Miyupimaatisiiun in Eeyou Istchee: Healing and Decolonization in Chisasibi

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ABSTRACT

Miyupimaatisiiun in Eeyou Istchee: Healing and Decolonization in Chisasibi

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This research is about ongoing processes of decolonization that are taking place in Indigenous communities across the globe and in the academia. Its twofold purpose is to explore the connections between autonomy and wellbeing in Indigenous contexts through a case study in the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee (James Bay, northern Quebec) and to elucidate the decolonizing research paradigm developed in collaboration with the community.

This study shows that approaches to decolonization and healing are varied, transitional, relational and creative. They are specific to particular nations, communities, groups within communities, and individuals. Often they are informed by personal histories, experiences and ontologies that come together to inspire and build opportunities for change and living a good life. It also seeks to caution against prescriptive and normative approaches to Indigenous-settler relations that bracket everyday experience and local processes of resurgence all the while bringing attention to how structural and institutional forces frame local action.

The collective effort in Chisasibi implies that everyone is doing their part in decolonizing the mind, body and spirit of the community, the best way *they* know how. It is about each individual finding what they hold sacred and honoring it in everyday actions. Even though decolonization is only rarely expressed as such, for those that have been involved with this project, decolonization means caring and loving for one another and invigorating the body with the effort of surviving on the land. It includes openness to the world and the recognition that decolonization is a collective and creative undertaking, of making something new from the everyday encounters, and more importantly, of creating inclusive spaces for these encounters to continually take place.

Keywords: decolonization, healing, knowledge mobilization, Eeyou Istchee

In memory of my grandparents

To Mom, Mike and

All my relations

Drumul spre "înţelepciune" sau spre "libertate" este un drum spre centrul fiinţei tale.

Mircea Eliade, Fragmentarium, 1939

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Introduction

What is compassion comprised of? And there are various facets. And there's referential and non-referential compassion. But first, compassion is comprised of that capacity to see clearly into the nature of suffering. It is that ability to really stand strong and to recognize also that I'm not separate from this suffering. But that is not enough, because compassion, which activates the motor cortex, means that we aspire, we actually aspire to transform suffering. And if we're so blessed, we engage in activities that transform suffering. But compassion has another component, and that component is really essential. That component is that we cannot be attached to outcome.
Joan Halifax, Compassion and the true meaning of empathy, TEDTalk, Dec 2010.

In October 1987, Naomi Adelson, then a PhD student in anthropology at McGill University, arrived in Whapmagoostui to assess whether the Cree community was interested to participate in a study about what health means to them. In the course of the fifteen months spent with the Whapmagoostui iiyiyiu, Adelson came to understand that miyupimaatisiiun (loosely translated as 'being alive well') includes the biomedical concept of health (or absence of disease), but moves beyond it by linking the body to the land and identity, and inevitably to resistance and dissent. As an anthropologist Adelson recognized health as a 'dynamic cultural process' at the onset, yet the links to land and identity were unexpected and only through life stories detailing life in the bush did she understand that history and contemporary contexts of dispossession and industrialization where intricately linked to individual and communal understanding of wellness and health (1992; 2000). For the Whapmagoostui iiyiyiu, and more broadly for the Cree of Eeyou Istchee[1], miyupimaatisiiun means that an individual is able to hunt and trap and pursue other land-based activities, that he or she has access to good food (game meat and anything that comes from the land) and warmth, and is able to enjoy life and to participate actively within the community (Adelson, 2000; CBHSSJB, 2004; Tanner, 2008). In other words, the very embodied presence on the land, whether frequent or infrequent, and active engagement in Indoh-hohn (Cree bush skills and social organization, including active engagement with Iiyiyiu cosmology), whether at home or in the bush, make up foundational identitary characteristics that, among other things, give meaning to what being a Cree person is all about.

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[1] Also spelled 'iiyiyiu aschii'

Adelson's study was framed by the second phase of the James Bay hydroelectric project which aimed to incorporate the Great Whale River into the existing La Grande complex completed in the early 1980s. The ecological destruction of Eeyou Istchee thus become "a necessary part of the story of health" as the land base that defines the Cree sense of culture and identity was imminently under threat, and thus, so was miyupimaatisiiun (2000, p. 10). Fortunately, the Great Whale project was cancelled following years of Cree opposition, and the context of hydro development helped forge a new direction in health theory and medical anthropology, one that, guided by the experiential knowledge of Whapmagoostui iiyiyiu, shows how health and politics intersect:

> …strategies of health can be strategies of dissent, or at the very least the means by which a person, through his or her body, can become involved in the negotiations of power between the State, the disenfranchised group and the individual. For the Whapmagoostui people, strategies of health -*miyupimaatisiiun* – connect individual bodies to that larger political process; in this way links are formed between health, cultural assertion, and dissent within both individual bodies and the body politic. (2000, p. 114)

Subsequent studies by Adelson strengthened this link between health and politics through the conceptualization of social suffering and the various culture-based activities that aimed to renegotiate and redefine Indigeneity as a response to that suffering. In her 2001 article "Reimagining Aboriginality: An Indigenous People's Response to Social Suffering" that first conceptualized social suffering as a category of analysis of Indigenous-State relations, Adelson explains that "Indigenous Canadians as a group are living out the effects of a chronology of neglect, indifference, and systemic oppression" that results in "the kind of long-term, institutionalized, and ultimately invisible suffering that has been referred to as the "soft knife" of long term oppression" (p. 77). Or as Irlbacher-Fox (2009) states, "the various social pathologies afflicting Indigenous communities in Canada, a complex of disease and unwellness, poverty and social issues, often referred to as 'Third World conditions' common in Indigenous communities" characterize the collective expression of social suffering (p. 29). She advances the analysis of social suffering by showing how the federal government in its self-governance policy and negotiations casts injustice caused by colonialism into the past, and thus the present suffering

resulting from centuries of assimilation and domination is historicized and suspended as something that cannot be changed (it is in the past). In turn, present social suffering is conceptualized as a result of Indigenous dysfunction and thus interventionist and restrictive policy is used to legitimate ongoing injustice (Indigenous people are not yet 'ready' to take responsibility or, put another way, they are not 'well enough' to do so). If Indigenous people are caught in the proverbial catch 22, forever constrained to a relationship that is at best strained and at worse still inscribed within the State's neocolonial paradigm (Alfred Taiaike, 2005; Coulthard, 2007; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; Ladner, 2003), are there opportunities to transform suffering? How can the 'invisible' suffering be made visible *and* be transformed? And if transformation does not necessarily lead to a just Indigenous-State relationship, does that mean that the whole enterprise has failed? Is there no hope?

In the summer of 2008, I had reluctantly agreed to 'visit' the hydro construction site on the banks of the Rupert River. My friend and tallyman of R21 trapline, Freddie Jolly, had insisted that I go. "You have to see it" he said, "you have to face it". As I sat looking out at the patch of clear-cut on both banks of the Rupert I could no longer hold back the tears. It was the first time in my life that I grieved for the land. We usually grieve for loved ones, for people, and maybe for pets and farm animals. But that day I was grieving for a river that Freddy was so gracious to have shared with me. I felt a mix of anger and resentment, sadness and hopelessness, but most of all of utter disappointment that all the efforts of so many people had failed to meet the desired outcome. I had paddled in the summer, idled in the blinds during the spring goose hunt, and snowshoe walked the Rupert for a couple of years following my move to Nemaska in 2005. After close to three years of intense and emotionally charged opposition to the damming of the Rupert River, as I sat looking at its advancing destruction, I had almost lost hope. The countless hours of strategizing, researching, writing reports and position papers for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of Eastmain 1-A project seemed like a huge waste of time and energy. The system is clearly designed for the industry, a project is rarely rejected, in fact only 0.1% of projects going through the EIA process are rejected (Radu, 2010). The three Cree communities of Nemaska, Waskaganish and Chisasibi that I had worked with had even each passed a local referendum regarding the project. Unsurprisingly, the project was rejected by all three communities. Unfortunately in 2006 social acceptability of projects was not an important variable

in development discussions[2], plus the Cree had signed the Paix de Braves which for many amounted to a tacit acceptance of the hydroelectric project.

Figure 1 Freddie setting up decoys during spring goose hunt

I asked Freddie how can he continue to work with Hydro Quebec knowing that the project will flood more than 10% of his trapline (not including the roads, workers and traffic in and around his territory) and forever change the Rupert? And knowing that all his efforts to stop the project will nevertheless come to naught, just like mine had, was it even worth it? His answer was very simple: if he wasn't going to do it then someone else would. At least, he reasoned, by remaining engaged in the process he would have the opportunity to take action to mediate some of the impacts, even if the project goes through. And so, Freddie remained engaged even after he was stripped of his tallyman status following family disagreements, even if he was not allowed to drive his own boat on the Rupert because he did not have a licence, and even if his protest snowshoe walk remained an ignored and devalued action in the eyes of the EIA commissioners. On that day, when I cried for the Rupert, Freddie taught me a lesson in compassion. He taught me that one cannot remain attached to an imagined outcome and that just engaging in transforming suffering is enough because in the process we create invaluable relationships that transform us.

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[2] For more details on social acceptability see Baril, (2006), Boyd (2003), and Owen & Kemp (2013).

As my friend and research partner Larry House pointed to me, that personal transformation we carry anywhere we go and, hopefully, in turn transforms the new relationships that we continue to engage in. So, what does a discussion about compassion has to do with an academic text such as this thesis?

Joan Halifax's talk on compassion sparked a final turning point or epiphany in the development of my epistemology. She asks: "You know, if compassion is so good for us, I have a question. Why don't we train our children in compassion? If compassion is so good for us, why don't we train our health care providers in compassion so that they can do what they're supposed to do, which is to really transform suffering? And if compassion is so good for us, why don't we vote on compassion? Why don't we vote for people in our government based on compassion, so that we can have a more caring world?" Couched within her presentation I heard the echoes of concepts that make up this interdisciplinary study: decolonization, resilience, agency, respect, cocreation, love, mobilization, sharing, relationality, accountability, reflexivity, wellbeing, resurgence, creativity, wisdom, engagement and holism. In an Indigenous research context then, one can ask 'if social suffering is so prevalent and destabilizing, why don't we train students in ways to transform it? If social suffering is so prevalent and destabilizing why don't we, as researchers, aim to make its transformation our research goal? And, if social suffering is the basis for continued oppression why don't we, as 'privileged' knowledge holders, take responsibility for it? In many ways these are the questions that Indigenous communities have asked of researchers for decades. But maybe researchers were not ready to face these questions, just like I was not ready to face the damage to the Rupert River, until the reflexive turn in social sciences took hold in the academia. It is perhaps the visible and inescapable global suffering perpetrated during WWII that finally broke positivism's back and led researchers to pay attention to the lives lived in the context of their ethnographies (Cole & Knowles, 2001).

