land hasn't ever been severed but it's certainly been stretched tight.

I think the Gwich'in language is far richer and goes far deeper than the sort of traditional ways that people live now. The way of life has really been Englishized and Anglicanized. It's become a mixture of Christian and Scottish ways. The traditional bush life, or the traditional life and culture that people had here is pretty well erased. I include the old songs, dances and drums. It started happening in 1858. The Anglican church is a strong tradition here and I think that the majority of people have loyalty to that church.

Settling the land claims and implementing it has challenged the Gwich'in communities. Changes brought about the land claims are ones in which the Gwich'in participated. Influences on community life include changing roles of men and women, technology, religion, spirituality, the impact of the boom/bust oil industry, lack of education, dysfunction and the process of settling land claims. Each community has risen to these challenges together and individually.

9.1. Land Claims Impacts

The Calder v. Attorney-General of British Columbia (1973) decision was the catalyst for

the Canadian government's agreement to negotiate a land claim with the Dene and the Metis, in keeping with continuing development of a healthy and self-sustaining community. This marked the beginning of a 20-year process to settle a claim that gives the Gwich'in the tools they need for self-government. The deal covers many aspects of their lives, including a $75 million dollar cash settlement over a 15-year period and title to 24,000 square kilometres of land in the Mackenzie Delta and the Peel River Basin in the Yukon. A number of boards and organizations were formed. These include the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Renewable Resource Board and several community councils.

It is critical that the four Gwich'in communities work together. This is accomplished through the Gwich'in Tribal Council (GTC) made up of a Board of Directors with members from each community. An Annual General Assembly, with fair community representation, establishes by-laws and elects the president with two vice-presidents who supervise the day-to-day affairs of the Gwich'in Tribal Council and meet with the Board of Directors regularly. At the annual assemblies, reports on the activities of each organization are submitted to the communities, along with audited financial statements, for their review.

The GTC has a number of wholly-owned subsidiaries that in 1994 included a trust fund, land corporation that administers Gwich'in-owned lands; a development corporation, a settlement corporation for certain investments, and a Social and Cultural Institute.

Fort McPherson is represented by the Gwicha Gwich'in Council that works with the GTC and has a Gwicha Gwich'in Renewable Resource Council that works with counterparts in the other communities and with the Renewable Resource Board (RRB). The RRB has representation from the territory, the federal government, the Gwich'in and from the broader community through an independent chair. According to Dolly Carmichael, the RRB has responsibilities for determining harvest quotas, and completing needs assessments and harvest studies of plant and animal life in Gwich'in territory.

They're responsible for the trees, plants, fish, animals, berries and even our moss. They'll consult with the renewable resource councils and the councils

will carry out harvest studies and needs assessments.

We're going to make sure that the Gwich'in needs are met before we allocate any portion of a quota to another group. We want to ensure that there will be trees and animals for the future. Although a lot of us don't get out on the land very often, we still have our ties there and to me that's still home.

Within this context of setting the course for a future that maintains ties to the land and meets community needs, the role of community leaders is as critical today as it has ever been.

9.2. Leadership

In Fort McPherson, a legacy of solid leadership has seen the Gwich'in through the land claims negotiation and is seeing them through implementation of the claim. Consultation, planning and limiting the use of outside expertise are important. Other communities and their experience with land claims have been examined. Alaska's land claims experience began in 1972 and regular visits are coordinated, especially with NANA Corporation. Other Native American experience has been examined through visits to various communities. Gwich'in community strengths are complemented cautiously by the use of outside consultants on a short-term basis. They avoid long-term commitments in favor of using their own members and building in-house expertise.

Leaders and community members have engaged in several planning exercises to define their short-term and long-term objectives and strategies for achieving those objectives. Road mapping, a planning technique introduced to the Gwich'in by facilitator Mike Robinson, gives a cross-section of decision-makers and community members the means to build a strategic plan or road map. It is a technique used by Esso Resources Ltd. and used by such organizations as the Rotary Club and the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary.

Mike explains (personal communication, 1994) how to build a community road map:

The road mapping process begins from the perspective of participation. Ideally you involve as many people as possible from the organization which is seeking strategic planning. The first order of business is to explain what a vision is and why institutions should have visions. In road mapping, the vision explains where the organization wants to be in five years time. For example, in the year

2000 we will be the most successful native organization in Canada with respect to stewarding cash, earned as a result of negotiating a comprehensive land claims settlement.

The vision is articulated by the entire group. Generally smaller groups are formed and then work is accomplished in round table format. Each discusses a personal vision held for the organization, and then it's the job of a round table captain to forge a consensus that builds the four or five, or even six individual expressed visions into one consensus vision.

The roundtable approach aims to facilitate creative thinking while building consensus amongst participants. It ensures equal opportunity for all to state their concerns, present facts, discuss issues and offer suggestions in the development of a strategic plan. It may be revisited and updated regularly. In 1994, the Gwich'in focussed on the financial strategic plan to ensure the Gwich'in Comprehensive Land Claim Agreement would result in future benefits to the Gwich'in communities. It sets the stage for managing their financial resources in a sustainable manner that will result in a constantly renewing resource.

Mike recalls:

In the Gwich'in case, there were 60 delegates. We divided the 60 delegates into eight round tables, and there were eight visions that were offered for general plenary discussion.

The Gwich'in Financial Road Map (1994) notes the benefits of community participation. These include promoting ownership of the plan by the community, focussing on specific community needs that were identified by members, ensuring benefits will flow to communities, and encouraging empowerment, capacity-building and consciousness raising for participants. (p. 2)

Out of the collective process, a vision for the year 2000 emerged. Four programs were identified as worthy of implementation: firstly, protection and enhancement of the Land Claims principal; secondly, preservation of Gwich'in culture; thirdly, development of an investment program while promoting education and training for Gwich'in members; and finally, improvement of local education and social systems. (p. 4) Once a vision was determined, beliefs and values that are the foundation of the community's spiritual and cultural aspects were articulated.

Values and beliefs included: trust, honesty, sharing (like sharing caribou), not mixing politics and business, responsibility, balance, faith in our leadership, religion/spirituality/healing, independence motivation, cooperation, compromising and continuous improvement rooted in a cultural orientation. Values and beliefs with a business and human capital investment orientation included: good judgement and common sense, control and monitoring of investments, re-investment in the local economy, security of investments, developing long and short-term plans, being risk averse, well being and financial stability for future generations, providing money for education, not paying dividends until a healthy rate of return is attained, inflation-proofing the principal and supporting entrepreneurs financially and encouraging beneficiaries to fully participate in the Gwich'in Development Corporation (p. 5).

Beliefs and values are translated into decisions and behavior through principles. The Gwich'in describe their principles (p. 7) as follows:

We will:

- conduct business in a professional manner (get all the facts straight),
- work to make safe investments,
- carefully monitor our investments,
- encourage equal participation from all age groups in the community,
- consult with Gwich'in band members,
- provide cooperation and security to our beneficiaries,
- be trustworthy,
- stick to our goals,
- do our research,
- get second opinions,
- have professional work and business plans,
- implement plans once they are complete,
- jump in with both feet when we know that it is time to act,
- leave business to the businessmen and politics to the politicians,
- conduct our business in an ethical manner,
- have quarterly (in house) financial statements available to our beneficiaries,
- provide training and jobs for the Gwich'in and work towards 100% Gwich'in run businesses by the year 2000,
- not take on very high financial risks,
- have knowledgeable and enthusiastic management,
- never forget the needs of the community,
- ensure that sharing, learning, trust, honesty and respect are values that are

practised when conducting our business,

- maintain and practice open communication and disclose financial information to all Gwich'in beneficiaries to keep them informed and,
- up to date on financial matters, and ensure all investment decisions are to the benefit of Gwich'in beneficiaries.

The final step in the process was to identify strategies for attaining the four programs (or objectives) that the Gwich'in had identified in their vision for their community. These strategies identified tasks, a time frame for accomplishing the tasks, naming an individual or group who is responsible for developing the strategy and setting a budget for accomplishing the strategy.

The first objective was to develop a program to protect, maintain and enhance the Land Claim settlement. Over a ten-year time frame, they want to select investment managers on the basis of three proposals; undertake a regular review of investment management; give thought to where money should be put since it is taxable in the Gwich'in Development Corporation (GDC) but non-taxable in the settlement corporations; provide information to beneficiaries; provide regular reporting of financial audits to the beneficiaries; review of bylaws that protect money; review ways to inflation-proof the principal; distribution of interest; assess the pros and cons of dividends to beneficiaries; and allocate a percentage to go to the GDC.

The investment mix was also determined. High risk investments will make up 10 % of the investment portfolio and will focus on business development. Business development projects with moderate risk will make up 20% of their investments. Low risk business development with government guarantees will make up 20%. The remaining 50% will be placed in a trust fund with low risk investments.

These plans have been reviewed since then and revised by the community. This road map records community priorities when the means to self-government is within their grasp. It demonstrates a process that aids community consensus where dissenting opinions are heard and decisions taken after hearing all arguments. Values and traditions are inherent in the process including the tradition of stewarding the environment in a thoughtful manner. Many plans gather

dust on shelves for many reasons but this process minimizes the possibility that this will happen. Participants have a vested interest in the plan being followed and will remind leaders of this interest.

Different community needs become priorities for leaders. Healing is a critical need because the fall-out from alcoholism and drug abuse, for example, reverberates at all levels of the community, from the children who do poorly in school to the missed job opportunities in the community. The first major investment approved by the community after the settlement was a healing camp, funded by land claims money. The government involvement was limited to redirecting program dollars for the same problems into this healing lodge.

The lodge allows people to get treatment while being on the land with their families. It is hard but people seem ready for a healing change. Unfortunately, the lodge closed due to lack of matching grants. Plans for cultural immersion programs for the children will be incorporated into the programs. James Ross, a former chief, made his stand by hiring people who are not drinking. The message is that you have to sober up if you want to work for the band. The school has also followed this policy. The result is while the community supports the selling of alcohol, opportunities are limited for people who are abusing it. These policies set the stage for building capacity of members who will eventually participate in initiatives that require skilled people who are sober.

Sarah Jerome, the former school principal, is impressed with this policy:

> *I really admire our leaders because they could have done so much with our money. They could have paid out money to the beneficiaries. Instead, they're geniuses to set up a camp because they realized that we have to heal. We have to heal our communities, we have to heal our people. We cannot heal one person out of every community, it has to be a family effort.*

Willard Hagen, former GTC president, has clear ideas of policies he supports including accountability issues. While the community is not under the provisions of the Indian Act, leaders are still limited to a two year term. Some communities are changing that to a longer period in an

effort to give their leaders opportunities to accomplish their plans. Willard supports the two year term now, for several reasons (personal communication, 1994).