Sociologist Michel Burawoy (2009) and many other scholars from myriad disciplines, as seemingly disparate as psychology and archeology, remind us that research is an intervention into the lives of participants and that researchers come to the research encounter with their own theoretical and methodological 'baggage' shaped by their respective discipline. Furthermore, researchers are not abstract 'things' they are individuals with specific life experiences who belong to particular, cultural, social, economic and political worlds. In addition to the academic ethos, these personal experiences and characteristics bring a set of biases, purposes, and

assumptions that influence the interpersonal encounters of research, the framing of research questions and the final products (Archibald, 2008; Burawoy, 2009; Lyons, 2013; Portelli, 1997; Wilson, 2008). Similarly, in the context of life history research, educational researchers Cole & Knowles (2001) assert that "we research who we are…we express and represent elements of ourselves in every research situation" (p. 89).

The unifying element that leads researchers to recognize their positionality happens in the dynamic and often uncertain encounter with the people that breathe life into the research – the interviewees, the administrators, the peers, the friends, the family and countless others that make up the researcher's web of relations. The intervention in the lives of others should thus be guided by the understanding that research is essentially a constellation of relationships that are intimate and dynamic. Hence, for knowledge production to be genuine these relationships should be characterized by "care, sensitivity and respect" (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p.43). Indeed, similar to Joan Halifax, Cole & Knowles ask: "How has the life, or how have the lives, been changed for the better?…How has the work made a difference?" The answer, they stress,

> demands an acceptance of a moral ethic and responsibility whose veins not only run deep into the motivations and potentialities for life history work – and the traditions associated with it that reside in the academy – but also strongly pulsate into the affairs of the world at large. (p. 108)

Indeed, engaging with the world at large in a way that makes a difference requires a research paradigm predicated on respect and reciprocity. Indigenous scholar Shawn Wilson defines "research by and for Aboriginal peoples" as a "ceremony that brings relationships together" (p. 8). The constitutive aspects being relationality and relational accountability that "can be put into practice through the choice of research topic, methods of data collection, form of analysis and presentation of information" (p. 7). From my research partner Larry House, who is also a Sundance Chief, I learned that ceremony has three important aspects: to honor relationships, to uphold obligations to these relationships, and to strengthen commitment in the long-term. These are the teachings that I have retained as a noninitiate and by no means do they encompass the complex web of social, legal, cultural and symbolic meaning of ceremony in Indigenous contexts. To assume otherwise would be disrespectful and inappropriate; nonetheless, I believe they point to important aspects of doing community-based research.

First, ceremony functions as a way of celebrating and honoring the relationships we maintain with Creation. As Wilson (2008) and Cole & Knowles (2001) explain, is the relationships with ideas, with the land, the spiritual relationships with the cosmos and those more immediate relationships of the research process with the people that guide and participate in it. For me this means that professional/academic and personal experiences have equal impact on the intellectual outcomes of research and thus should be made visible/legible; honored through explicit acknowledgement.

The second aspect of ceremony is consciously focussing the mind on the responsibilities that we have to uphold in maintaining these relationships. In the research context, I understand this to be the awareness of the researcher's positionality and self-reflexivity throughout the research process. This aspect is probably most expanded upon by oral historians[3] who remind us that an interview is in a sense a "laboring together", of "knowing *with*" as opposed to "knowing *from*" (Greenspan & Bolkosky, 2006, p. 432, emphasis in the original). Alessandro Portelli (1991) asserts that the interview is an "exercise in equality" that recognizes difference as a common ground to build new understanding:

> Only equality prepares us to accept difference in terms other than hierarchy and subordination; on the other hand, without difference there is no equality – only sameness, which is a much less worthwhile ideal. Only equality makes the interview credible, but only difference makes it relevant…I believe that one possible function of research today is to, once again, place the question of identity on a social and interpersonal plane, and to help us recognize ourselves in what makes us similar yet different from others. (p. 43)

In other words, 'relational accountability' includes at the same time an aspiration for social justice 'in the world at large' and sharing of authority in the intimate encounter of the interview or "sharing the power going into these new connections" (Wilson, 2008, p. 79).

Third, it is the sustained work that goes into preparing for a ceremony – an effort and commitment for the long-term – that makes possible the creation of spaces and places conducive to the flourishing of equitable relationships. For example, the Sundance is prepared months in

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[3] I follow High & Little (2014) in defining oral historians as belonging "to an interdisciplinary community of practice" connected "by a shared methodology [...and] a shared interest in life stories" with 'individual subjectivity as the basis of analysis' (p. 6 & 8).

advance, cloth is procured, people volunteer, medicines are gathered, and participants commit to attend for a period of four consecutive years. Ethnographers[4] and oral historians, and more recently knowledge mobilization scholars, often maintain relationships with collaborating communities for decades. Sometimes termed as engaged scholarship, collaborative research is built over many years with the same community[5]. For example, Henry Greenspan has worked with the same group of Holocaust survivors for more than thirty years (Greenspan, 2014). Greenspan's 'engaged scholarship' finds expression in the relationships that Sto:lo scholar Jo-Ann Archibald Q'um Q'um Xiiem describes with each of the three Elders that participated in the research for *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) and the work she has undertaken for many decades with the Coqualeetza Elder's Council. Indeed, anthropologist Carole Lévesque (in press) reminds us that the research activity is not limited to the field work, but begins years before the researcher engages in the first formal interview or observation. In her presentation of DIALOG (Aboriginal Peoples Research and Knowledge Network) a network of researchers, students and Indigenous stakeholders, Lévesque (2009) identifies three distinctive forms that the principle of commitment takes within the network: to build inclusive and non-hierarchical interaction between its members; to create opportunities and spaces for the interaction to take place; and to maintain these interactions in the long-term (p. 98).

For me, this also means that research is both an intellectual and political endeavour, one that cannot be accomplished without taking sides, without becoming a researcher-advocate and ally. In other words, the commitment to self-reflexivity aims for self-transformation, the realization that I am indeed not separate from suffering, yet, as a settler engaged in decolonization I also have to be careful not to fall into the illusions of 'colonial empathy'. Speaking in the context of the residential school Truth and Reconciliation process in Canada, Paulette Regan (2010) reminds settlers that 'colonial empathy' or 'white guilt' enables "non-Indigenous people to feel good about feeling bad but engender[s] no critical awareness of themselves as colonial beneficiaries who bear a responsibility to address the inequalities and injustices from which they have profited" (p. 47). She further argues that learning critical awareness implies that the knower has a responsibility to pass on the self-actualized teachings, as

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[4] By ethnographers I mean social scientists and scholars who "commit to studying others in their space and time" (Burawoy, 2009, p. xi)

[5] Understood in its broadest sense, i.e. as a 'social and spatial process' that is "lived, imagined, and reproduced", which includes a particular social network of people and institutions anchored in a given geographical place but also networks that transcend locality (Walsh & High, 1999; High, 2014, p.24)

is consistent with Indigenous pedagogies and storytelling (Archibald, 2008; Cruikshank, 1998; Regan, 2010). Gaztambide-Fernandez (2012) explores forms of a decolonizing solidarity that is committed to transforming spaces of intersubjective interaction that in turn transform those engaged in the interaction: "The pedagogy of solidarity is concerned with the conditions of possibility for ethical encounters that rearrange structural conditions, including both the symbolic and material dimensions that produce the encounter" (p. 57).

Solidarity and settler-ally relationships then have decolonization as 'common interest', while, similar to storytelling, they remain non-prescriptive, creative and transitional depending on local contexts of subjective interactions. Without a doubt, commitment to critical awareness as settlers-allies includes responsibility for decolonizing the self, after all Indigenous allies and research partners "should not be asked to carry the additional burden of my decolonizing struggle" (Regan, 2010, p. 31). The lesson that Freddie Jolly had taught me in the summer of 2008 gave me the strength to commit to compassionate engagement and develop an Indigenous research paradigm that makes sense to me, a settler, while remaining framed by both theory and practice, by both the academia and the worldview of the Cree research partners. At the same time, I am mindful of Joan Halifax's warning that I cannot be attached to outcome, and as Elder Eddie Pash, with whom I have the privilege to collaborate since 2012, has taught me, if something doesn't work the first time, try again because every challenge is an opportunity for life-long learning. Indeed, as Burawoy (2009) eloquently asserts, "such are the dialectics of ethnography – you never end up where you begin, if only because this is research in real space and time. History takes its course, which defies the very theory that makes it intelligible" (p. 244).

Retrospectively, the challenges encountered have taught me much about doing collaborative research and have become epiphanies that have pushed my epistemology along. Much like memory work, this thesis is a space and place in which I make sense of my intellectual evolution, a meaning making that strives to weave together past, present and future. In the following chapters I show how I began this research with a concern for resource development or more specifically, how land loss is experienced in everyday life, and ended up with a research about healing and decolonization. My trajectory is almost a mirror image of Adelson's, starting with the land and coming full circle to health. My concern for youth gave way to a research relationship in which Elders and adults are the main protagonists. Nevertheless, the values that underlined my epistemology from the onset did not change much. These were/are: that any

research project needs to have a relevant and practical application for the community; that the research process is co-determined by the community and the researcher in the spirit of reciprocity and respect; that all local knowledges (community narratives, personal stories, spiritual expressions, etc.) are fully recognized and valued both as theory and praxis[6]; and finally, that the aims are to foster community agency and empowerment. In other words, I opted to take a strength based approach, placing emphasis on the mechanisms, processes, skills and knowledge that community members already employ and nurture and to 'rescale' the focus of the research locally so that "a dual focus on the individual and the collective, representing two scales of social action that operate in a dialectic with each other" could be made visible (Lyons, 2013, p.89). Although not intended from the onset, this research process followed (tacitly) the extended case method as developed by sociologist Michael Burawoy where local dynamics provide the point of departure for understanding the structuring of social forces which in turn help reconstruct theory.