> *Leadership does not become entrenched with a short term. I like the two year term because I think it makes people more honest at the start, and I think it means that they have to work night and day if they want to get credibility and keep it. Continuity of leadership is very, very important but not if it means someone can pull a con artist job on the communities. If you can't do it in two years and you argue that you need four years, well then maybe you can't do it. I said I'd have the claim in two years, and here eight months later we have it. We outdid ourselves. I have a good crew working for me. Robert Alexie Jr.'s an excellent guy, and James Ross is a very solid leader and a very honest man.*

Another way to encourage depth in leadership is to allow people to develop their own skills, another capacity-building practice. Willard is very active but he pulls back, consciously allowing the people he works with to realize their own skills. He shares some thoughts on the community and the settlement:

> *We're taking total control of important local organizations. Someday soon the government will wake up, realize this has happened, it's almost going to be too late. Our own chairmen head these boards, which I don't think is going to happen again. We should be in control of all our boards anyway, and when industry comes in then we can have some influence. We're not pro-development, but we do want balance. Development has to address what's environmentally safe, what's good for the people, what's good for tradition, how many job opportunities are there, how much money's going to stay in our region and how much control are we going to have over the development. We'll control any development, like a pipeline. We'll build it and lease it back to the government. We'll joint venture with the Japanese.*

Positive leadership attributes and community experience are articulated by Mike Robinson. He has had dealings with many Aboriginal communities over the years as a consultant and is well-informed about strong communities.

> *I think the Gwich'in are in some ways, remarkable and unique, in that they have a tremendous depth of leadership talent. They have youth, young adults, middle-aged folk who carry most of the burden sometimes, and they have elders, all of whom play a leadership role. All integrate well across the age ranges in the communities, and care deeply about the future of the Gwich'in language and the Gwich'in people, and the Porcupine caribou.*
>
> *The Gwich'in have perhaps, because of their homeland being distant from the centres of Yellowknife and Whitehorse and Ottawa, avoided to some degree, the*

colonial imprint, than communities that are closer to government have received. So there's a Gwich'in sense of purpose, pride of place, and strength of focus that is very strong.

When I'm with the Gwich'in or participating in Gwich'in projects, they are an equal partner. In that sense, there doesn't seem to be a strong legacy of paternal, colonial regimes from government or the church. Another major Gwich'in asset is that a number of the leadership and others who have completed advanced education away from the Gwich'in communities and then returned home. There is a formal educational base there that many communities don't yet have the opportunity to rely upon. They have a strong commitment to bright young students completing their education and bringing it back home.

Since the land claim was settled, the best and the brightest of the Gwich'in aspired of being well-employed at home, in the Gwich'in homelands. I don't get the sense that they want to become deputy ministers, or ministers or MPs . I think that they would view achievement as being home achievement, the best achievement as community achievement, and the best achievement is the achievement that really betters the life of Gwich'in directly. So that there hasn't been a conspicuous loss of Gwich'in talent to other job centres and other sectors.

Another contributory factor, I'm sure, was the early Gwich'in involvement in the 70s and 80s with the oil patch activity in the Beaufort and the Mackenzie Valley. It certainly had its negative aspects in terms of what was very easy, big money, and the opportunity that brought all kinds of material goods and chances to travel and party. The bottom line is that the exposure to that era gave people a chance to see what big money was, what you could buy with it, and the problems that came with it. It obviously disappeared quickly if you didn't think about it, bank it and invest it carefully. That experience was important.

The communities set their priorities for an investment strategy that would work for the people in their financial road map.

9.3. Land Claims Investment

The actual projects that they invested in, after a portion of their funds were invested in financial markets, targeted local companies that met local needs. Dolly Carmichael talks about the opportunities for those in the community of Inuvik:

We have a lot more opportunities here than the other communities. We're on the highway system and there's potential for lots of highway work. There are lots of government positions that'll open up through community transfers and also

in our leadership. James Ross is a very strong leader. He looks for opportunities for his people and then he takes the initiative. He gets things going and gets everybody involved.

Our investments have to have some direct impact for our people. It has to have some value for our people. It's not a money issue. We try and see how it'll improve the lives of our people. If the benefits aren't there then I think we'll just basically invest in the North. We'll stay within our own regions.

In 1994, commercial construction, property management and a company that handled land-related research contracts were the major investments of the Gwich'in Development Corporation. The construction company provided employment to local community members on highway contracts, while two office buildings were operated in Fort McPherson and Inuvik. Gwich'in Geographics had contracts with a territorial park and projects with the Social & Cultural Institute. These projects met the criteria for claims investment with employment opportunities for local people, taking control of local economic activity and support for people to work and live in the communities. They built the two office buildings with a large training component. It was expensive but these trained people will provide their skills in other projects.

According to Joe, some people expected to receive a pile of cash and never have to work again. These perceptions are slowly changing as the land claims settlement activity focuses on cautious and careful implementation. He states:

I believe land claims have made people more aware that this is their claim. Also, if they want to be a part of it, they had better start working and bettering themselves, in order to fit into the organization. Get your education, get your feet on solid ground, or get yourself healed and then start working forward.

Education is becoming more important to young people, as they realize the opportunities require skills and knowledge. The leadership is investing in businesses that will provide opportunities for members to run them. These include entrepreneurial opportunities for members interested in their own businesses. Staff provide advice and support for new business ideas. Settlement funds are available to augment government start-up funds for members with a good business plan.

9.4. Making a Stronger Community

With the land claims has come a sense that positive changes can make a difference now in the attitudes of community members, in families and between communities. Members in the community say they feel hope that elders and youth can work together, Gwich'in culture will survive, families will become healthier and children will be inspired to further their education.

Mary Teya, first female band councillor, is pleased that an elders committee and a youth committee are being set up. Start up is slow but she is very encouraged.

She notes:

> *It's not easy to do these things because they've been all done for us before. Now it's something new and sometimes very confusing. Many times, people don't agree with each other about what they're doing, and it causes conflicts. So the people will have to get really serious about all these things. We just can't sit back and expect things to happen for us, we have to be a part of it.*

Modern pressures are impacting on families. Mary is concerned that parents leave their kids at home to cook dinner for themselves while parents play bingo. The closeness of a healthy family is affected and the teachings that will help the children to understand their culture are minimal. If this trend is not reversed, their culture is threatened.

Mary states:

> *People should be home with their children at night, after they come home from school. They should get a good meal for them and put them to bed, and give them support for their education for the next day. They can check into their homework instead there's too many bingos and card games going on in the community. We have to see that our way of life as Indian people, the way that we were taught, the advice, the encouragement and all that, that has to come back somehow, and we need our elders to do that.*
>
> *Our elders have to bring back that discipline, that advice and encouragement because our children are going to be led astray. They're not going to care because mother wasn't there making sure that they went to bed at the right hour and so for that reason, they get up at a late hour. They miss out on their morning, or they're sleepy or unhappy. Nobody cares so why should they care, so this has to come back.*

The parents and grandparents have to teach the children. If they plan to take them out on the land for weekends and teach and talk to them it will be good. When you're out on the land, you listen to each other in one room where you eat together and you sleep together. You share your work and during those times parents can be telling them about their grandparents, and how they used to live. They can teach how important it is to share and talk. We don't talk as much now and people go their separate ways with TV. We have to realize that there are changes that we have to take control over.

This caring has been lost in the community, too. In our Gwich'in way, when our young people made mistakes, they didn't just get condemned for it. The elders were asked by the parents to speak to them. Whether it be not listening or spousal assault back years ago, Chief and council went to whomever was abusing their wife and they talked to the family. They would say what you're doing is not right, but they didn't condemn them for it. I'm asking people in the community to bring that caring attitude back. We have problems in our community. It may be alcohol problems, suicide or problems of abuse, when we see one of our people causing other people problems, we know that it's not right. We should make the effort to go and talk with them before it gets worse. If we see signs of depression or suicide, we should make it our business to talk with them. Don't wait. Don't watch it happen.

With the increased development activity, more opportunities are available for people with some education and training. Education is still relatively rare although the Gwich'in leadership is proof of the growing trend of getting educated and working in their communities. Many parents and grandparents do not have extensive formal education and recall the pain of residential schools. They are not overly supportive of education for their children. This has created a challenge for those interested in improving the level of education in Gwich'in young people.

Sarah Jerome, former school principal, discusses the challenges in education facing the community.

A lot of grandparents take their grandchildren in and try to raise them but without boundaries. Those are the kids that you have the most problems with so our first challenge I think, is to educate the grandparents and the parents to make them realize why education is so important. I think our next challenge is to work with leadership to support us because the next generation has to be educated. They are backing us because they realize that they're not going to be in positions like that forever. We have challenged the leadership and the different organizations within the community to work with us as a team to start pushing the importance of education.

Another challenge our young people have asked for is to teach academics in school and then have them go home and look after a net. Our education has to be academics plus our bush skills. If we can include those two, then the youth say they'll be knowledgeable on the land and about education. We'll be happy in both worlds and we'll have a foot in each culture.

An elder said, you have your knowledge about the Gwich'in culture and the language and you have your education. You can live anywhere in Canada with the dominant society, so you've got a foot in both cultures, you're superior, because you're right in the middle. I, on the other hand, he said, am only knowledgeable about the Gwich'in culture and language. I don't know the white man's language and culture, so therefore I'm way over here. The person that's a white person or that was brought up in the white dominant society is over here, so you're right in the middle and you're right up there. What we have to make the students realize, is that they have to have both cultures and be knowledgeable about both.

Non-Gwich'in community members are involved in the local hamlet council. Piet Van Loon, mayor and resident of more than 25 years, notes that while they are not involved directly in economic development, they are involved in planning for the community. They make sure industrial property is available and that the property is serviced. They are involved in zoning and enjoy a positive relationship with Chief and council. They share ideas in regular weekly meetings. This positive relationship benefits the whole community.

There were some difficult land claims negotiations with their neighbours, the Inuvialuit. The Inuvialuit settled their claims in 1984 and as a result took a leadership role in the community of Inuvik. There were some overlap in both claims that had to be worked out.

Dolly Carmichael remarks on how the disputes were resolved and the community draws together when facing an important issue:

There was a lot of problems working out the overlap agreement. It was more problems with the leaderships because neither would give in. What happened was the community councils just said, since you guys can't solve it then we're taking it away from you, and the communities will decide. They took their power away, let the community decide, and they had an agreement within two weeks.

When we have some common conflict that affects the community as a

whole, it really draws everybody together. We just had a big meeting and you saw the Gwich'in, the Inuvialuit and the non-Natives all grouped together to solve this issue. I think that was a big turning point because we got involved in other social activities together.

The future is bright with opportunity for the Gwich'in and their communities to deal with challenges facing families and take advantage of new opportunities. It sets out research of a northern community with a land claims settlement that addresses the second and third research objectives of economic development approaches and the role of Aboriginal wisdom. Stable and insightful leadership supply consistent encouragement and ideas for implementing the community vision, in keeping with premises two, three and four. Elders are valued in keeping with premise two and Elder Hannah Alexie thinks the future is good for the children. She does not speak about challenges facing the community. She says that is not the Gwich'in way and it is the Gwich'in way that means everything.

I don't think 'challenges' is the right word to use among us Gwich'in people. We know how to live out on the land. If we see one of us doing something wrong then we teach them how to do it right so the next time he or she goes out on the land, they can do these things. We teach one another, so that 'challenge' is not the right word. We have to use the word 'sharing.' We're all Gwich'in people here. We share what we experience, we share what we know, we share our culture. That is where our future is.

The Gwich'in land claims process has honed the leadership skills in the community and has brought opportunities for self-sufficiency, as noted in premise one. Community members are participating in the plans for investment of the settlement funds and in new business. The leadership has clear direction and is focussing on investment that benefits the community, under their direction in keeping with the positive connection noted in premise five. The healing lodge is an investment in the community that has the potential to reap long-term benefits. Other investments in the community provide employment opportunities and capacity-building as noted in premise four. Once these opportunities have been tapped, then regional investment opportunities will be investigated. Consultants are relied on when required for specific tasks which are clearly defined.

Relationships within the community and with neighbours have changed as more

opportunity exists than ever before. While modern society is compelling, many want a blend of both the modern and traditional ways to continue with the young people. The Gwich'in way of life must be preserved and strong families must be nurtured. The dysfunction that exists in the communities is being addressed and healthy communities will flourish.

10. Bigstone Cree Nation, Alberta: A Community On The Move

Building partnerships is a demanding process but understanding the desires and needs of the other side makes success more likely. How does a corporation in a mainstream industry understand the needs of Aboriginal communities? More and more companies are dealing with this question, some more successfully than others. The question of how to build understanding is being asked by Aboriginal leadership too. Understanding those at the table leads to better decisions. Understanding how far industry may go towards working effectively with their communities helps Aboriginal leadership to build strong strategies that can help make positive differences.

Bigstone Cree Nation, in northern Alberta, is dealing with resource companies wanting to do business with them. They are located in the forestry management area (FMA) of Alberta Pacific Forest Industry Inc (Al Pac). Al Pac entered into a memorandum of agreement with Bigstone as one of a number of initiatives to work with Aboriginal communities in their FMA. What are the opportunities and challenges facing Bigstone? How can they work successfully with Al Pac and the other resource industries while protecting the environment? The environmental impact assessment review process points clearly to Al Pac's need to work with local communities. How are they translating this goal into an action plan? These questions will be examined in the following sections.

10.1. Understanding Bigstone Cree Nation

Bigstone Cree Nation encompasses seven distinct areas of land. The five main areas are known as Wabasca with some of the land bordering on the shores of Wabasca Lake and Slave Lake. There are 5500 registered members according to Indian Affairs statistics, with more than 3100 members residing off reserve. The community of Wabasca is home for 2,500 band members and approximately 2,500 Mètis and non-aboriginal community members. Winter estimates indicate a doubling of the local population or more as resource company activity picks up.

The Nation's level of education is typical of the challenge facing Aboriginal communities.

For the population of 15 years and older, INAC statistics indicate that 39% have less than grade nine; 36% have grade nine to 13 (90% did not graduate from grade 12); 3% hold trades certificates; 15% have non-university education and 7% are seeking university degrees. Training is a challenge if community members are going to participate in economic development projects. According to Rick Allen, Director of Economic Development, in 1997 the band spent between $800,000 and a million dollars a year on training. He notes (personal communication, 1997) that,

> *Our employability rate is probably 50% right now but I can see us hitting 75% in five years. Companies have to cooperate with us on this and stop trying to cut us out of the picture. Training is critical for us but it is not as cost-effective to them.*

The community is focussing on opportunities with oil and gas, forestry, and tourism. These activities fall under the purview of Bigstone Cree Enterprises Ltd. that was formed in the early eighties as part of the move of the Nation closer to self-government and self-reliance. Major projects have involved partnering with Amoco Canada and building an alliance with Al Pac. Major commitment at all levels of a company's management to make such initiatives work has resulted in steady employment for 50 members, seasonal employment for up to 130 members and business opportunities for local companies.

In Chief Mel Beaver's opinion, effectiveness is not compromised by having Chief and council members on the board of Bigstone Cree Enterprises at this point. Mel notes that many decisions involve using political leverage. It is an asset to be able to move quickly and make those decisions as required.

Past leadership started work on a solid foundation for the current leadership to build on successfully. Mel notes that the very reason for the existence of Chief and council is to improve the quality of life and health of people in the community.

> *The reason why we get involved in issues is to make it better for everyone especially the youth. We want them to have many opportunities today. We are paving the way to creating jobs for them as we encourage them to get training and more educated over the next five or ten years. We speak specifically of opportunities in oil, gas, forestry, and tourism.*

We consistently try to phase in young people and our recent graduates into current projects. We are examining ways to maintain good communications with them when they are away studying. We want them to know they are welcome (personal communication, 1997).

10.2. Journey to Self-Sufficiency

Since the takeover of programs in 1978 from the Department of Indian Affairs, Bigstone Cree Nation has seen changes. Chief and council now total seven, down from thirteen. While there were some in the community that questioned the wisdom of taking over programs, many had positive attitudes. Mel recalls:

Most of the council thought who better to know what is best than us. The worst that can happen is that we make some mistakes. The government has made worse mistakes than we have. We hire our own people, train our own people, and work to getting them to where they can head programs as directors or managers.

Employment issues were important. We wanted to control our economy where we are able to plan and make local decisions. We wanted to reduce administrative costs and use those dollars elsewhere. It was exciting but we had to deal with dissent in the community. Today we are experiencing another large growth period. I am confident we have the skills to guide an expansion in services. We have many years of experience so there is no way to go but forward in terms of our growth at Bigstone.

Effective self-government generally includes encouraging community input. Regular community meetings provide such opportunities in Bigstone Cree Nation. Traditionally, advice of elders is sought in matters important to community welfare, in particular, in education and social affairs. They are an important group of advisors. A recent discussion on accountability and responsibility is recalled by Mel.

Council said in the end that Chief and council are held accountable and responsible for all decisions that are made. We may make them or our elders when we delegate that right to them but when the dust settles it is the Chief and council that are responsible and accountable to the community. If we were ever in a situation of conflict with the elders and their advice, we would not disregard their input but Chief and council would have to agree on the best decision.

In achieving goals for the community, economic development initiatives are very important. Some issues impact on economic development strategies, in particular, such as an outstanding land

claim, community attitudes, environmental protection, training programs and the contribution of women to the process. These issues will be discussed briefly in the balance of the section.

Unsettled land claims lend uncertainty to the business environment and are not conducive to new economic development. Bigstone Cree Nation has a land claim and it is part of its discussions with each corporation that wants to do business on its traditional land. They invite companies to join them in working out a settlement. It argues that it is in everyone's best interests to support a quick resolution and in fact companies should build in costs of settlement into projects since it is an investment which will be worthwhile. Future costs with an unsettled claim are high since they include continuing human costs with lost opportunities for training, economic development and the downward spiral of dysfunction due to lack of hope or vision for the future, as noted in the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples.

Rick is firmly convinced that Bigstone Cree Nation must constantly protect its interests in the face of corporate disinterest. He notes:

> *We deal with senior management in any corporation. We advise them that they are operating in areas that may very well be land claim areas and that the people here have the right to work and train. We suggest that they are better off working with our people since it saves money on extra expenses. We also let them know that down the road, when the land claims are settled, we may come back on them through legal means if we are ignored.*
>
> *What I see happening is that corporate presidents and vice presidents embrace mandates to support First Nations but that does not always trickle down to the supervisors or consultants. All they care about is the bottom line so they will get us to sign on the dotted line and then turn around and give us reasons why they can't use us like, it is too expensive. Once that happens we try to resolve it locally but if it that doesn't work then we go directly to senior management.*

Industry has historically been viewed with distrust and concern in Bigstone. Mel recalls the Al Pac environmental impact assessment hearings held in 1988 or 1990.

> *They asked communities about a response to plans to clear-cut this part of northern Alberta. Our Chief and council were against Al Pac's plans because of the devastation clear-cut logging has on the land. We organized a panel discussion to give the other side. We had a BC Chief come and tell about his*

community's experience with clear- cut logging. He talked about the promise of job training but when the dust settled the company didn't hire locally since people didn't have the skills. He painted a bleak and negative picture of forestry companies.

Today is different. The leadership gives priority to development and to the environment. We give the community our perspectives on how we see those two priorities co-existing. The community understands our long-term plans for development. We want to establish a working relationship with companies while paying attention to membership concerns about land use. For these reasons, I think that people are more receptive of development than before. This includes development opportunities with forestry companies like Al Pac.

Bigstone Cree Nation works to establish successful training opportunities with industries operating locally. The oil industry has been active. Amoco, for example, gave enough contracts to Bigstone Cree Enterprises that the volume allowed Enterprises to reduce their rates to be more competitive and cover the costs of training community members. Mel is pleased:

We have a relationship with Amoco that sees them send any outside company working for them, to the band. The band puts them to work under Bigstone Cree Nation Enterprises. We get a percentage and that money is used for training.

Training is a priority for the community. Where other communities might issue dividends to community members, profits from Enterprise operations go into training. Rick notes,

It is not cash dividends but it is dividends that will train our children. We tell our community that today we will train you, tomorrow we will train your children and then we will put a portion of the money away. We invest some so that there is money there to train your grandchildren. We don't look at this as a five year program but this is a fifty to one hundred year program.

In addition to industry partners, a partnership is being cultivated with the surrounding non-Nation member community. According to Mel, the history of cooperation between the on-reserve and off-reserve communities is poor. There have been some successful efforts however, on a small scale.

We met recently about starting more small projects in order to establish our relationship and then go from there. The response from off reserve leadership is quite positive. With the oil and gas development or even forestry occurring now, we could work and stand together as a community. We could be more effective as a

bunch of local contractors going to these companies together.

These partnerships extend to local business. In this way, expertise can be shared, competition will be minimized and training opportunities can be optimized. At the macro-economic level, the global economy impacts on Bigstone Cree Nation through industry. For example, Al Pac is owned by a Japanese company. Rick notes that he has never seen a Japanese person from the parent company in their community. In his opinion, there is an indifference to Aboriginal concerns at the global level that is important to recognize.

> *The Japanese don't care about Indian rights issues. It is not a knock on Japanese in general, nor are they necessarily racist. It is just simply that they don't care. They do business around the world.*
>
> *We know the Alberta government has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Al Pac. All the more reason that they should have to work with us since the Japanese are basically working with taxpayer dollars.*

As was mentioned, the leadership must balance environmental protection concerns of the community with the need for jobs and the push to develop resources by industry, with all the attendant negative environmental impacts. It is a quandary without easy answers but common to the leadership in Aboriginal communities across the country. Mel comments on their strategy and the background leading to its development:

> *In the early nineties, our community placed emphasis on development because development was finally here in our region. We wanted to be a part of it and take advantage of it through Bigstone Enterprises. On one hand we enjoy the development that is happening and the benefits but at the same time the downside is troubling, in terms of the effects on our water, air, land, trees and so on .*
>
> *Bigstone Council talks about these issues on a regular basis. We recently completed a land use study in order to deal with our land claim and development issues. A group of researchers worked with our people and identified how our people used the land. They located berrying sites, our old graveyards and where we used to hunt, fish and trap. When we looked at the map with all the things that our people used to do in our vast territorial land, it underlined the need for us to pay closer attention to protecting the land and making the environment a priority when we talk to companies about development.*
>
> *When we meet with the resource companies that work in our area, we say*

that development is fine but the environment is also a priority. We expect them to pay attention to our land use study. We don't want to chase them away but we also love our environment. We ask companies to be our partners not only in development but also in making sure that we don't destroy the environment.