Autonomy and wellbeing – what this research is about

This research is about ongoing processes of decolonization that are taking place in Indigenous communities across the globe and in the academia. Its twofold purpose is to explore the connections between autonomy and wellbeing in Indigenous contexts through a case study in the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, Eeyou Istchee (James Bay, northern Quebec) and to elucidate the decolonizing research paradigm developed in collaboration with the community. In the first instance, it centers on the concept of healing as a means through which the relational links between autonomy and wellbeing are developed, nurtured and redefined, depending on specific local contexts. In the Cree Nation of Chisasibi the implementation of iiyiyiu healing in the health and social service delivery is one of the examples where community members create and strengthen local socio-culturally relevant institutions, and define their own goals that correspond to their expressed needs. Healing is by no means static but actively and continuously renegotiated; it is reflective of an Indigeneity firmly embedded in both place and wider process of decolonization (Waldram, 2008). As such, healing is always part of a response to external

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[6] Praxis is understood as `learning through action' by consciously building connections that through dialog enable collective reflection and better understanding of system behavior, change and adaptation. Praxis is thus a knowledge creation process in which tacit, experiential and intuitive knowledge held by individuals, gained both through internal reflection and collective lived experience, leads to self-organization that facilitates decision-making and action. In the context of Indigenous peoples, praxis (informed by Indigenous knowledge) leads to transforming unequal power relations and calls for continuous and simultaneous action and reflection or building the social capital needed to take action (Bennet & Bennet, 2008, p.41; Freire, 2004[1992]).

destabilizing forces that are in turn specific to physical and temporal contexts. For this research, healing therefore presents an interesting entry into an examination of decolonization because it reflects subjective and objective power dynamics and cultural ethos at both the individual and communal levels; anchors identity and Indigeneity at specific temporal and physical sites of production; elucidates process of cultural change and continuity; and functions as space and means of political resistance and empowerment. Essentially, this research is about everyday decolonization. It aims to reveal how political resistance is enacted and embodied by community members through a seemingly mundane constellation of activities that make up their social existence.

In the second instance, this research is an experiment in knowledge mobilization. It traces the journey of the knowledge co-created at different stages of the research process by paying attention to the actors involved, various levels of collaborative engagement, its temporal and topical dimensions, as well as the nature and aims of its various outputs. Ultimately, by appreciating the ways in which the knowledge was created and circulated, a decolonizing research practice was developed in the course of this study. This experiment in knowledge mobilization is framed by an Indigenous research paradigm that acknowledges that knowledge is relational and therefore cocreated in the dialogic encounter of the research process, and here I want to stress that this encounter does not limit itself to that between individuals but extends to the encounters with the land and with spirituality as previously discussed. Knowledge is also culturally, temporally and spatially bound and therefore multiple and dynamic, which requires a heightened sense of respect and accountability to both the knowledge holders and to how the knowledge is mobilized. And lastly, an Indigenous research paradigm is critical, in the sense that it strives to transform suffering or 'restore harmony to relationships' by not only uncovering injustice but also centering the actions on the concerns, perspectives and purposes of the community (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). In other words, an Indigenous research paradigm is centred on the strengths and worldview of those that participate in the research process. From the perspective of the researcher, a critical Indigenous research paradigm also demands continual self-reflexivity that we "must carry over into the rest of our lives" (Wilson, 2008, p. 83). As Wilson rightly asserts, "if research doesn't change you as a person you are not doing it right" (p. 83).

The research presented here is thus the outcome of a six-year collaboration between myself, a settler PhD student; Larry House, a Chisasibi iiyiyiu, community advocate and my closest research partner; Eddie Pash, a Chisasibi iiyiyiu, cultural resource, and elder; as well as the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, the Nishiiyuu Department (Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay – CBHSSJB), the youth who participated in the initial stages and the individuals who so graciously agreed to share their healing stories with me: Irene Rupert-House, Denise Perusse, Mary Louise Snowboy, Roy Neacappo, Mike Polson (Big Mike), Martha Bearskin, William Bearskin, and two other individuals who preferred to remain anonymous. This web of relations also extends to my academic advisers who challenged me to strengthen my theoretical knowledge and who, through their own innovative University-Community Research Alliances (CURAs), have taught me much about doing collaborative research: Daniel Salée and Steven High from Concordia University, and Carole Lévesque from INRS. I am also indebted to my husband, Mike Wong, whose own professional career in multimedia production has inspired the many aspects of this research, not to mention the countless hours of mentoring and training I received from him. Finally, a network of peers is invaluable to navigate the often frustrating and uncertain world of graduate studies. As emerging researchers, we often lean on each other in times of doubt and reflect together on our ethics, methodologies and epistemologies. I would like to extend my gratitude to Stéphane G. Marceau, Ioana Comat, Catherine Calogeropoulos, and Aude Maltais-Landry.

Ultimately, this study shows that approaches to decolonization and healing are varied, transitional, relational and creative. They are specific to particular nations, communities, groups within communities, and individuals. Often they are informed by personal histories, experiences and ontologies that come together to inspire and build opportunities for change and living a good life. It also seeks to caution against prescriptive and normative approaches to Indigenous-settler relations that bracket everyday experience and local processes of resurgence all the while bringing attention to how structural and institutional forces frame local action. In other words, transforming suffering begins at the local level where addressing immediate and imminent priorities has the highest potential for local engagement and intervention that foregrounds agency and empowerment while operationalizing external forces to achieve Indigenous ways of being. The collective effort in Chisasibi implies that everyone is doing their part in decolonizing the mind, body and spirit of the community, the best way *they* know how. It is about each individual

finding what *they* hold sacred and honoring it in everyday actions. Even though decolonization is only rarely expressed as such, for those that have been involved with this project, decolonization means caring and loving for one another and invigorating the body with the effort of surviving on the land. It includes openness to the world and the recognition that decolonization is a collective and creative undertaking, of making something new from the everyday encounters, and more importantly, of creating inclusive spaces for these encounters to continually take place.

Structure of the thesis

This research is made up of the present thesis, a short (35min) documentary on the Chisasibi land-based healing program, and a series of five Korsakow films and corresponding website – www.chiasibi-healing.ca. These three main components are designed to stand-alone, meaning that each can be viewed/read/watched independently, yet when used in concert they provide a much richer understanding of healing and decolonization in Indigenous milieus. Throughout this thesis I point to the website and especially the five Korsakow films as a way for the reader to access a much more intimate and direct engagement with the eight interviewees; responding, in part, to the gaps identified by scholars between the written and aural dimensions of oral history research. As it will be detailed later, during the research process I was hired as research advisor to the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee to develop a manual for the land-based healing program and a wellness strategic plan for the community[7]. As such, other research products or different ways of mobilizing the knowledge cocreated were developed at the request and in consultation with the Committee. My work with the community is ongoing and if it were not for their active engagement I would not have been able to achieve all the objectives that I had hoped to when I first began. Undeniably, the collaboration led to a multitude of actions well beyond my initial modest expectations.

This thesis is divided in six chapters that follow the chronological development of the research epistemology starting with setting up the research agenda and community collaboration, developing a reflexive methodology and analysis, and generating research products. As such, its narrative blends personal reflections and theory in a way that departs from the formal dissertation structure, which generally outlines the research question or problem at the onset. Instead this thesis presents the theoretical context (or the literature review) in the sequence in which they

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[7] These documents can be found at www.chisasibiwellness.ca

were explored in the course of the research process. In other words, each chapter begins with personal reflections on field experiences that led to exploring specific theoretical aspects and methodologies, which in turn, gave rise to further questions. In some ways the overall narrative follows an Indigenous storytelling esthetics in the sense that a definite hypothesis is not presented a priori, but reflected upon throughout the course of the dissertation to underline how theory was incrementally internalized and praxis situated within the community context. Although it may be demanding on the reader, the choice of structure and methodologies is deliberate and was designed to show how my reflections on researcher positionality, Indigenous-settler relations, storytelling work, and knowledge mobilization in the field have led me to build a bias for multivocality and shared authority. I therefore use autoethnography to critically reflect on my research narrative.

In agreement with Regan (2010) I move away from the impetus of many settlers working in Indigenous contexts to 'give voice' to the research partners and instead focus on how research partners teach us to listen and together bring the many voices to the intended audiences. I struggled about how to bring the voices into my thesis but I decided that those voices will literally speak for themselves through the video components. I also think that some stories are not ours to tell, or to put it better, it is not our place to intervene in the stories that are told. I came to this conclusion when I presented the short documentary on the Chisasibi land-based healing program at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (Concordia University) in March 2014. I had advertised it as an ethnographic documentary and my supervisor, Dr. Steven High, was surprised that I was not present in it. Although I had not thought about it before the comment was made, I realized that I strongly felt that it certainly was not the kind of place and space in which I could intervene or be present. The documentary was indeed a product of the research collaboration but it was mainly initiated by the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee as an awareness raising tool regarding the community's efforts to implement iiyiyiu healing in the health and social service delivery. It is a story told by and for the community, a story in which my only role was to make the technical aspects of video production happen. This thesis is nevertheless not written in isolation, it brings my own voice in conversation with the others that make up this research project, thus the autoethnography. Two co-authored academic articles have also been published in the meantime and they are framed by the knowledge mobilization perspective that will be discussed in detail in the following chapters. Knowledge mobilization is about a

bidirectional flow of theory and practice from the academia to communities and to the public. Ultimately, engaging with the public is the last step in a decolonizing perspective where the coproduced knowledge would ideally transform systemic and institutionalized oppression. Negotiating these levels of engagement is difficult, not only for the researcher but also for the research partners; reconciling when and how you engage with each is part of the reflexivity that is inherent in community-based research. This is also in agreement with Burawoy's (2009) conceptualization of reflexive science that

> …starts out from dialogue, virtual or real, between observer and participants, then embeds such dialogue within a second dialogue between local processes and extralocal forces that in turn can be comprehended only through a third, expanding dialogue of theory with itself. (p. 20)

The thesis starts with my first experiences of working and living in Eeyou Istchee and how I became interested in the ways in which young Crees' engagement in territorial decision-making is informed by their own lived experience with hydro development. Chapter two points towards an expanded understanding of Indigenous rights and citizenship by foregrounding Indigenous resurgence and decolonization in everyday life as countermeasure to the more prescriptive and normative visions of Indigenous-State relationships. In chapter three I examine how the reflexive turn in social sciences has led to an Indigenist research paradigm that shares authority and builds a collaborative community-based practice by doing research with and for communities. This discussion leads into chapter four in which I show how such a research practice grounds youth studies theory in the needs and priorities of Indigenous youth that ultimately led me to reframe my research and gain a critical understanding of wellbeing and decolonization in Chisasibi. Chapter five discusses how healing operates at the level of the individual by presenting a portrait of healing and wellness of Chisasibi youth and the land-based healing model developed by Eddie Pash. I close the thesis by extending from personal healing experiences to an exploration of how historical and contemporary injustice frames collective processes of social action and discourses of social wellness. In the case of Chisasibi decolonization is defined and framed in terms of miyupimaatisiiun, a way of being that employs relational creative potential to achieve social justice through a temporally and locally bound cultural revitalization.