This is the type of up-front dialogue we have with the companies on a regular basis. Their response is mainly positive and they want to work with us. We know they want to make their money but in order to do that, they need a positive and a productive working relationship with the leadership and the community people here. We are pretty straight forward with them.

In taking an holistic view to economic development and environment, Bigstone understands that this attitude means encouraging each community member to join in whole-heartedly in making a difference. The contribution of Bigstone's women to making the community healthy and productive is significant. Their participation permeates all aspects of community life.

Mel has taken an interest in this area.

A lot of what I believe or say is a result of my upbringing. I see women as being an important part of me including my mother and my grandmother. As a result of how I was raised, I see women as being a very important contributing factor to the community here. On the political scene we have had women on council in the past. They are in the office and also in the community. I look at the strength of some of our female elders for when they talk, our people listen. They are our hidden leaders who have influence in the home and in community meetings. They don't hold titles or positions but they are leaders at different levels at home, and in the community. The way that I see it, the women have a very active and substantial role in our community. Even though we have some real macho men who don't believe that women should hold powerful positions, I think they are starting to think otherwise.

In summary, Bigstone Cree Nation is working hard to develop the community in terms of encouraging all members to be part of their goal of self-sufficiency without sacrificing environmental integrity. There are obstacles but they are dealing with them openly and up-front, in the community or with industry representatives. They try to walk a fine line of doing business while protecting the environment as directed by the community. They focus on cooperation and partnership.

Mel reflects:

> *I think that people are expecting development to continue in a controlled way, that is based on what they think is important. They value the environment, for example, and they don't want us to sell out to development. As long as the leadership pay attention to our people's values and beliefs then I see good things happening here. I think the way that this community is evolving is very positive.*

In the next section, Al Pac's plans to work with the community will be examined as an example of a company doing business on the traditional lands of the Bigstone Cree.

10.3. Alberta Pacific Forest Products Ltd.

Formed in 1988, Al Pac operates in northeastern Alberta as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Crestbrook Forest Industries. As part of the process of getting its licence, Al Pac participated in a series of environmental impact assessment hearings in the communities that are in their forestry management area (FMA). One very strong message was that Al Pac must be prepared to work with the Aboriginal communities. The senior management at that time, was amenable to creating a company that would be unique in the industry. They set about gathering a team of individuals who had expertise in their respective fields and who could work with a mandate that included building strong relationships with the Aboriginal communities in their FMA. This goal was incorporated into the company mandate which also meant addressing a distinct business ethic and relationships with all communities in the FMA.

The new mill was operational in 1991-92. Bill Hunter, acting general manager in 1997, recalls the start up.

> *Mr. Jerry Fenner, Senior Vice President at the time, and several other vice-presidents had a vision to take all of the historical garbage of what our industry has created to see if we can follow the best available method of management. We decided to participate with the communities. The owners said go for it since we need a well-run mill. We absolutely need to operate at peak performance, production quality and environmental safety. The trade-off, is that we will stand back and support you financially (personal communication, 1997).*

The forestry industry is not generally interested in taking a pro-active stance in developing

relationships with communities. Ken Plourde, Forest Resources Business Group Leader, has worked in the industry for a number of years. In his opinion, Ken notes:

> *Al Pac is ten miles ahead of the rest of them when I look at where I worked in BC. We are a brand new company and we have a new focus. In my experience, the general attitude of a forestry company coming into a new area is that we've got the right to be here and you will automatically like us because we provide jobs. Companies are probably astounded when somebody doesn't like what they are doing. They don't want to believe it. They haven't really been sensitive to the human aspect in the past. I think companies are treating people better, as a spin off of society becoming more tolerant (personal communication, 1997).*

Other extraction industries are similar. In Ken's experience, there is little left for communities once a company comes, extracts its products and then leaves. When companies plan to work in an area for an extended period of time, there are more opportunities to mitigate the impact of their activities on the environment and the people.

Al Pac is interested in making sure that other forestry companies in Alberta have assistance in working with local communities. They monitor the situation where the biggest controversy is, that of the Lubicon Cree Nation and Daishowa. Daishowa's focus is on their technology and plant with little left for the communities. According to Bill,

> *We don't want to be painted with the same brush. We want industry in Alberta and more especially the forestry industry to be accepted and respected in the same way. It should not matter which company you are from. We share a lot of ideas and we meet in order to build strategies.*
>
> *In order to successfully develop a community focus, you need a champion. A champion has passion, empathy and a heartfelt need to develop new relationships. Since everything is bottom-line oriented in business, a champion will ensure these programs survive in tight economic times. It is a constant battle to protect some of our existing programs because as you have heard in the media, we have missed a few loan payments. Capital is tight and we need to make very drastic cuts to survive these very, very tough times.*

A senior manager carried this vision of working with Aboriginal communities and that helped Al Pac. Managers throughout the organization work to implement policies including employment, community liaison, and supplier standards that lead to strong, healthy relationships

with surrounding Aboriginal communities. For Al Pac, the reasons to follow these policies make good business sense. Ken reflects on these reasons:

> *For one thing, it makes good business sense that when you go into somebody else's area and start doing something, the most humanitarian thing you can do is talk to the people there. Discuss the negative and positive impacts that you bring their way.*
>
> *Secondly, it makes sense to identify people who share the same vision. This includes educating community people about the vision and then giving them the opportunity to participate as employees or suppliers. You require the right kind of people to bring groups together internally and externally.*
>
> *Finally, for companies not interested in the human aspect, securing their raw material supply is critical to continued operations. For example, if there is political unrest in the communities and their supplies are affected then their operations may be shut down.*

Establishing a working relationship with communities is an on-going process that takes time and planning. Bill notes:

> *It has not been easy since we are brand new in the neighborhood. We had to win their respect and build relationships in these communities. The oil and gas industry has been here for a very long time. We are the first major forestry corporation here in the northeast section of the FMA. We wanted to do it right so we brought together a group of people who have the expertise but more specifically have the drive to make a difference. We created the Aboriginal Affairs Resource Team (AART). Today we are very happy with the progress but we still have a long way to go.*

They hired an Aboriginal consultant, Elmer Ghostkeeper, to head AART. He is from northern Alberta, knows the land and is well versed in his culture and language. He introduced Al Pac to the communities. Al Pac's management team members were introduced to chiefs and councils and community people throughout the FMA. Bob Ruault, Vice President, Woodlands and former General Manager of Operations, recalls the process:

> *We wanted to understand what they were doing and get them to try to learn what we were about. We had to build trust too. We demonstrated trust by listening to them, going out there and being very open to their questions. We tried to answer them and if we didn't know the answers then we said so. We didn't beat around the*

bush.

> *Initially, Bigstone was very pro-environment and wasn't interested in the mill. Other communities like Janvier were open-minded and wanted to work with us. We had to learn about what was important to the communities. We implemented cultural studies for our employees. We talked with community members in order to understand their traditional values regarding the land. We learned about the place trapping holds in their economy and the major challenge to keep it going. We learned about their values, politics and social structures.*
>
> *Their number one economic challenge is never ending. Jobs, jobs, jobs is the number one challenge. They aren't educated but they do have the desire to do work. We need time for job training, building partnerships and offering contracts of all kinds (personal communication, 1997).*

As mentioned, AART has developed education programs for Al Pac employees regarding Aboriginal culture. Their main function is to act as a resource and provide a liaison between corporate teams and communities. They manage a trappers compensation program and facilitate a variety of projects including a loan circle and a land use study. Another company initiative of interest is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Bigstone Cree Nation.

Mandatory education programs help Al Pac employees understand issues faced by Aboriginal communities in today's society. They also learn about community priorities. Aboriginal perspectives are compared to the western science worldview. Employees have the opportunity to participate in a sweatlodge ceremony offered by an elder, who is an AART member. For many Al Pac employees this ceremony has become very meaningful and special in their work. If there is any resistance to the policy, it is not visible and senior management is pleased with how well people are honoring the policy.

AART is a relatively unique initiative in the forestry industry. It has become important to community leadership who request other companies operating in their area to have an Aboriginal Affairs group. It is important that AART members have knowledge of communities and have expertise. For example, team members are from the area and may be former chiefs, or have trapped and hunted. They are sensitive to community needs but operate within the corporate context.

Misunderstandings can be handled with sensitivity or avoided altogether. There are some important policy aspects that must be in place to encourage success in AART. Bob notes:

> *The number one challenge generally, is to have commitment to your policy regarding Aboriginal peoples in your corporation from the bottom to the top. You have to have the attitude that everyone has equal opportunity to your job. It is a challenge.*
>
> *AART has some autonomy in decision making, team building and bringing their culture to the team. They are accountable to their team and they need a reasonable budget to support their activities. In our case, there is a million dollar budget for them. AART is part of the company business plan. They have to accepted by the other teams.*
>
> *They have opened the door to the communities and the company has to be prepared to go there and participate. Sometimes it is tough but you have to do that.*

Bill adds,

> *We have got good rapport with most of the communities. On a couple of occasions some of them were hostile but with good reason. We go into the communities and talk to the elders, community and political leaders and other leaders. Through these relationships we explore opportunities or engage in contracts. Initially we did a mental checklist when we met but now it is more comfortable. Our team know who to contact when they go into an area and they do it automatically as part of operations. When there is a change in leadership, we call on the new leaders.*
>
> *We have our ups and downs. We have some individuals who are not really pleased with the progress that we are making. They think it is too slow and that we are really not doing anything for anybody. They are probably right, so you have to listen to these people even though they are detractors.*
>
> *We are careful because some seldom offer alternative solutions. Usually they are a very small minority. Some are self serving and can be found in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. They go away if you come up with something for them personally and they really don't care about the rest.*

AART implements a trappers compensation program. They have trapper specialists who talk to the trappers in the area. They administer a program that compensates for disruption of the traplines due to forestry operations. While there is no compensation for loss of habitat, there are

information sessions and one on one meetings to discuss concerns.

Walter Quinn, a trapper specialist with AART, comments on the program:

> *For many, many years the trapper has been left behind but with Al Pac our number one priority is to help the 426 trappers in the FMA in any way we can. Our work does devastate traplines and we would have to deal with trappers one way or another. While you can't make a living at trapping, it is a good hobby or for recreational purposes.*
>
> *I used to trap and many times companies will just push your traps away to the side. They don't honor the special places. Your family may have lived in an old cabin for many years. You don't want that pushed away because the memories are special. We try to avoid those kinds of incidents. We deal directly with the trappers to avoid any problems (personal communication, 1997).*

Another program to support community economic development involved a loan circle to support a small sawmill. The idea is to support local business development through financial support. A substantial sum was invested in the sawmill but for a number of reasons, the program was put on hold. Al Pac has intentions to revive the program when the circumstances are deemed to be appropriate so that they can make a positive contribution to economic development projects.