Chapter 1

Reflexive ethnography and megaprojects or how Nemaska taught me about loss

Oral historians and Indigenous scholars place great value on subjectivity and self-reflexivity recognizing that the relational nature of ethnographic research recognizes the role that both researcher and research partner have in shaping both the content and the process of the research (Greetz, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). Whether explored through life stories or storytelling, the lived experience functions as a site of meaning making and as source of knowledge, and, in a research context, of theory making. Autoethnography is often used to reinscribe the author within the broader narrative of the research and identify significant moments perceived to have impacted the epistemology and methodology of the project either as emotional or difficult interview experiences, unexpected fieldwork occurrences, or other 'unsettling' happenings. Many oral history works employ autoethnography to elucidate how the researcher's experience shapes the understanding of the subject under study. Speaking about life history research Cole and Knowles (2001) explain that autoethnography "uses the self as a starting or vantage point from which to explore broader sociocultural elements, issues, or constructs" (p. 16). As a point of departure, they stress

> One way to unpack our researcher baggage…is to write what we call a personal history account in which we examine the path taken to a research project…Understanding the place of experience in relation to the topic are important beginnings in developing a life history research project. (p.49 & 57)

For example, Alessandro Portelli (1997) observes that in the course of examining the experience of Italian resistance fighters in WWII and student movements in Rome he has 'inevitably wrote about himself' – "my own memories as well as those of others are involved" (p. xii). For his part, in exploring the notion of self-reflexivity in oral history research, Allan Wong (2009) chose to assume the role of both the interviewer and the interviewee and use his observations to 'compare and contrast' "the emotions, feelings, and thoughts behind my decision-making processes while situated on either side of the table" (p. 241). He later explains, "witnessing and feeling the process from the interviewee's chair is, I believe, essential to structuring the frame through which oral historians can fully discern their role - and the power

inherent within it - in the interview scenario" (p. 245). Working in an Indigenous context as a settler, Paulette Regan (2010) explains that

> writing within the IRS [Indian Residential Schools] context, I think it important that I reveal something of my own emotional turmoil and the moral and ethical dilemmas that confronted me in my work with survivors.…Moreover, it would seem unconscionable that, having listened to survivors who had the courage and strength to tell me about their intimate experiences of abuse, neglect, and suffering, I would not have the fortitude to openly and critically reflect on how their stories affected me. (p. 31)

Jo-Ann Archibald's (2008) exploration of the role Coast Salish (British Columbia) storytelling has for indigenous education echoes the self-reflexive characteristic of oral history: "the experiences presented in this book have taught me more about life and more about myself" (p. 89). In *Indigenous storywork* she attempts to reconcile tensions between academic literary traditions and indigenous orality, through various pathways of 'meaning-making' through her specific life-experience. Similarly, in his influential book *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods*, Cree scholar Shawn Wilson uses various literary styles to convey the theoretical framework of an Indigenous research paradigm. Among the selected transcripts of various interviews with peers, theoretical analysis, and self-reflexive narrative, he begins each chapter with a personal letter addressed to his sons. He explains,

> Addressing parts of the book to Julius, Max and Falco became a device for me to try to provide both context and definition [to the relationship between the storyteller/author and listener/reader]. The two "voices" may initially seem disjointed. Oftentimes they either cover entirely different material, but they may repeat one another. It was my intention that they cover more or less the same ground, but with two different emphasises – one academic and one more personal. (p. 9)

Writing from and within a context of colonialism, Indigenous autoethnography is often deployed as counter-narrative aimed to disrupt hierarchical power relations in research and to intersect with broader Indigenous decolonizing objectives (Absolon, 2011; Bainbridge, 2007;

Hart, 2002; Smithers Graeme, 2013). Indigenous scholars often use personal experience as site of knowledge production, as Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2011) explains

>…to access knowledge from a Nishnaabeg perspective, we have to engage our entire bodies: our physical being, emotional self, our spiritual energy and our intellect. Our methodologies, our lifeways must reflect those components of our being and the integration of those four components into a whole….The performance of our "theories" and thought is how we collectivize meaning. This is important because our collective truths as a nation and as a culture are continuously generated from those individual truths we carry inside ourselves. Our collective truths exist in a nest of diversity. (p. 43)

I therefore follow these scholars in developing my own autoethnography. The sections and chapters that follow describe my intellectual evolution through self-reflections on the comforting and unsettling happenings in the field and what I have learned from my personal friendships and relationships that make up my web of relations. I avoid using different typesets to distinguish between a 'personal reflection' and a more theoretical discussion because I view them as having equal impact on my epistemology and methodology. In writing an autoethnography I am also aware of the critique that reminds settler academics that "the confession of privilege, while claiming to be antiracist and anticolonial, is actually a strategy that helps constitute the settler or white subject.…As a result, the white or settler subject reasserts his or her power through self-reflection" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2014, p. 218). This research is therefore attempting to rise up to this challenge by underlining the intellectual contributions of the Cree research partners involved by employing a collaborative research processes based on sharing authority as well as premising the analysis on the multiple and multivocal local actions. My contributions to these local actions have been framed by the priorities set by the Cree research partners, while also unpacking the theoretical implications of these actions. Lastly, critiques of "ethnographic entrapment" call for developing "alternative governance systems based on principles of horizontality, mutuality, and interrelatedness…outside of a nation-state model" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2014, p. 226-227). Although this research does focus on non-prescriptive governance regimes, the research partners have worked to better frame and operationalize existing governance structures to address their own realities and achieve miyupimaatisiiun as they understand it. The perspective co-developed in this

research is that decolonization lies at multiple sites and operates within a view of local collective empowerment. While being perhaps 'less transformative', i.e. operating within a nation-state model, current efforts in Chisasibi do reject the view "in which Native peoples are presumed to have a singular knowable political aspiration and identity" (Tuhiwai Smith, 2014, p. 230). As Salée and Lévesque (2010) argue,

> Between the exultant report of Indigenous people's political accomplishments and the disappointment of those for whom anything less than complete and unequivocal self-determination is a sign of abandon to the dictates of the colonial state, there is a grey zone of everyday politics that needs to be better understood. It is mainly within that grey zone, where theoretical and abstract normative absolutes often have less resonance, that Aboriginal politics takes place and the contents of Indigenous responses (and resistance) to the state take shape. (p. 102)

The rest of the chapter describes the genesis of the research starting with my first experiences in Eeyou Istchee as a research assistant for a study on post-fire forest regeneration. I attend to some academic challenges I encountered as a MA student and on formally entering 'the field'. I then discuss my experience of living and working in the Cree Nation of Nemaska during a period of tension where community members and other Cree were negotiating the possibility and subsequent finality of a third major hydroelectric development phase in their territory. I close the chapter with my return to university and how I began to learn about identity politics and oral history, two of the main theoretical foundations that inform the present research.

Forest fires and hydro development: first encounters in the field

When I set out to study post-fire regeneration in the Eeyou Istchee I knew little about the people that would become my close friends and co-workers. I had taken an introductory course in Indigenous Resource Management at Concordia from which I learned about the Great Whale opposition and the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). I knew about tallymen and hunting and even though we watched the short documentary *Cree Hunters of Mistissini*, 'life on the land' in Eeyou Istchee was very much an abstract knowledge. I first arrived in the community of Nemaska during the summer of 2002, a couple of months after the signing of the Paix des Braves and on the heels of the biggest forest fire in recent memory.

Figure 2 Nemaska evacuation
(source: Nemaska Fire Department)

The fire had burned 600 square kilometres of the boreal forest and almost wiped out the community. At the insistent requests of my Forest Management professor from Concordia I quit my summer job, hopped into a SUV and was in Chibougamau by the end of June. Before setting out further north, my field assistant and I visited the local Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) office where the manager sternly advised us to take care since there is 'nothing to be found' on the 300 kilometre gravel road, not even a gas station or public phone. We knew there was a Cree town somewhere but it turned out that the MNR manager only knew of the Hydro-Quebec camp Nemiscau, the community Nemaska was invisible from where he was standing. Luckily after surveying the sorry state of the Hydro-Quebec camp (we were not aware of the more equipped – bar, restaurant and depanneur - complex further up the hill), we decided to check out the airport where we found out that 10 kilometres further west there was indeed a Cree community. When we drove into the community of Nemaska I was amazed by the beauty of the landscape. Nestled on the shores of Champion Lake, Nemaska is home to approximately 600 Crees, a dozen or so non-Crees, and a generous amount of dogs. The south-east and the north-west tips of the community are made up of sandy beaches. The lake itself is quite shallow and routinely visited by kids and ducks in the summer and snowmobiles and caribou in the winter. The community has no paved roads, which to me added to the charm, but for many community members is a health

risk as the dust and sand that gets kicked up by the cars exacerbates respiratory problems (Harris-Giraldo et al., 2000).

Figure 3 Champion Lake

The two months spent in Nemaska that summer were a good introduction to life in a Cree community, although we spent much of our time in the bush counting seedlings and setting up seed traps. At the time I had a colonial view of Indigenous people and Indigenous life. I had imagined them living in tepees, eating only bush meat and leading a quaint and harmonious life. I was surprised by the 'modernity' I found in Nemaska; the cars, the computers, the TVs, the constant travelling 'down south'. I also learned about the latest Cree-Québec agreement, the Paix des Braves, the plans to build a dam on the Rupert River, and the conflicting views and apprehension about the future impacts. That summer, Jacob, a local artist, brought us to the James Bay Highway Bridge where the (formally) roaring Rupert River makes its way into the community of Waskaganish and the Bay. He told us stories of the Notimeshanan, Waskaganish's traditional fishing site where 'you can scoop up ciscoe in fish nets', a site that he was concerned will probably disappear once the dam was fully operational. For him, the Rupert has always been his 'highway' and 'home'[8].

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[8] Most families from Nemaska have a bush camp on the Rupert were they spend many months during the year; at the least 80% of the Cree communities spend two to three weeks in the bush during the spring goose hunt and the fall moose hunt (Feit, 1995).

Figure 4 Jacob and Miriam (field assistant) by the Rupert River rapids

For Freddie Jolly, the Rupert was a 'source of life'; 'we get everything from the river, the fish, the geese, the beavers, it sustains us'. The dam was built on his trapline (R21) and flooded more than half of the territory. Important fishing and spawning areas have been destroyed and some remaining ones face an uncertain future. Beaver lodges and other dwellings for small game have disappeared and the migration patterns of caribou may shift with the landscape changes[9]. Transportation on the river will be precarious all seasons as ice regimes will change in the winter and portage trails used in the summer are now under water. But the River is much more than a provider of food or a transportation medium. As Freddie explains,

> With your five senses, when you're out there you hear the sound of the river and the rapids, the birds when they're flying, the beaver splashing its tail. And when you look at it, it brings joy to you and it heals you. The spirit of the land is life, and it helps you with your health. Out there on the land there is peace, joy and healthy food. When the elders say there's healing out there I believe them (Jolly et al., 2011, p. 35).