A project that focussed on traditional land use in the FMA by Bigstone Cree Nation was financially supported by Al Pac. The sacred areas that were identified included traditional hunting and gathering areas, burial sites and ceremonial locations. This information is used by Al Pac in their planning process in order to work with the community in ways that are significant to the local people. It is also used by Bigstone Cree Nation for use in planning resource development in their traditional lands and is greatly appreciated by community members. It begins to show the level of human activity in a way that many people can understand.

This traditional land use study is only one source for the long-term plan that Al Pac works up with the assistance and input of a task force. That task force involves community people from all walks of life including community people, trappers, hunters, fishers, elders and originally environmentalists. This plan is important and is reviewed in community meetings. They set out the

annual plan and the plans for the next twenty years so that people have a chance to share their reactions.

Another significant move to recognize the relationship between Bigstone and Al Pac is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to recognize the relationship, on paper, that they would like to cultivate. Al Pac chose Bigstone because they had established a working relationship and they are a large enough community that such a partnership might be workable. It is simple and sets out a partnership based on mutual intentions. It can only work, however, if both parties are clear about expectations and want to work together. Al Pac has not entered into any other MOUs because of the resource investment that is required and the fact that other communities are not large enough nor do they have the level of workforce that Bigstone demonstrates. After several years, both partners give a mixed review of the MOU and are focussing on how to improve the partnership.

Rick Allen, Bigstone's Economic Development Manager, appreciates several points in the MOU:

> *I think the MOU is a good thing but you really have to make sure that you have got the fine points nailed down. The MOU obligates companies to work with Bigstone Enterprises but they have to back it up. I think the Mou with Al Pac has been very poorly supported. When we entered the MOU, Al Pac was supposed to operate a certain amount of production which would then create a certain amount of work for us.*
>
> *Within a few weeks in the first year, I was told Al Pac had worked out a new technology. They didn't need as much lumber as they thought for production at the mill. Is it true? I don't know. All I know is that when the MOU was signed we expected to get a certain amount of work. We didn't want to hear a story that they do not require that much work. That is not satisfactory.*

This sense of frustration in not surprising since the boundary between how far business is prepared to go in helping Aboriginal communities is undefined and in a constant state of flux. How can industry meet the needs of Aboriginal business while reassessing their own perspectives in ways that maintain shareholder confidence? What can Aboriginal leadership do to help clarify the

issues and the rationale for industry to be an active player in making things better?

In Ken's opinion:

The partnership agreement is only good if both parties want it to work and both parties understand what they are getting into. The partnership is not worth two cents if there is no good will.

Unfortunately, the federal government has muddied the water. Other Aboriginal peoples have told me this so I can repeat it. There is a generation of spoiled people. I don't mean it to be a general statement and it may or may not be a fair statement.

They may have thought that this MOU was going to be an easy thing. It is not really and it is our fault if we did not make it clear. I thought that we did. They have to produce at a certain level, maintain their machinery and follow the other points in the MOU. They will have to work at it to succeed because this is not going to be subsidized. Training may be subsidized in the initial period but not afterwards.

Becoming self-sufficient is the goal otherwise we have not accomplished much. Make- work projects are short term and are not the answer. Real business opportunities and focussed training are the answer. It is our fault if people become disenchanted or think that it will be easy. Everyone progresses at their own speed and they have to be ready for a partnership. We are proceeding slowly with the next MOU with lots of up front discussion.

Sharing perspectives about the MOU is a starting point for a discussion about other topics including effective leadership, partnering, selling a training component and educating communities about Aboriginal policies. Real progress requires constant effort by both sides in resolving issues.

10.4. Sharing Perspectives

In committing to successful long-term partnerships, it is important that both sides be open to understanding realities, pressures and shifting priorities affecting each partner. For Bigstone, for example, other industries are operating on their traditional lands with different pay structures and business opportunities. Some are more attractive than Ol Pac in terms of revenue-generating opportunities. The partnership with Al Pac has given Bigstone good experience. Future

partnerships will be more specific and will have revenue-sharing possibilities spelled out in the agreement. Yet Al Pac is going to be in their territory for many years to come and Bigstone is prepared to develop the partnership so that the community benefits.

For Al Pac, supporting community projects is worthwhile but time consuming and in some instances costly. Each must come back to the table again and again, with new players, sometimes covering the same ground but each time with an attitude of building a partnership. For AART employees, challenges include presenting information to the community in ways that capture their interest for on-going sessions and on an understandable level. Sometimes the decision to work at Al Pac must be defended with each employee having their reasons for working there --from wanting to support their families to seeing good corporate citizenship in decisions taken by the company.

The context in which economic development occurs in Aboriginal communities generally sees the leadership stretched thin. As previously mentioned, Bigstone has set up agreements with corporate partners that their sub-contractors work through Bigstone Enterprises. They build in 15% to fund training. Some customers try to pay sub-contractors directly and cut out Bigstone and the surcharge. To curtail this type of activity, Bigstone must monitor these contracts regularly- - a time-consuming activity.

Training is a tough sell because it makes Bigstone less competitive than similar companies that do not have a training mandate. Most companies focus on the bottom line but training takes time and resources. Bigstone has to be creative and persistent in order to make change that meets community priorities. Mel observes:

> *When we approach companies about training, we are going against their mandate to make money as fast as possible. So we have to be forceful with them to make them understand that this is an investment for us and for them. It is cheaper for them to train our own people, for example, then to bring in a trained crew from Calgary. By accepting this training challenge, it is a short term investment for a long-term gain.*
>
> *It is an internal challenge for Chief and council to generate as many business*

opportunities with training components, balancing profit with the need to train our people. Since we are meeting hesitation, the board of directors for Bigstone Enterprises are reassessing the mandate.

We have to handle training differently. We ask ourselves whether or not we should train on site rather than bothering companies or try to train people at their site. We eventually want to operate as any other company that can do quality work for oil companies or forestry companies with training occurring but in a different way.

A challenge of similar importance is met by Al Pac in implementing a policy that favors Aboriginal peoples from employment, from out-sourcing to creating a special department focussed on their needs. Bill reflects on this challenge:

Canada is a great nation made up of a potpourri of cultures but there is no doubt that there is still racism here. I am not talking in terms of hatred but I am talking about recognizing differences between people. From time to time I do have team members within the manufacturing plant here at Al Pac, asking 'why we focus on Aboriginal content? When I walk into the vestibule, why is it full of Aboriginal arts and crafts and why do I have to spend time with AART? It is almost like favouritism. Why don't we spend the same amount of time supporting and trying to understand the white Russian colony that lives just 30 km east of us or the Lebanese, Ukranian or any other cultural group?'

Our reply is that the predominate community in our FMA are Aboriginal and we want to work with them successfully. There is a lot to learn about Aboriginal peoples. We want to understand why they think they way they do and make the types of decisions they do. Our long-term strategy is full integration at the mill. Some day there is going to be an Aboriginal person sitting in this chair running this company. That will lead to security of this operation and security of this business because it is totally supported by the people in the FMA.

It does not have to be 100% run by Aboriginal peoples but it has to have the commitment, the direction and the vision that incorporates Aboriginal needs and wisdom. I implemented a program that allows Aboriginal peoples priority in working in eight positions through a program of reserved occupancy. Based on my background, it is clear to me that it does not matter if you are Aboriginal, Ukrainian or Russian. If you come from a community where you grew up all your life and you have to move 100 or 200 kilometres to begin work in a giant industrial complex like this, there is high fear factor.

It is an unbelievable obstacle. So to enhance opportunities for Aboriginal peoples, they are gradually exposed to the modern technical world in ways that make them feel more comfortable. They have a schedule with certain goals. As

they start to warm up, they start to look around the mill and notice other jobs and possibilities for themselves. I think we have been quietly successful. We have had at least 30 to 35 people come through the system. Some are taking advantage of the opportunities and moving into higher profile jobs with more job skill requirements. That is exciting. They like the steady income and report that their families have finally adapted to the move. Others commute from their home communities because they like the steady income. Others say it is too stressful and don't stay on.

We set this opportunity up so that they can make decisions about working with us on their time. I don't want failure for them I don't want failure for us. I don't want failures for me personally. I want Aboriginal employees to know for themselves that they can handle the responsibility, that they are supported in a team environment, and that they have peers from their own culture. I like it that way.

In conclusion, making a partnership work is like a marriage. It takes a lot of work and the right attitudes. It takes renegotiation and realistic expectations about what is possible over what time frame. It takes policies that build on each other both in the internal and external operating environments. For Al Pac, it makes good business sense to work with the Aboriginal communities in its FMA for many reasons. In the long-term a buy-in by the community into its operations will secure Al Pac's future. It will have spin-off security for the communities that local Al Pac employees support. These needs impact on the Aboriginal community's desire for economic sustainability since it opens the door to mutually beneficial partnerships in keeping with premises one and four.

For Bigstone Cree Nation, Al Pac is one of many multi-national companies developing resources in their area that will help secure the future self-sufficiency of the community. By getting involved with these partners, Bigstone is taking a pro-active stance that will give them the opportunity to be included in decisions that affect their land with the only partners that can afford to develop resources by their somewhat isolated community. Besides resource development, they are focussing on the health field with their own pharmacy and supporting services. The leadership works hard to make development a reality but without losing sight of the priorities of their community members, in ways that make sense in line with premise one, two and five. Training and

the environment are priorities that are acknowledged in all their projects and noted in premise four. Mel's personal philosophy is to be honest, cooperative and straightforward in all his dealings with business and with his community. It sets the stage for a strong partnership and avoids problems due to lack of confidence and trust, making an effective connection set out in premise five, that is the connection between leadership and successful economic development.

Mel is proud of his community and for the future:

I am confident that the future will bring good things for this community. We've gone through some growing pains and lack of confidence in leadership over the years. I was a part of that leadership so I blame myself. Now I have a good sense that the council members and I want to do right things for the people.

Our community has higher expectations for its leadership. They are sick and tired of people doing the wrong things. I give credit to the former Chief and council for the last three to four years of tremendous growth and development. I think people are expecting that development will continue in a controlled way that is acceptable to them based on what they think is important. Their regard for the environment is paramount and we are not going to sell out to development.

So long as the leadership pay attention to people's values, beliefs and priorities, I think that this community will evolve a strong partnership of economic development with industry.

11. Shared Themes and Particular Circumstances

For me, true insight and understanding into another person's experience begins by moving from the intellectual understanding of a person's life to one that embraces my heart and spirit. In taking the journey with these people and these communities, I realize the limitations of my experience of that journey. I am only able to share the brief glimpses of what I know. I can share their words at the time of my research. I cannot capture all of the shades of meaning nor the changes that have occurred before or since then.

I am humbled, however, by the scope of this project and its significance within the context I have just shared. The words open windows that have not been opened in this way ever before.

I spoke to many members in each community and was unable to document all their insights in the case study portion of this research. It is with respect that I honor this experience and the teachings I was given.

Wanda Wuttunee

The findings around each research objective provides that basis upon which diverse strands of this research are appraised in this chapter. Firstly, selected community experience is summarized in relation to each element in the Elements of Development model. Secondly, the broader research conclusions raised in other chapters are revisited and finally, implications of this research for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal supporters of economic development in Aboriginal society are noted. The research objectives include ascertaining the place held by Aboriginal wisdom in economic development theory; documenting the blend of approaches and economic development strategies currently employed in selected Aboriginal communities; and identifying the role of Aboriginal wisdom in selected Aboriginal communities that are striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms. Aboriginal wisdom and its meaning for this researcher is visited in the following section.

11.1. Aboriginal Wisdom

It is within the context of the values of sharing and caring, that observations regarding the first and third research objectives are offered to the Aboriginal community, academic community,

corporate Canada, the state and to interested Canadians for their consideration. Aboriginal wisdom was introduced in chapter two, Aboriginal Worldviews and Approaches to Development. In particular,

> *Wisdom encompasses the holistic view, possesses spiritual quality and is expressed in the experiential breadth and depth of life (Newhouse, 1993, p. 95).*

According to Ghostkeeper (personal communication, 1997), 'wisdom' in economic development for Aboriginal peoples, more aptly encompasses the ideas underlying sustainable development and then goes beyond them. In my limited understanding, the knowledge caught and held in Aboriginal wisdom goes to the heart of sustainable development but then incorporates spirituality and ethics in ways that are not easily grasped by western practitioners. The holistic approach is the reason Aboriginal peoples survive.

Aboriginal wisdom is not confined by age, instead it is demonstrated by all ages. Those communities that tap into the wisdom in their communities are guided in ways that best meet all the needs of the community. Elders, youth and women have roles with the men in their communities. They have a forum for their voices including those that dissent. Strong communities are those that are most responsive to change, have leaders that are confident in hearing opinions and reaching decisions based on consensus. These roles are changing with the changing rhythms of modern times. There is still a place for wisdom, however, as demonstrated over and over in this selection of communities.

11.1.1. Research Objective One: What place does Aboriginal wisdom hold in economic development theory?

In their quest to understand life and the place of humankind, the threads of Aboriginal wisdom have been picked up by Suzuki, Daly, Capra and Hawken in their work, noted in chapter four. These approaches, introduced in chapter five, are manifested by the evolution of sustainable development into policy, programs and methodologies that share a connection with the ancient Aboriginal wisdom that honors the gift of the Earth Mother. Most do not realize the extent of the connection nor do they acknowledge it in their writing. It is indeed wondrous however, to appreciate the greater wisdom that leads us on different paths to the same place.

Aboriginal wisdom is integral to the continued survival of Aboriginal peoples. It encompasses the cycles of life and death while seeking balance along the dimensions of being. It encompasses many of the goals of sustainable development as developed in the western world but draws together uniquely, while going beyond the external rationale for honoring life's limitations. It is internalized for many Aboriginal society members. It is no longer, however, guaranteed to exist just because of Aboriginal heritage.

Aboriginal wisdom is readily discussed in the work of Aboriginal scholars. Colorado, 1988; Dockstater 1993, Newhouse 1992, 1993, 1997, 1998; Ghostkeeper 1993, 1996, 1997; Salway Black 1994; Alfred 1999; Simpson 1999; Joe 2000 ground their work in an acknowledgment of their heritage. It prods their philosophies. They offer perspectives on aspects of Aboriginal life that include economic development and Aboriginal communities that has implications for Aboriginal communities, the business world, and policy-setters.

There is a place for Aboriginal wisdom that is being recognized by more and more academic scholars. What will the result be with the synthesis of these perspectives? Where will the impact be felt? Will it be allowed to influence the leaders of business and government to bring us to a different place then the one we are currently headed for? A chorus of approaches are coming from many different disciplines and are synchronized around the same song - a common understanding of the need for meaningful change.

11.2. Research Objective Two: What blend of approaches and economic development strategies are currently employed in these communities?

This research objective is initially explored in chapter three where the influence of Aboriginal worldviews in economic development is examined and the Elements of Development Model by Salway Black (1994) outlined. This model forms the framework for addressing the objective and acknowledging the diversity in the selected communities. It demonstrates great insight into some of the markers for Aboriginal peoples' perspectives on economic development and is flexible enough to go from reserve to an urban locale. The blend of approaches emerging from Aboriginal worldviews and the western approach become clearer for these selected

communities in the following evaluation.

First Nations Development Institute uses this model as a starting point for discussion and regularly revises it to suit the needs of their community client. Once a community has a project and is seeking funding from FNDI, the community members meet and discuss their community within the context of the model in order to submit a proposal based on their assessment. It allows for dissenting opinions to be shared and balanced decisions taken. Sometimes dissent is overridden when communities rely on majority guidance while for those building consensus, time is taken for discussion so that dissenters are given the chance to be comfortable with the final decision (they can live with the decision while not necessarily agreeing with it unreservedly).

One way to use the model is to involve project and community members in plotting a point on each axis to capture their assessment of their community's strength or weakness regarding that element. They develop a visual representation of their community profile before and replot it after the project. As a planning tool, it is unique in its ability to incorporate an Aboriginal perspective that relies on local expertise. No 'expert' is used to undertake this analysis on behalf of the community. The community can use it as a planning tool that represents its goals and directs their current objectives.

I take the opportunity to share my insights of these communities for the purposes of addressing this question and as the basis of discussion should further work using this model, continue with these communities. Their economic development strategies demonstrate the breadth of approach and level of sophistication in dealing with wide-ranging problems while remaining grounded in the particular blend of tradition, knowledge, wisdom and vision that has grown out of each community's experience. While my personal analysis does not include the critical 'local' perspective that is needed to make it relevant, it is a starting point for discussion.

Each axis in the Elements of Development Model addresses dynamic aspects of Aboriginal

life. The naming of each axis draws on familiar details experienced by Aboriginal peoples but, in most cases, it introduces concepts that are very foreign to mainstream economic development. For example, spirituality and kinship are not commonly discussed in a critical analysis of successful economic development. Therein lies the strength of this model. It is a means for Aboriginal peoples to go beyond the mainstream perspective and to contemplate their own valid reality in the understanding of community goals for successful economic development. This approach sets the stage for reciprocity in that mainstream business can question how capitalism might benefit from the influence of Aboriginal worldviews. Finally, it represents the underlying themes of this research.

11.2.1 Kinship.

Acknowledging the role that kinship plays in the distribution of goods and services by Aboriginal peoples, reveals the inherent value of everyday practices. Kinship is not regularly identified as a community asset. Its inclusion leads to a better appreciation for ancient mechanisms that still have a role in Aboriginal community economic development today. The informal economy is alive and well in the communities that form part of this study in a manner underlining their common experience. Kinship identifies the creation and circulation of assets as well as it refocuses the lens of economic development from within the community.

Giving haircuts in exchange for work on the car or babysitting are integral benefits and responsibilities of living in close proximity with extended family members that are usually so automatic, that any in-depth discussion of this aspect of community life, is rare. Give-aways are connected with traditional ceremonies and are present to varying degrees among the selected communities. The practice of traditional spirituality may complement or alternatively, be circumscribed by the presence and influence of western religions. It depends on the prevailing wisdom in the community. The diversity of beliefs evident in this small selection matches the diversity noted in Aboriginal nations.

Obstacles such as religion, residential school fallout, incarceration, family breakdown and

dysfunction, community disinterest or isolation all influence the effective sharing of traditional culture and values through kinship ties. Kinship ties are recognized and fostered in each of the selected communities. However, the health of some ties are stretched to the limit for many families. Each community has at least one treatment facility or more designed to address these issues. In the urban setting, kinship ties and sharing traditional culture and values have broken down for many families who moved to Winnipeg, in an example of difference in these communities. Those who want to hold on to kinship as a meaningful part of living in the city, may find that the extended family is replaced with new friends, local community members and those with common experiences.

It is not always apparent to Aboriginal community members that a broad analysis of their assets should include kinship and the informal economy. How can the narrow economic perspective held by the dominant society be shaken off and the foreign blinders lifted so that Aboriginal peoples operate from their true place of strength and not from an automatic place of inferiority?

11.2.2. Personal efficacy.

A number of continua must be considered: individual initiative balanced with community/state support; work ethic and dependence; fear and self-esteem; broad and narrow future outlook; and gifting the next generation with necessary skills including self-confidence. There are individual community members at each point on these continua. Each community has a small contingent of entrepreneurs who have a distinctive vision for their contribution to the community and the segment who rely on state payments to survive.

Strong, experienced leadership is helping make a difference in these areas for the selected communities, by living self-government. For example, Tsuu T'ina Nation has a comprehensive plan for employing its current membership and encouraging its young people in seeking education and staying in the community. Drop-out rates are still problematic but now role models and opportunities hold out invitations to those who might choose to stay and earn their living within

the community. Each of the other selected communities face the same obstacles and try to offer the same opportunities with varying success.

Language programs are in place to support traditions and elders are essential to community spirit. Leadership balances political expertise with community economic development insight in setting board representation. The Gwich'in have identified local opportunities but many still are unemployed. With only a finite set of opportunities, youth are encouraged to gain skills but understand that their future may lie outside of the community. They are developing resources at a thoughtful, careful pace. A strong call to the land and the peaceful existence it means, is most evident here than in the other selected communities. It is minimized in the urban setting and of more importance the further communities are from urban centres.

Bigstone Cree Nation is addressing the challenges of high drop rates and low employment opportunities by negotiating with resource companies and increasing opportunities through partnerships. Its leadership relies on expeditious decision-making when political representation is actively involved with all economic development decisions. They also involve the community in the decision process. Tsuu T'ina and Winnipeg have few natural resources with Tsuu T'ina creatively managing the resources and experience they do have.

Finally, the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg faces numerous challenges in making a difference for the adults who want to work and its youth who are dropping out. It is a major challenge that the community has identified in the Aboriginal Urban Strategy and under-resourced organizations like Aboriginal Youth With Initiative, Inc. and Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, try to address. It is a question of managing individual needs with what will build community and for three of the selected communities the leadership are able to exercise influence into final decisions. For the urban community, the leadership of many organizations faces resource constraints and competing jurisdiction that hinder forward movement.

11.2.3. Control of assets.

The land claims agreement governing the activities of the Gwich'in has made a difference in knocking down inherent barriers to economic development. Land title and financial compensation have given the means for the Gwich'in nation to control its future. Excitement for future possibilities was most evident in this community. Community control of its investment strategy requires that community goals be incorporated by the leadership in its decisions. Managing the trust fund for the benefit of today's members while protecting the legacy for future generations secure its community in a positive manner.

The balance of the communities are bound by the Indian Act with regards to control of their assets and are subject to federal and provincial laws. Both Tsuu T'ina Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation are building on their business experience and the hard lessons they have had to learn. As a result they are able to focus on economic development opportunities that twenty years ago were not available to any reserve community. They target training programs linked to economic projects that benefit Nation members. Tsuu T'ina's approach to dividing profits benefits the community and all economic development endeavors in keeping with community guidance.

In contrast, urban community members have no land base but have access to house purchases, control of savings accounts, upgrading education and job skills and taking loans, that are denied or not as easily available to reserve community members. A strong web of non-profit organizations that meet social, health and economic development needs, support efforts to build a strong community. Aboriginal entrepreneurs may target the Aboriginal community market but in order to expand, must enter into the mainstream marketplace. The Aboriginal Business Development Centre provides support for the initial entrepreneurial process.