Bertie Wapachee, a Cree from Nemaska that now resides in Chisasibi, grew up on the shores of the Rupert River in the early 1970s. He remembers the Rupert as 'one of the most beautiful places where I have been' and 'the only place where I tasted real freedom'.

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[9] In 1984, 10,000 caribou drowned in one of the La Grande reservoirs which happened to be along the migration path of the herd (McCutcheon, 1991).

For the first eight years of my life I used to think that the Ruperts was my home. This is where I was most happy and this is where I went home. My home was in three traplines but my favourite was the Rupert.[10]

Primitive accumulation and the challenge of land-claims agreements

In his critique of the 'politics of recognition', Dene scholar Glen Sean Coulthard argues that reconciliation through recognition only further reproduces the colonial status-quo. "*Settler-colonialism*", he maintains "*is territorially acquisitive in perpetuity*" (Emphasis in the original, 2014, p. 152). Using Marx's thesis of "primitive accumulation" as the starting point of the ongoing settler-colonialism in Canada, Coulthard makes the case for an ongoing dispossession of Indigenous people through "structurally determined by and in the interests of the colonizer" systems of recognition and inadequate redistribution, land-claims being one of these colonial tools of dispossession (p. 152). Indeed, since the 1969 *White Paper*, the normative and prescriptive practices of self-government have been redefined in the courts, at the Constitutional repatriation (1982), during the First Ministers conferences on Aboriginal constitutional matters (1983-1987), during both the Meech Lake (1987) and Charlottetown Accords (1992), in the Inherent Rights Policy (1995), and the First Nations Governance Act (2001), to name a few. The extinguishment clause that continues to define Canada's land-claims policy agenda has rightly led some to conclude that Indigenous self-government remains inscribed within the State's hegemonic paradigm (Alfred Taiaike, 2008 & 2005; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; Macklem, 2001; Ladner, 2003, Coulthard, 2014). Others have argued that this view creates a 'false dichotomy' that denies Indigenous agency to transform unequal relations of power and create a public space for self-definition (Belanger & Newman, 2005: 184; Cairns, 2000; Salée and Levesque, 2010; Saul, 2008; Schouls, 2004). Indeed these formal negotiations have also been punctuated by various direct actions, such as the Temagami blockades in the 1980s, the Oka standoff in 1990 or the Caledonia (Grand River) land dispute in 2006, which have shown consistent political activism and reflection on self-government discourses emanating from local communities. For their part, the Cree Nation was the first Indigenous nation in Canada to sign a contemporary land-claim in 1975, the James Bay and northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA), which was the result of sustained opposition to the province's land-grab for the James Bay Hydroelectric project. The

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[10] Interviewed November 2009.

story of the James Bay Hydroelectric project was born out of sheer political might energized and reinforced by economic downturn; a battle nonetheless rooted in deep colonial struggles for control over the territory and its resources.

"We were fighters, we fight for our land and that's what we represent" [11]

During the late 1930s Quebec was home to the largest privately-owned electrical utility in the world and short supply of capital investment left other natural resources open to foreign development. Quebecois nationalists seeing vast revenues flowing into American coffers began, in the late 1940s, to take control over their political, social and economic development. René Lévesque's conversation with an executive echoes the sentiment felt throughout Quebec: "It was the same paternalistic concept – the colonial master speaking to a backward native. 'We'll show you, you bastard' I thought. And we did" (quoted in McCutcheon, 1991, p.17). In response to criticism at home, the Quebec Government began the first phase of nationalization of electricity production and distribution, when in 1944, it bought *Montreal Light, Heat and Power Consolidated* and gave it to the newly established publicly-owned electric utility, Hydro-Quebec. Inspired by its star Minister of Natural Resources, René Lévesque, the Liberal Party built its 1962 electoral campaign on the full nationalization of electric utilities in Quebec and won. By 1963 Hydro-Quebec had doubled in size, becoming a powerful asset for the economy of the province, and most importantly a symbol of national pride. Quebecers became '*maîtres chez' eux* (masters of their own house) supporting a protectionist economic policy of *achat chez nous* (buy at home) that was in line with the welfare state model of the Quiet Revolution.

> Hydro-Quebec partly substituted for the Church…To question Hydro-Quebec was unpatriotic. Immune from critical public scrutiny, more powerful in many ways than the government that was ostensibly in control – a relationship symbolized by the fact that the Montreal offices of the Premier of Quebec are within Hydro-Quebec's headquarters – Hydro-Quebec grew into a state within a state. (McCutcheon,1991, p. 34)

While Lévesque broke with the Liberal Party, forming the Parti Quebecois and pushing for independence, a young and ambitious Robert Bourassa began building his electoral campaign

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[11] Pakesso Mukash, interviewed, November, 24, 2009

on a massive hydroelectric development project in the James Bay that was designed to meet the requirements for his 100,000 jobs campaign promise. After the embarrassing fallout from the October Crisis, Bourassa declared in 1971: "Quebec must occupy its territory; it must conquer James Bay" (McCutcheon,1991, p.19).
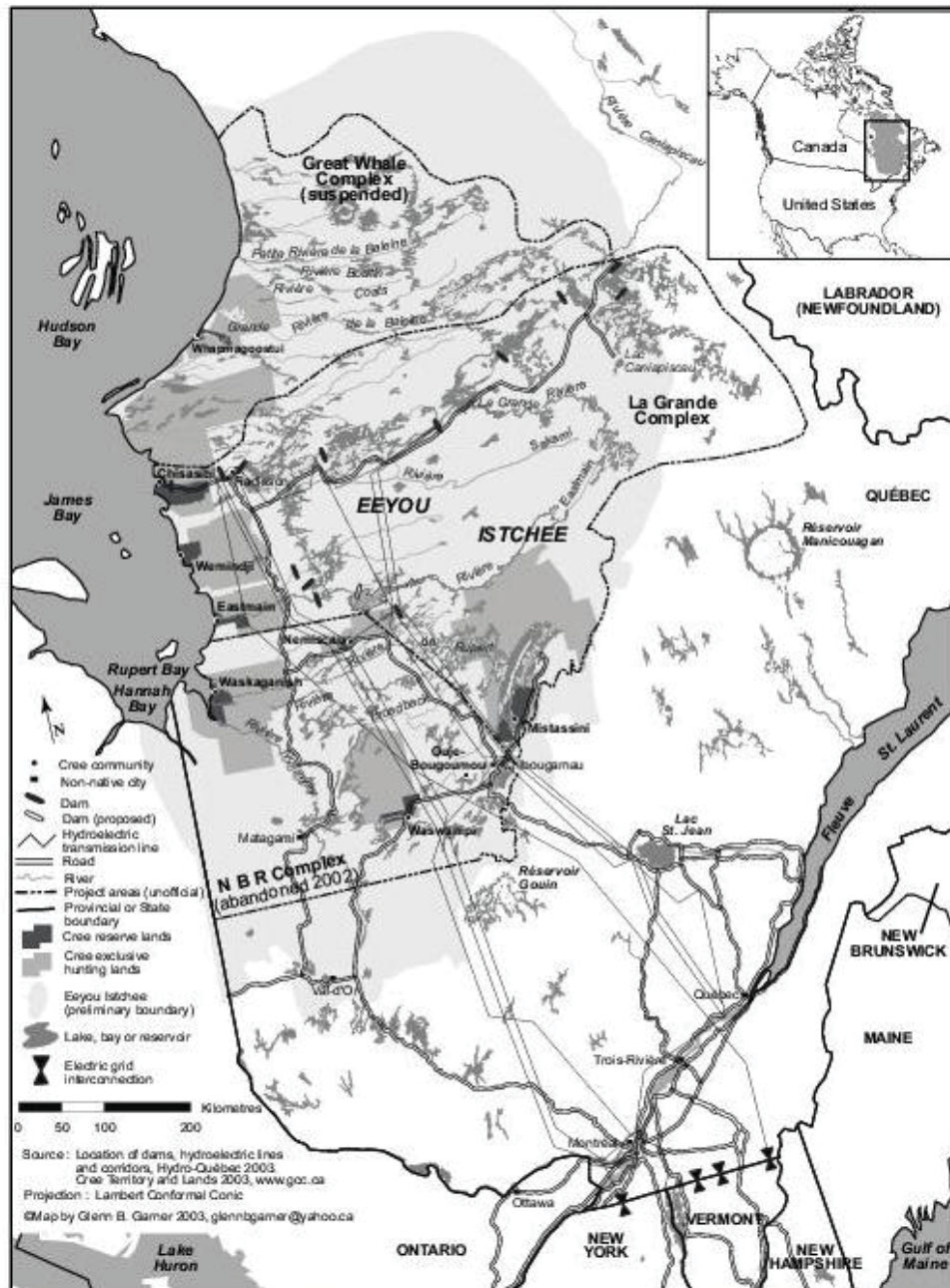
Figure 5 The original James Bay Hydroelectric Complex

(source: IDRC)

The gigantic hydroelectric complex would create thousands of jobs, an output of 27,000MW, and potential revenues of billions of dollars, at a price tag of $20 billion (including the transmission lines) and the flooding of over 11,000 km^2. It was to be developed in three phases: the Nottaway/Broadback/Rupert Complex (NBR), La Grande and Great Whale. In 1971 the James Bay Highway paved the way for the La Grande complex which represents 67% of the total area to be flooded by the 3 projects combined, and was, at the time, one of the largest hydroelectric generating complexes in the world (Hornig, 1999). The work started in 1971. It was done neither with regard to nor in consultation with the Cree communities in the region. In 1972, anticipating great impacts on their livelihood, the Cree and Inuit sought an injunction from the Superior Court of Quebec. A year later, in November 1973, Justice Malouf rendered a decision in favor of the Cree, which suspended work on the project until prior agreement from the Crees and Inuit would be gained. Nonetheless, the construction work proceeded a week later when the Quebec Court of Appeal suspended the injunction on grounds that the public interest takes precedence over the interests of a minority[12] (Hamley, 1993; Hornig, 1999). As a result of these legal confrontations the Cree formed, in 1974, the Grand Council of the Cree (GCC), their first and central political body.

During a period of global economic recession following the oil crisis and the subsequent stock market crash of '73-'74, the promise to create 100,000 jobs with the La Grande complex propelled Robert Bourassa to push for the signing of the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). In 1975 negotiations between the Cree and the Inuit and the provincial and federal governments, resulted in the first northern comprehensive land claim to be settled in Canada.[13] In the 1980s evidence of the negative ecological and social impacts of La Grande were making headlines. In 1982, scientists found that 64% of the James Bay residents had methyl mercury levels deemed unsafe by the World Health Organization. [14] At the same time, increased intrusion of non-natives and relocation associated with Hydro-Quebec activities in the area resulted in negative social impacts on the Cree communities. Levels of alcoholism, family violence, and substance abuse increased. Intense environmental effects, such as decreasing game populations,

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[12] The Malouf ruling, named after the presiding judge, the late Mr. Justice Albert Malouf (for a detailed account of the judgement see Quebec Superior Court.1973. *La Baie James indienne: texte intégral du jugement du juge Albert Malouf*)

[13] The JBNQA is now protected and entrenched as a Treaty under sec. 35(1) of the 1982 Constitution Act (see Manianskum, L. 2002)

[14] In 1984 the James Bay Mercury committee was established (for a detailed discussion of the effects of mercury see chapter 4 in Hornig, 1999);

increased their dependence on income security payments and reduced their ability to sustain the hunting and trapping subsidence economy (Hornig, 1999; Salisbury, 1989). The federal and provincial governments had been reluctant to properly fund the many programs made under the JBNQA. Moreover, many objectives of the JBNQA had not been fulfilled, mechanisms giving rights over specific resources and development (especially section 24) had not worked as intended, and the extent of Cree participation in the development of the region had been very limited. For example, in 1985 of the 150 permanent jobs at Hydro-Quebec installations that were promised under the JBNQA, less than 30 were held by Crees (Diamond, 1985; Hornig, 1999; Maxwell *et al*, 1997. Salisbury, 1999). Billy Diamond, the first Grand Chief, stated in the 1990s that if "I had known in 1975 what I know now about the way solemn commitments become twisted and interpreted, I would have refused to sign the agreement" (Hamley 1993, p.102).

While the Cree were wrestling with the aftermath of the La Grande, major industrial areas in the south, still reeling from the '74 recession, were slowly snuffed out by the deinstrustrialization gale following the newest stock market collapse in 1987 (High, 2003). The same year, René Lévesque was vigorously negotiating the Meech Lake Accord that would have extended constitutional powers to Quebec. The Accord was finally rejected, some maintain because of MLA Elija Harper, a Manitoba Cree, opposed its ratification (Cohen, 1990). Newly reelected, Bourassa sought to implement his vision for the James Bay region, made clear in his book, *Power from the North* (1985):

> …the austere beauty of the north is undisturbed except for the rushing of the river's waters. At least for now….In fact, because of its particular climate and topography Quebec is a vast hydroelectric plant in-the-bud, and every day millions of potential kilowatt-hours flow downhill and out to sea. What a waste![water] a good, like any other, and can be bought and sold. (pp. 4,8, & 155)

Bourassa's ambition to make Quebec financially independent of English Canada was centered on turning Hydro-Quebec into a major energy exporter. The provincial government not only owns Hydro-Quebec, but also guarantees its debt (which stood at $38 billion in 2009), giving Hydro-Quebec "quasi-sovereign-borrower status"[15] (Hydro Quebec, 2010; Maxwell *et al*,

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[15] A Merrill Lynch study regarding Hydro-Quebec's borrowing costs found that "HQ has experienced very low profitability over the past decade due to consistently high debt levels, with interest costs currently equal to about 39% of total revenues, down from a peak of 48% in 1991[…]With debt levels of about 74% (better than the 85%

1997). The sale of electricity to the US presented secure returns for the significant investment, as the La Grande already proved, while the success of the massive engineering project strengthened the Quebecers' sense of pride in themselves and their government.

When the Oka crisis hit in 1990, Hydro-Quebec tenders were called for the clearing and construction of the access road to the Great Whale River before any social or environmental assessments were completed. Coinciding with the deadline for the Meech Lake Accord ratification, the Oka crisis led to a fresh round of constitutional negotiations under the Charlottetown Accord. The Accord was intended to reconcile not only federal and provincial jurisdictional powers, but also make provisions for aboriginal representation and rights as well as recognizing Quebec as a distinct society (McRobers & Monahan, 1993). In March 1991 the Cree Chiefs took the federal government, the provincial government and Hydro-Quebec to court, asking that they abide by the provisions made under Section 22 of the JBNQA[16] and insisting on the federal government's fiduciary duty. Legitimized in part by the fallout of the Oka crisis and the Meech Lake Accord negotiations, the Cree Chiefs refused to consent to the project, stressing that the Cree retain their aboriginal rights over traditional lands and the project violated the exercise of these rights. The court ordered the transfer of $255 million from Hydro-Quebec to the Cree, who mobilized these resources toward an intense international campaign against the Great Whale project and various court cases while Hydro-Quebec had to conform to the ruling and put together an environmental impact statement (EIS). Since the Cree did not have strong political support in Quebec, they turned to the international arena: they brought their case to the International Water Tribunal at The Hague, where it ruled against Hydro-Quebec, and during the 1992 Olympics visited Barcelona publicizing their cause. The GCC maintained their presence at the UN and formed coalitions with various NGOs and other organizations such as Greenpeace, the National Audubon Society, the Environmental Defense Fund, and Natural Resources Defense Council. The Cree campaign was also centered on publicizing their issues among the US public. On Earth Day, Grand Chief Mathew Coon Come and other Cree officials paddled a ceremonial

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average typical of government-owned utilities), Hydro-Québec has a weak balance sheet, particularly in comparison to the approximate 60% average typical of investor-owned utilities. This has resulted in consistently weak interest coverage ratios[…]**Additionally we doubt that HQ without the government guarantee would have had the access to the Canadian capital markets it enjoyed over the years**. (Merrill Lynch. 2000. *Opinion regarding Hydro Quebec's theoretical borrowing costs in the absence of a government guarantee*. http://www.regie-energie.qc.ca/audiences/3401-98/Req-revisee/Hqt-8/HQT8_Document2.PDF) April 16, 2010.

[16] Section 22 of the JBNQA sets out the environmental management regime for Eeyou Istchee including environmental and social impact assessment

canoe down the Hudson River into New York to campaign against Hydro-Quebec's power contracts (Black, 2001; Hornig, 1999; Jenson & Papillon, 2000; Maxwell et al., 1997).

As result of the Cree campaign, in 1992 Governor Mario Cuomo canceled New York's $12.5 billion power-purchase contract with Hydro-Quebec, suggesting that it was no longer economically advantageous and that power surpluses from private utilities in the US could satisfy the demand. In October the same year the Charlottetown Accord was rejected in both the Quebec referendum and the federal referendum. In August 1993, Hydro-Quebec released the EIS but its 5000 pages were not in conformity with the Directives and therefore had to produce a new assessment. Quebec's energy minister at the time, Lise Bacon, blamed the Cree for endangering the province's economic development: "I blame them for discrediting Quebec all over the world…the territory that they claim is theirs is still ours. We haven't given it up yet" (Selby, 1992, p. 34). In November 1994 the new premier Jacques Parizeau, having lost the contracts in the US, announced the indefinite discontinuation of Great Whale project (Mercier & Ritchot, 1997). So dependent was the province's nationalist movement on this project that the Quebec press run headlines accusing Grand Chief Coon Come of injuring "all of Quebec" (Morantz, 2002, p. 255). Although the outcome was in favor of the Cree, the campaign came with an $8 million price tag (GCC, "Cree Legal Struggle"). It is not surprising then, that when the Paix de Braves was signed in 2002, many Cree perceived the new agreement as a step back from the more assertive self-determination stance that the Nation had pursued since the late 1960s (Atkinson & Mulrennan, 2009).

Struggles with positivist science

After I returned from my first stay in Nemaska in 2002, I went back to conduct my MA fieldwork on the use of information and communication technologies (ITCs) among the youth and had the chance to volunteer at the local high school and then teach a semester there. My off-and-on stay in the community between 2002 and 2004 helped me familiarize myself better with the social realities of life in the community as opposed to life in the bush. Having spent a little time in the previous summer did not help much in establishing quick rapport with community members. Before leaving for the field my supervisor at the time told me that 'I'll do just fine' and that there was not much that she could do to prepare me since 'I already knew the community'. More disappointing for me was the resistance my supervisor displayed towards my idea of volunteering at the local high school to conduct an introductory training class on computer and

Internet use. I was told in not so subtler terms that 'I didn't need to do a Masters to train locals' and that I should 'concentrate more on the serous business of doing research'. Granted, I was a geography student and in the early 2000s the discipline was not very open to engaging with research subjects, although I felt that this disciplinary attitude was contrary to the quite voluminous work on community-based ecosystem conservation and coursework on Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), which emphasized the role of community collaboration for successful conservation measures.[17]

Working against this positivist stance was frustrating to say the least, but should have not been so surprizing since most of the courses available in the program centered on physical geography and demography which used quantitative methods as their primary data gathering and analysis. Although unfamiliar with the critique of positivist science at the time, I strongly felt that if I expected someone to spend at least two hours filling out a questionnaire with no compensation, I was ethically obliged to contribute something in exchange. The only resource available to me was enough knowledge of computers, office applications, and Internet to help individuals begin to navigate these technologies. Thus on my first days in Nemaska I asked permission from the Youth Department to teach an introductory workshop at the high school. This not only helped to get a better idea of the local technological infrastructure but also to begin forming relationships with community members. To my surprise, the one hour workshop a day was extended to three two-hour workshops a day to accommodate the different schedules of band employees, school staff, and community members that participated. I was even asked to give certificates attesting the attendance of band employees.

My first couple of days in Nemaska were not overtly welcoming; people said 'hi' but did not engage in conversation. I was another settler passing through just like the many nurses, teachers, Hydro Quebec workers and researchers who rarely establish long-term relations with Indigenous communities. Worse, I could even be an anthropologist ready to observe but never to engage and always aiming to advance the state's colonizing agenda (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Fortunately for me, although I am a settler I am not born here. I remain an outsider/insider everywhere I go, whether 'back home' in Romania, in my current home of Quebec and Canada, or in Eeyou Istchee. Even though I am white, my accent which is prominent in any language I

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[17] For a detailed overview on community-based conservation research in Indigenous contexts see *The Canadian Geographer* special issue *Community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples in Canadian geography* (2012)

speak (apparently even in my mother tongue Romanian) 'otherizes' me instantly. Issues of identity are always a site of tension and negotiation for ethnographers. On one other hand, researchers are bound by strict disciplinary and institutional ethical codes of conduct in which transparency and consent are essential and unavoidable. On the other hand, the "unstable and contradictory moral engagement" in the field transcends these codified frameworks and the researcher's "identity is shaped and played out in the process of conducting fieldwork" (Sylvain, 2005, p.26). Working with the San (bushmen) in Namibia, Sylvain (2005) explores the many identities she had to assume or was assumed to have in her research on farm workers employed by Afrikaners. She was at once treated or assumed the identity of a *miessis* (a white farmer's wife) or that of a N=isa (an adopted San kin) depending on whether she had to defuse a fight between San tribe members or bring a San farmhand in secret to the clinic. She argues that fieldwork demands the negotiation of different identities that shape and reshape code of conducts and perceptions that are necessary for ethical and "moral progress" (p. 37).