Traditional rights to hunt and fish are protected on reserve as is control of the small land bases. Bigstone Cree Nation and Gwich'in members engage in trapping, hunting and fishing activities. To a lesser extent, urban and Tsuu T'ina Nation members engage in these subsistence activities on a recreational basis and apportion the hunt proceeds with their extended family. Other

issues of environmental balance will be addressed in the discussion of the second research objective.

Financial institutions are trying to capture the personal and commercial business on reserve through increasing accessibility. Increasingly a skilled, educated workforce is available as a community resource but the training process takes time. Each of these communities is facing human resource shortages and investing in long-term education. The selected communities do have control of their education (including two schools in Winnipeg) and are able to deal with these issues close to home, in a manner that incorporates the amount of culture and tradition that is important to the community. In any event, their pursuit of a dignified livelihood for the members of their communities underlies leadership strategies in this selection of communities.

Health care is widely available in Winnipeg for Aboriginal peoples and in Calgary for Tsuu T'ina Nation members. The Gwich'in have the most limited access to quality health care service with Bigstone Cree Nation taking some control of its health services. In particular, a full-service drugstore is available with their own dental services. These services improve the general health of the population and impacts on their strength as a community.

Progress is being made but many challenges must be addressed. While it has taken many years to create these problems, patience is short in the broader community for reaching solutions. How do these communities and others get significant support from the broader community with enough room for incorporating a local perspective into the solutions?

11.2.4. Spirituality.

Religion through mainstream churches co-exists with opportunities to practice traditional spirituality in these selected communities. The presence of tradition is stronger in those communities where there is acceptance and tolerance. Some people have forged a blending of approaches, accommodating seemingly contradictory approaches in one strong spiritual vision. There are also examples of community perception that particular employment opportunities are

reserved for community members of a particular faith. The presence of religion and spirituality in a community is an indicator of healing, visioning of support and one's critical place in the universe that seeps from the individual, to family, and then to the community.

The place and distinctiveness of Aboriginal peoples in society, is strongly tied to language. Children have the opportunity to learn their language and traditional teachings in many of the community-run schools. The importance of language is recognized and in Tsuu T'ina Nation and in several Aboriginal Winnipeg schools, for example, funds are ear-marked for developing language resources for use in the schools. Winnipeg organizations, including the Manitoba Association of Native Languages, are also very involved.

Traditional values are integral to a variety of aspects of society. Traditional roles of elders are honored in each of these communities. In the organizations examined for this research, elder contributions are acknowledged. Regaining and using their own language is respected and decision-making works to consensus in many instances. Women hold a variety of roles in community administrative structures, including in economic development. They face obstacles of sexism and beliefs that women have no say in those forums but many are given opportunities and meet them with integrity and significant contribution. Women are making inroads in each of the selected communities.

Leaders in these selected communities display a variety of strengths including a positive vision for their people and the strategies for making them a reality. While they are not without controversy and conflict, managing challenges effectively is a sign of effective leadership especially in ways that are truly representative of community wishes. It is not always possible to please everyone but that is a reality faced by all leaders. There are many signs of communities seeking balance in all elements of economic development outlined in the model, that are important to strong communities and economic development.

In its relationship to the element of spirituality on the model, kinship links with the

empowerment of community members through participation, cultural integrity and relationships with society through the media and financial institutions. Each of these communities has mechanisms for community involvement in policy and major decisions affecting them. Some encourage dissenting comments by community members and their leaders reach consensus where everyone agrees on a course of action while making room for dissenters to give qualified support. Tsuu T'ina's leadership note that providing a forum where a dissenting speaker is assured of being heard, helps reduce the level of frustration in the community and builds solidarity.

Tsuu T'ina Nation has an extensive process of community interaction in examining projects and progress. Its due diligence process is comprehensive and builds on its experience and best practice. Bigstone Cree Nation relies on community input to guide decision-making and the direction of future economic development. Community opinion for developing forest resources has changed over the last ten years from strongly negative to one where economic development is considered within certain boundaries that protect the community's environment. Isolated communities have limited economic development options, so that when a company wants to develop the resources in consultation, some relationship is likely to develop over time.

The Urban Aboriginal Strategy expressed the community's concerns in a process that gave them precedence for the provincial government's consideration. The question arises as to how quickly and intact will these recommendations be championed by a provincial government that has since changed from Conservative to NDP? For the Gwich'in, the land claims settlement has inspired enthusiasm for positive change in the lives of its members. People have hope and a vision for the future which are becoming part of the plans for a strong community. It is an enormous task and the leadership must coordinate plans to move forward on all fronts while maintaining momentum. This is difficult and challenging but similar to the sort of tasks facing the other selected communities in terms of complexity.

Social respect from Canadian society is an on-going issue for Aboriginal nations. The national media is often quick to highlight scandals and crime while ignoring or minimizing

successful business stories or academic achievements by bright Aboriginal students. There is more balance in grassroots Aboriginal newspapers although relationships with leadership can be rocky with accusations of unfair criticism and closed door politics being made back and forth. These communities are no different. Can issues of contention be aired so that all sides can be examined in the name of solid decision-making? How can balanced reporting be encouraged in the media so focused on 'extreme' human experience as 'good' news?

The relationship between the selected communities and other communities and organizations is apparent and may include tribal councils, or regional organizations based on treaty or national membership in Assembly of First Nations. Larger issues of policy are dealt with in these arenas but regions and individual communities work effectively on specific issues linked to their immediate concerns.

Within these communities, there are examples of policies that support hiring on the basis of heritage and skills while consultants are used in specific circumstances for limited time periods. This is not always possible when qualified applicants are unavailable and so non-Aboriginal peoples carry those positions.

Another element is access to financial resources. Many financial institutions see the potential for increasing market share with Aboriginal clients in an industry that has little to no room for growth. Tsuu T'ina Nation has built a strong relationship with its financial institution based on a record of increasing assets and reliability. While it is not possible to build an urban 'community' relationship with a financial institution in the same way, Aboriginal organizations based in Winnipeg do develop banking relationships. Accessibility and flexibility remain critical issues in this area. Bigstone Cree Nation and Alberta Pacific Forest Industry (Al Pac) partnership must be considered for the insights to be gained.

The Earth Mother provides the context for the Elements of Development model. The impact of development, in terms of the environment, sustainable development and Aboriginal

wisdom are part of the discussion around the first and third research objectives.

11.3. Partnerships

Partnerships of all types are part of these communities' strategies for success. Tsuu T'ina Nation emphasizes more band-owned enterprises based on their lengthy experience. Their partnerships focus on specific expertise they value or in cultivating necessary relationships such as in the financial community. The Gwich'in have the resources to fund their own projects but will enter into advantageous partnerships. The partnerships that are examined in most detail in this study are the ones that Bigstone Cree Nation has entered into with resource companies. Two perspectives are examined– that of the community and the company.

Bigstone Cree Nation incorporates partnership opportunities into its economic development strategy. Bigstone's experiences are varied. It wants fairness in the opportunities that are made available to its members, recognition of its claim on its territory, and the spirit observed as well as, commitment to the terms of that agreement. Bigstone acknowledges training programs are costly and affect the bottomline. It try to work with companies in its area but sometimes it is difficult. They must be assertive in setting the pace for significant partnerships.

Al Pac made its Aboriginal community policy integral to its corporate strategy. Clear feedback to that effect was one of the catalysts for a leading-edge industry policy. Al Pac reviewed community comments under the initial environmental impact assessment process and sought advice from within the Aboriginal community. As a result, the organization developed a number of internal and external programs. Internally, a senior manager acted as champion for this initiative that saw it through start-up and lean times in the industry. Programs for understanding Aboriginal worldviews and ceremony were developed for all staff. Supports were developed that encouraged retention of Aboriginal employees. A team was formed that is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs both internally and externally. It has reached the point where knowledge and experience regarding Aboriginal issues are building throughout the organization.

Externally, community members hired by Al Pac made contact with various communities in the area. Initially, they introduced senior Al Pac members to the leadership for discussions about company plans and the impact on the community. Relationships take time to cultivate but in the end it makes good business sense from the perspectives of public relations, human resources, and operations. Al Pac wants a secure supply of raw material. This is an important reason for these policies.

The problem that many companies facing these decisions must come to terms with, is that Aboriginal leadership and their communities are sophisticated business partners. Lip service to these types of policies will be readily identified and will sabotage long-term success. Al Pac is interested in the long-term. As a result, it tries to balance supportive policies and avoid crossing the line of business where it no longer makes sense. Is that enough and should companies go further than what communities are demanding, going beyond the bottomline to what is right?

Contracts are available to Aboriginal-owned businesses but these companies are told that it is not easy and self-sufficiency is critical. Again, the company has to ask whether or not it has provided all that it can for these entrepreneurs. Environmental concerns held by communities are acknowledged but they must be part of the planning process that is set up for community input so meaningful plans are set. Taking the opportunity to share visions can influence policy and set the stage for successful partnerships.

It is not an easy road. External obstacles may arise that are beyond the control of the company or community as well, internal dissent regarding affirmative policies, may sabotage these partnerships. Champions for the partnership are needed in both camps with enough perseverance and authority to overcome the obstacles. Both Al Pac and Bigstone Cree Nation agree that the MOU has had mixed results. Neither expressed intentions of giving up. Persistence is critical.

Sometimes 'time' is the best tool. Over a period of years, Bigstone members moved from a position of being opposed to economic development to one where it will partner within its

guidelines. Time and consistency of contact within Al Pac has encouraged an environment that integrates Aboriginal perspectives at many levels within the company. This is not accomplished over night.

The need to review the relationship and continue to build on it cannot be taken for granted. People, priorities and pressures change and there must be room to accommodate those changes. If problems arise, the opportunities for both sides to talk, must be encouraged. For example, the MOU supports contracting opportunities. It would appear that Al Pac thinks that offering the opportunity is enough while Bigstone wants more help in order to truly take advantage of the opportunity. For example, strategies might include dividing contracts into manageable pieces for entrepreneurs or leasing expensive equipment to entrepreneurs. This is an issue that must be negotiated. It is an opportunity for Al Pac to make a decision that genuinely reflects concern and caring for this community.

It is unclear how easily this model might be adapted in a setting where the company had entrenched attitudes and procedures. Al Pac started business with commitment to working with Aboriginal peoples although this was new to many of its experienced forestry personnel. In any event, there is much to be learned by the experience of Bigstone and Al Pac.

Al Pac's commitment has gone further than the company and extends to other companies in the industry. It is a priority that the industry be a leader in promoting strong relationships with Aboriginal communities. This commitment takes the policy to a different level and sets the company apart from those who use meaningless employment statistics or set the bar of business opportunity in such a way that Aboriginal-owned companies cannot compete. Meaningless employment would be to pump up part-time positions with Aboriginal peoples but then have little or no reason for calling on part-time employees. Unfair business practice might include a situation where expensive equipment is required for bidding on contracts but the contracts are not large enough to support the cost of the expensive equipment.