Similarly, my non-Canadian identity helped me establish a more trustful initial relationship with community members. Once they detected my accent their attitude towards me warmed considerably and a friendly conversation developed centered on questions about where I come from and how I like Canada. The fact that I have Canadian citizenship and have been living in Quebec for 15 years was only secondary to issues of integration and assimilation in a 'foreign' culture. Exchanging life experiences, I was surprised at how similar were my encounters with racism as a newly arrived immigrant in a French-speaking high school and persecution and oppression under the communist regime, with those experienced by Indigenous people in Canada. This solidarity in adversity, although experienced in very different social and political contexts, became a foundational dynamic in my relationship with community members. Yet, I remained an outsider for the duration of my fieldwork despite moving comfortably in and around Cree social spaces. I made friends with a couple of community members who helped me find a place to stay or fed me in the weekends when the restaurant and local store were closed, but I continued to be regarded as a researcher when I interacted with the Band administration or with the individuals who participated in the computer workshops at the school. While my MA defence went well and even my reluctant supervisor observed that my volunteering was valuable to my research in the end, Nemaska community members were struggling to negotiate a common vision of development in Eeyou Istchee.

"And so we lost"[18]: contesting the Paix de Braves

After a decade of litigious confrontations, on February 2nd 2002, the government of Quebec and the Cree Nation signed a 50 year, $70 million per year[19] nation-to-nation agreement on economic development intended to renew their relationship and meet the provisions made in Section 28 of the JBNQA. Among many terms included in the agreement, the Cree leadership gave consent for the development of the Eastmain1A/Rupert Diversion project, settled all outstanding legal proceedings with the provincial government (totalling some $8 billion) and agreed not to oppose Quebec's resource development projects in the territory: "The parties **reserve** their respective **positions** in regard to other projects, **including their positions as to whether or not Cree consent is required for any specific project**" (Section 4.11, emphasis added) (GCC, 2002; Roslin, 2005). The Paix des Braves gave the Cree Nation specific provisions for land management, participation in project decision making and economic spin-offs. First, the funding formula reflects the evolution of the market value of hydroelectric production, mining exploitation, and forestry harvest production in the territory, assuring that the funding is linked to the benefits the province would accrue from resource development in Eeyou Istchee. Second, Cree concerns with forestry impacts have been largely ignored under the JBNQA. The Paix des Braves calls for an adapted forestry regime that is largely based on Cree ecological knowledge and management approaches that permits close consultation between the Cree and forestry companies during various phases of planning and management of forestry activities. The regime also sets up a Cree-Quebec forestry Board that will implement, manage and monitor the forestry regime (Salée & Lévesque, 2010). Third, two separate agreements have been signed with Hydro Quebec: the *Nadoshtin Agreement* and the *Boumhunan Agreements*. The former provides for Cree remedial works and other measures in respect with the Eastmain 1 (La Sarcelle) project and its main objective is to reduce the impacts of the project on the Cree of Mistissini, Nemaska, Eastmain and Waskaganish. The latter enables the continuance of traditional activities, any other additional works and remedial activities, as well as an archeological program, wildlife management provisions during the construction phase and measures to assure employment opportunities. Forth, the Paix des Braves also establishes a Mineral Resources Development Agreement (MRDA). Since the signing of the Agreement mineral exploration has uncovered

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[18] Pakesso Mukash, interviewed, November, 24, 2009
[19] "…$70 million per year indexed for 50 years by the increased value of the revenues extracted from the resources of the territory" (GCC, 2012, p. 5)

large deposits of gold, silver, copper and uranium in Eeyou Istchee. Finally the agreement also set aside various protected areas, such as the Ouje-Mistissini biosphere corridor, that are now being negotiated with the Ministry of Wildlife and Parks (GCC, 2002).

Figure 6 Ruper River Diversion

(source: Hydro Quebec)

Since the Agreement in Principle (AIP) was signed on October 23rd, 2001, controversy over the development of the Rupert River Diversion heated the Cree communities. Many maintain that public participation in the decision-making over the Paix des Braves was very limited, that the time to consider the AIP was insufficient and that Quebec blackmailed their officials into accepting the new mega-project: "A Cree official stated that Premier Landry told Mr. Moses that there would be no deal on forestry or funding for housing, sewers and other community infrastructure if Crees do not accept new dams" (Roslin, 2001). When confronted about their decision in relation to the Rupert Diversion, Cree officials cited high unemployment among the Cree communities and poor housing conditions. Between the 1996 and 2001 the unemployment rate in the James Bay region actually decreased from 16.9% to 12%, and most of the unemployed Cree are youth, who were also most opposed to the Rupert Diversion project (Statistics Canada, 2001). The youth council came out against the project maintaining that the Cree leadership has not listened to their concerns. In Nemaska the youth entered the community assembly during public meetings carrying a banner saying, "Let our rivers flow free".[20] Pakesso Mukash, the Cree Youth Ambassador at the time, explains the mood:

> The leaders at the time, even the current leader [Matthew Coon Come], were part of that team to fool the people into signing it. Now we see the results of the [Rupert] river, it's bare. First of all the youth were not listened to, I was part of that youth. We were ignored like the plague because we had the educated questions and that was our future that they were signing. We wondered, my brother in law and I, and the youth, that agreement, 50 years, is my lifetime. The rest of my lifetime. I might still be kicking by the time it expires but it was jammed into the Crees' throats. Six months they had to decide yes or no and not a whole lot of information being told. [the negotiators said]We need the money, we get the money, we get this and that. But for me was like, why it is being pushed so hard? Quebec [government] was just hoping [the Cree] would open the door to the agreement and the men in power at that time said…YES! And so we lost. I don't know how much more we could have got, our rights renewed or something.[21]

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[20] For a detailed account of the public participation for the AIP please see *One More River*, Documentary produced by Rezolution Pictures http://www.rezolutionpictures.ca
[21] Interviewed, November, 24, 2009

Matthew Mukash, the Deputy Grand Chief at the time, stressed that the three months allowed for reaching a decision regarding the final agreement was not a sufficient time to "make an informed decision on the future of our homeland", especially since it extends over a period of 50 years (GCC, 2002, p.4). He also mentioned concerns about underlying provincial motivations for promoting Quebec nationalism by increasing its economic development in the James Bay region and the federal government's strategies to transfer its jurisdiction on Aboriginal matters to the provinces. As Pakesso succinctly explains, in essence, the Paix des Braves divided the Cree along opposing concepts of development.

> The agreement was genius in that it divided the people. If you are for it, you are for the development and the future of your people, an economic state I guess, but that also meant that you were for the destroying of the land and erasing the Rupert. You can see it [the Rupert River] now on pictures. And if you were against the agreement, well, then you were against income for your people and the economic boom even though you were for saving the land. And that split the people right down the middle. And it worked perfect. It's hard to be young and be aware of these tactics and see your people fall for it. Now, is like, where is the heart of the people? Where is the connection to the land? How can you give up two more rivers [an additional dam was built on the Eastmain River]? And mining on top of it. You need 3 things to open a mine: an access road, electricity and a camp. We [the youth] knew this at the time and nobody really gave a shit, maybe nobody believed [us]. [22]

Notwithstanding the benefits gained by the Cree considering the past political and economic circumstances, the conditions and actions under which the Paix des Braves was negotiated and signed was deemed by many as having erased all possibility for dialogue concerning a common vision for the Nation's future. In the book *I dream of Yesterday and*

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[22] Pakesso Mukash, Interviewed, November, 24, 2009. Although it wasn't planned, the interview took place two weeks after the gates of the Rupert dam were closed when emotions were running high among many Cree that witnessed the rapid changes in the water levels – even after a few hours following the closing of the dam pictures and video clips were pouring in on facebook showing surprising changes along the shoreline and rapids. With respect to mining in a personal conversation (2008) with Ginette Lajoie, the former director of the James Bay Advisory committee on the Environment (JBACE), she admitted that there are so many mining claims on Cree territory that the JBACE cannot even keep track of every one that gets filed.

Tomorrow: A celebration of the James Bay Crees, published by the GCC in 2002, only a passing mention is made of those who opposed the Agreement:

> There remained a small disaffected, but very vocal, group of Crees who strongly and publicly opposed the agreement with Quebec. Their biggest complaints were against the proposed partial diversion of the Rupert River ….In the end a strong majority of the Cree people voted to accept the New Agreement. The referendums showed 70 percent of voting Crees were ready to embark on a new relationship with Quebec. (pp.71-72)

In effect many Cree decided to boycott the referendum with approximately 62% of the electorate abstaining from the vote on the final agreement and the Chisasibi community voting against it (52%) (Coté, 2002; CNC, 2002, *Certificate of Results of Referendum;* Roslin, 2001). Furthermore, several discrepancies have seriously hampered the legitimacy of the referendum: the wording of the question varied from one community to the next; referenda were held on different days in each community; results of the vote were divulged between each referendum; the 10 day delay of the posting for the public consultation was not respected; lack of objectivity in the information given during these consultations; and unclear answers to questions from the members of the assembly (Black, 2001; Roslin, 2001; Coté, 2002a; Gagnon, 2002; Harder, 2002). This discontentment underlined subsequent arguments presented during the Rupert River's Environmental Impact Assessment and pushed three communities to take a stance against the project.