Partnerships go beyond business, into community well-being and state relationships. For example, the Gwich'in form healthy alliances with the non-Aboriginal members in their community, and with other communities in the region. In Winnipeg, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg (ACW) entered into a memorandum of understanding with municipal, provincial and federal governments that has supported its work and credibility with government. How committed these partners are to the well-being of urban-based Aboriginal peoples remains to be seen especially in light of ACW's internal conflicts.

Economic development strategies taken by decision-makers in Aboriginal communities are based on the need to improve employment, training and development initiatives in order to positively impact the quality of life enjoyed by community members. Community history, leadership and connection to tradition affect the choice of economic development approaches as noted in the five premises set out in chapter five and illustrated in the case studies. It is this connection that lies at the heart of the third research objective.

11.4. Research Objective Three: What place does Aboriginal wisdom hold in Aboriginal communities striving for economic development in tune with individual community rhythms?

It is declared again and again by Aboriginal peoples that 'the land is our life, our home and must be protected.' It is this 'given' that sets the stage for many Aboriginal leaders to make decisions that respect the land, as well as meet the community demands for employment opportunities. Resources are there to be used for communities to look after themselves in independence. This may result in a superficial assessment by outsiders that labels certain decisions as the antithesis of sustainable development principles (Widdowson & Howard, 1998). Better understanding and deeper appreciation may result with discussion of the reasons for the community's decision.

The connection to the land is so integral to their personal identities that it is often a surprise to Aboriginal peoples to even be asked to talk about it. This does not mean that all Aboriginal peoples have an innate attachment to Mother Earth nor that each will act on it when given the

chance. It does means that when consistent input into the decision-making process from the community is possible, the checks and balances in the system will tend to factor protection of the Earth Mother into the final decision in Aboriginal communities.

For example, Tsuu T'ina Nation decided against a profitable business proposal for its business park because the by-products from the service work would impact negatively on the environment. Other Nation businesses have passed its elders council, Chief and council, its community and its zoning by-law which fully addresses environmental issues.

In contrast, Bigstone Cree Nation has taken a very cautious approach to the economic development of its resources. They were not interested in the forestry industry initially. Ten years later they are more open to partnerships but are still cautious and want to protect its resources. It is interested in partnerships and business opportunities that will still allow them to satisfy community standards regarding the environment. It is aggressive in protecting their land and when new companies come to exploit resources without proper consultation, the Nation acts quickly to defend its children's heritage. The province may have awarded proper licenses but the norm is that companies are being required to act responsibly with surrounding communities.

The Gwich'in people are most articulate about their continuing ties to the land. They celebrate those families that spend time on the land during weekends or holidays. It is an important factor in their investment decisions because they want to preserve the land for future generations, also noted by their elders. None of these communities have demonstrated priorities where profit is given precedence, hand in hand with destruction of land. Rather it is reasonable development in support of livelihood and community.

Individual interests are more prominent in the urban setting, with community being constructed by organizations that attract individuals with common interests. It is a construct of a multitude of communities. In terms of sustainability, this setting requires a shift of focus from natural resources to institutional sustainability through leadership foresight; human resource

development and financial resource allocation. The Aboriginal Centre remains a nucleus for the Aboriginal community as it houses a number of businesses and organizations within the larger Neeginan project. It is profitable and represents a major real estate investment held by members of the Aboriginal community. Debate continues about the sustainability of this centralizing approach compared to investing in a number of less risky projects in keeping with the needs of the community. Further, reliance on government funding that finance budgets of tenants puts the Centre in a position of risk for the long-term.

ACW provides an alternative to the MMF and AMC who have not moved quickly, due to resource constraints, to meet the needs of their urban-based members. As this changes, ACW's strengths lie in the vision for an independent organization that does not provide services but nurtures the ones that need their help. Its leadership must regain its balance and move forward in gaining greater membership and encouraging participation in decisions. ACW's mandate makes the organization available to all Aboriginal peoples in the city of Winnipeg, going beyond the membership-based mandates of MMF and AMC.

Its inclusive approach contributes to its sustainability. Aboriginal Business Development Centre has set a strong foundation for capacity building that goes to sustainability of the community. Successful small business development will increase the contribution to the economy by Aboriginal peoples. Finally, Aboriginal Youth With Initiative ensures that the youth understand the issues and are working to make significant changes. As future leaders, this bodes well for the health of the Aboriginal community. It must be noted however that there is evidence of other experiences where priority seems to have been given to maintenance of the status quo rather than support for young leaders with new visions. This works against the continuing health of Aboriginal organizations and communities.

Community rhythms allude to the main axes in the Elements of Development Model, including control of assets, spirituality, kinship and personal efficacy, as well as, to the internal/ external challenges and opportunities facing each community. Each community must walk its own

path and live its own truth. The analysis of the second research objective indicates that each community has similar problems that are shaped by local circumstances that make them distinctive. They can learn from each other's experience but they will have to reach farther for the significance that experience has for their community then just try to 'rubber stamp' experiences from one community to another. The experience does not translate directly from situation to situation.

There seems to be a willingness to work with Aboriginal communities on the part of Corporate Canada, when it makes good business sense. Different standards to reflect Aboriginal employee differences do not work unless company policies are revised in a manner that makes sense for everyone. The usual starting point in considering these questions is the business orientation to the bottom line. Generally, Aboriginal peoples are expected to fit into the corporate culture. Room for kinship, spirituality and personal efficacy are not priorities since they do not translate directly into profits. Is there room in the business world for Aboriginal perspectives and priorities? Is there a way that time pressures may be eased and to let the cycles of nature dictate pace, focus and balance? What differences would a more holistic approach make in the boardrooms of corporate Canada? I submit that it is time to find out.

Aboriginal companies and organizations are able to give more room to these rhythms when business is being done in their own communities where Nation members have control. Traditions such as ceremonies or honoring the collective nature of Aboriginal communities oftentimes are seen as burdensome or meaningless in the mainstream business world. Accepting that single-minded focus on profit to the exclusion of balance and respect, has significantly marred the quality of life for those generations that will follow, is a giant step towards realizing that capitalism, in its present form, does not have all the answers. It is time once again for Aboriginal peoples to share survival skills with their brothers and sisters for the benefit of this generation and all those that follow.

Profit is important but not the only factor to consider in a business decision. For example, truly effective partnerships go past paying lip service to the concept, to commitment at senior

levels and creative programs and policies that actually make a difference and even go beyond the demands of Aboriginal communities. Time is given for relationships to develop and for progress to be made. This includes building an internal climate that supports these policies.

These selected communities demonstrate the level of activity that is occurring across the country. Community members are highlighted who are pro-active, insightful and visionary. When they have the skills and control, they focus on the community vision in ways that cannot be dictated nor handed to them from outsiders. Governing is not easy but individuals with reasons to dedicate their time to the process are stepping forward to listen and be guided in traditions that are appropriate to their communities. It is economic development on their terms. Many are assuming control of programming in all areas at a pace that flies in the face of the picture of dependence commonly understood by Canadians.

In the effective governance of business projects, these selected communities have dealt with the issue of separating business and politics in their own ways. It is not an either/or situation as is painted by some research studies (RCAP, 2, 1996). For example, Bigstone Cree Nation says that at this stage in its development, it is satisfied with Chief and council being involved in business decisions including investment and policy issues. It saves time since there is always a political element that must be dealt with. This may change as the community grows but for now it works for them. On the other hand, Tsuu T'ina has recognized the political element but also the need for input from community members with business expertise. They structure their board membership with a majority of community members but with participation by a band councillor. Politics does not overwhelm the process but maintains a presence.

Finding the appropriate balance is always challenging. The Aboriginal Business Development Centre has gone through a change in management, that according to their funders, was related to an ineffective mixing of political and business agendas. The issue at hand, is that the time to learn all types of lessons is now for Aboriginal peoples. A guiding hand is useful but sometimes hard lessons are the best.

The time for maintaining separations of services because of the political labels placed on Aboriginal peoples by colonizing forces is past. The approach taken by the Aboriginal Centre, ACW, ABDC and other organizations that meet the needs of Aboriginal peoples regardless of their government label is much more satisfying and in keeping with Aboriginal traditions. Government funding may be an excuse to continue this attitude, but I submit that meaningful self-governance and independence is demonstrated by new partnerships, sharing and caring that honors our traditions, and moving in directions where Aboriginal peoples recognize their common needs and work together to make new realities.

11.5. Conclusions

In conclusion, the role of Aboriginal wisdom in economic development as contemplated by the first research objective, is hinted at in those authors who are explore the boundaries of conventional theory in their diverse disciplines like Daly, Suzuki, Hawken and Capra. Other authors like Berkes, Elias,Wien and Loxley conduct research with Aboriginal peoples regarding economic development choices in ways that respectfully acknowledge opportunities, strengths and challenges. For Aboriginal scholars such as Salway Black, Newhouse, Dockstater, Ghostkeeper and Colorado the wisdom that flows from their worldviews command the direction of their research including economic development in their communities. It is possible that Aboriginal worldviews may command more attention in future economic development literature but the stage is set for Aboriginal scholars to carry Aboriginal wisdom forward in their exploration of economic development for Aboriginal society.

Aboriginal communities will continue to draw on wisdom from mainstream business as well as their own experience and perspectives in developing strategies for economic development. A review of the selected communities revealed distinctive approaches, as contemplated in the second research objective. These blends may continue in the future especially with support from those who understand the importance of Aboriginal wisdom in the process. If the influence of capitalism is not scrutinized then this research objective would become moot since the influence of capitalism would be paramount.

Finally, scrutiny of the selected communities demonstrated evidence of a rich heritage that is cherished even in an urban setting. Aboriginal wisdom has a presence that is stronger in some communities than in others. Its role in community economic development strategies is evident throughout these selected communities. Its contribution to the continued survival of Aboriginal peoples cannot be underestimated although to expect systematic application of Aboriginal wisdom even within Aboriginal society is unrealistic. Such an expectation would not respect the diversity inherent in these communities.

Generally, there are still many challenges for these communities on their particular journeys to independence. It is important for Aboriginal peoples that they be allowed to contribute to Canadian society in positive ways since the more common experience is negative. Acknowledging and using Aboriginal experience and insight where it can benefit both Aboriginal communities and Canadian society is a win-win situation. The stories of the struggles and triumphs of individual Aboriginal communities serve as an evaluative guide for policy, appropriate economic development strategies and insight into specific approaches to questions of resources, human development and other governance issues.

Further participatory research in these areas will increase understanding of what works and how assistance can be most thoughtfully employed to help communities striving for strong communities. It must continue to draw on the strengths of Aboriginal wisdom, ways of knowing, perspectives along with a partnership of western approaches that open the door for this work into Aboriginal communities, academia and Canadian society.

When we talk generally about what should be done or what is being done, the message goes just so far. The message that is shared by these communities and their experiences, is apparent to those who are close to them, of course, but generally, these messages quickly bounce back from the walls of indifference and ignorance that separate Aboriginal peoples from the rest of Canadians. A clearer picture emerges when the words come from community members. That is the best of what comes from sharing and caring.

The changes continue in these communities and are heartening. Sharing stories, dreams and victories make us all strong ...

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