The outsider moves in

After finishing my MA, in January 2005 I was hired as a full-time science teacher and lived in the community for two more years. During this period the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Rupert River diversion was in its last year and tensions were high in the community in advance of the final round of public hearings. Elections for a new Grand Chief took place in the summer of 2005. Matthew Mukash won on a platform highly critical of the hydroelectric project and promising the establishment of an independent environmental management and monitoring institution. Three communities, Nemaska, Chisasibi and Waskaganish, deemed to be most impacted by the project, decided to build an opposition to the project. Taking a stance against the project was a very risky choice for the three Chiefs but

'letting the river die without a fight' was not an option. Speaking at the public hearings, the former Chief of Nemaska told the panel:

> I have even heard it from certain Cree officials who are in positions of authority, and basically, the message to some of our people has been that if there are any expressions of opposition to this proposed diversion project, that there will be repercussions, that there will be consequences. There will probably even be the possibility of benefits being denied from this New Relationship Agreement…(Quoted in Atkinson & Mulrennan, 2009, p. 472)

At the time, I was hired by the Nemaska Band to help build a case for an alternative to the project and study the socio-cultural components of the EIA. Rivers Foundation, Helios Center and Rupert Reverence were three not-for-profit environmental organizations that helped with the research and some publicity in southern Quebec (Atkinson & Mulrennan, 2009). I accompanied the group of concerned Nemaska members and supporters from other Cree communities in their various strategies to make their case such as a 100km snowshoe walk, submissions to the EIA panels, interventions at the Annual General Assembly, and even traditional ceremonies

Figure 7 The three Cree chiefs that opposed the Rupert Project at Ecofete 2006, Montreal.

From left to right: late Chief Robert Wistche, Waskaganish; Chief Abraham Rupert, Chisasibi; Chief Josie Jimiken, Nemaska.

After the public hearings were concluded the three communities decided to hold a referendum on the project. The three Chiefs traveled to each community to present the alternative (a 3000MW wind project) and consult with the local people. The referendum was held in

November 2006 according to Quebec legislation (they were trying to make a point about the legality of the Paix des Braves referendum) and close to 78% of people (30% turnout) voted against the Rupert diversion (CNN, 2006). Unfortunately, even though the three Chiefs tried to negotiate a moratorium on the diversion and the development of the wind project instead, Hydro-Quebec and the Grand Council of the Cree negotiators refused to consider this option. The new Grand Chief did not get a mandate from the rest of the Cree communities to officially negotiate a different power project in Eeyou Istchee; he could therefore not support Nemaska, Waskaganish and Chisasibi. In February 2007, the project was announced in a press conference in Montreal. It was supposed to be held in Cree territory but the officials were afraid that protests will tarnish the message of progress and reconciliation they were trying to convey. Matthew Mukash began his statement by saying: "I know that a lot of Cree people are concerned today, and it's probably a very sad day for a lot of people. It's a sad day for me. When you lose something, when you lose a loved one, you go through a phase of grief" (CBC, 2007).

Chief Abraham Rupert of Chisasibi deemed the decision "very disappointing. We're feeling we haven't been listened to. We haven't been given a chance to speak". Bertie Wapachee wondered "why isn't it possible to study other sources of energy, instead of killing off another virgin river? [The Rupert River]It's not just [used by the] Cree anymore. People come from around the world to see that river. It's one of the last fresh-water rivers you can still drink out of" (CBC, 2007).

Figure 8 Rupert River before & after impoundment

Source: Hydro Quebec

The controversy surrounding the Rupert diversion soon faded form the front pages of newspapers but the anxiety in the Cree communities only heightened with the advancing construction of the dam. During the two years that it took to complete, the Route du Nord was as busy as an urban highway during rush hour. Trucks after truck of logs were making their way into the southern towns of the province. Blasting notices plastered the store and administration offices in Nemaska. Trappers voiced their concerns about the impact of the traffic and noise on the local wildlife and families were feeling the strain of separation for those who chose to seek employment at the hydro camp. When the gates were finally closed on November 9, 2009 a handful of community members attended the ceremony. Not one Cree leader or Hydro-Quebec official showed up. Bella Jolly from Nemaska remarked that "when people see this on TV, it will look like it's us Crees who are doing the damming" (Webb, 2009). Within hours Facebook was flooded with pictures and short videos of the changes in water levels. Reactions ranged from anger - "Those that voted YES to destruction such as this have NOTHING to be proud of. YOU are the reason that our division has been finalized. I, along with future generations, thank you for this imprint on our history" - to sadness and disbelief - "I was so shocked to see the River so lifeless it was so sad I had to stop on the bridge [on the James Bay highway] so did a number of other vehicles. I was not expecting it to look like it does. Heartbreaking for sure my thoughts were … "what have we done?"[23]

The social construction of resource development in Eeyou Istchee

Loss, sadness, grief. This is how many Cree individuals expressed and experienced hydro-development in their territory. For those who have lived on the land, the loss of the river is felt at a deep emotional and spiritual level and making sense of these lived experiences is often a forgotten dimension of academic studies of resource development impacts. If I had not had the chance to meet and spend time with Freddie and Jacob, I would have never understood the human cost of megaprojects. Unfortunately and with very few exceptions, these life experiences continue to be translated from the rationalistic perspective of structuralism. The assumption that human thought and experience are governed by universals and as such homogeneous, led structuralists to supplant human subjectivity as the agent of meaning-making (Vansina, 1985). Indeed, although the Cree experience with megaprojects is one of the most examined on the east

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[23] Cree posts on Facebook – identification is kept anonymous as no permission was sought from the authors; emphasis in the original post

side of this continent very little has been written on the social construction and lived experiences of Cree individuals with development. With few exceptions (Luis Bird, 2005; Regina Flannery, 1995; Harvey Feit, 1987, 1989, 1994; Richard J. Preston, 1975 & 2002; Boyce Richardson, 1975) the literature on these impacts (Hornig, 1999; McCutcheon, 1991; Morantz, 1983 & 2002; Salisbury, 1986; Scott, 2001) tends to be highly abstract, factualized and disembodied.

For example in his regional analysis of the political and economic development of the Cree Nation between 1971 and 1981, Salisbury (1986) shows 'the feasibility of the Cree experience in terms of national unity and 'transfer payments' which is largely analyzed in economic terms: job creation, increase in goods consumption, new infrastructure, technology transfer etc. Similarly the collection of essays in *Social and Environmental Impacts of the James Bay Hydroelectric Project* (Hornig, 1999) focuses exclusively on quantitative data and secondary sources and although Stanley Warner states in the same volume that "the Cree's view of the likely physical effects derive, in part, from their own culturally-framed knowledge of the physical environment", Cree voices are oddly silent (p. 143). Sean McCutcheon's (1991) *Electric Rivers: The Story of the James Bay Cree*, presents the Cree opposition to both the La Grande and the Great Whale project which he frames within the technological, economic and political dimensions of hydroelectric production and consumption. In *Partners in furs* (1983) and *The White Man's Gonna Getcha* (2002), Toby E. Morantz focuses on the 18th and 19th century history of the eastern James Bay Cree and specifically on the impact of the fur trade. She nevertheless shies away from Cree narratives because "a history written by Western-trained historians would distort and destroy the depiction of the relationships, the symbolism, the patterning and the integrity of the oral tradition of the Cree or any other people" (p. 17). In a recent volume by Hans M. Carlson (2008), a more culturally contextualised account of the relationship between Cree hunters and the land and "how James Bay has become integrated into the rational vision of economy of North America" is presented (p. 5).

But, as Jacob's, Freddie's, and Bertie's statements show, behind the statistics and the veneer of written history lie complex subjectivities that reveal alternate realities and meanings that are often revealed only through orality. Ethnographic research by Harvey A. Feit, Richard Preston, Colin Scott and others on traditional ecological knowledge, historical nomadic patterns of hunting, and aspects of spirituality have shown important cultural and social constructions of the relationship between the Cree and the land. Nevertheless, the social impact of hydroelectric

development and other large scale projects and the way in which Cree individuals (and not trappers in particular) make sense of and deal with has remained a "subtle and difficult issue" (Niezen, 1993, p. 222) Subtle, because they are emotionally charged experiences, and difficult, because they are interpreted though subjective lenses.

While official accounts construct the myth of 'unity', 'free' consent and 'measured progress', individual Cree struggle to make sense not only of their past but also of their future. Nevertheless, the consent myth is now part of the history books, having the power 'to rally and decide who belongs and who doesn't' both in time and within the larger society depending on how it is employed and reconstructed, by whom and for what purpose (James, 2001; Portelli, 1997; Samuel & Thompson, 1990). Indeed as Alistar Thompson (2006) shows through the story of Fred Farral, a WWI Australian veteran, national mythology can have the power to shape individual's identities by repressing personal narratives and negating life experiences. Such instances often have traumatic impacts on individuals and make them uncomfortable about their own identity (p. 250). But remembering and meaning-making are also social processes that "seek social recognition and affirmation" and often engage in individual struggles "for more democratic and radical versions of our past and of what we can become" (Cruikshank, 1999; Thompson, 2006, p. 253).

As the dominant Cree 'majority' draws 'on mythical selection to find confirmation for contemporary policy', the collective memory of the 'vocal' minority 'needs continual active expression' so that their lived experiences can act as a 'historical force in the present' and their hopes for the future can find expression in reconstructed histories (Samuel & Thompson, 1990). In the case of the Cree, the implications for challenging the established 'official' orthodoxy can very well be destabilizing. By insisting on a Cree split, the Nation's negotiating power can be jeopardised. By exposing their personal stories of resistance, Cree individuals may lose some friends and make new enemies. But by imagining another history and dreaming another future they 'foreground the difference in the context of seeking equality' in these communities (Portelli, 1997).

These were some of the challenges that I also began to reflect on after my visit to the Rupert construction site. As Bella Jolly and the youth that protested the AIP public consultations, I wondered how embodied and subjective experiences of resource development can be expressed in a way that articulates dissidence and still preserves, if not harmonious, at least cordial social

relationships (Yanah, 2001; Fair, 2001). As discussed above, in the Cree context, ethnographic research regarding development has largely focused on trappers and tallymen, but what do other Cree individuals have to teach us about loss and suffering caused by megaprojects? And why do youth, who are perceived to have lost their links to land and cultural traditions, care if another river is dammed? In my interactions with the students at the school, they expressed frustration relative to their marginalized role in decision-making. Our discussions digressed from algebra problems and Ministry examinations, to the role of education in daily life and its impact on the future role of youth in community life and development. Many indicated that despite recognizing the benefits of education in preparing them for entry into the labour market for example, by and large, they felt that barriers to their participation were not restricted to education attainment per se but were influenced by local and regional social and political dynamics. For example some felt that interfamily dynamics framed access to employment or housing, to the detriment of many and the benefit of few. Others complained that socio-economic disparities marginalized certain groups, while government policy limited opportunity for local solutions to their inclusion. Intergenerational tensions around issues of cultural continuity and cultural change were also discussed. But the main issue for these young Cree was the failure of the community to listen to their needs in a serious and non-judgemental way, to value the contributions that they already make to community life, and in general to celebrate youth successes as often as denouncing the failures. What can Cree youth then teach about development decisions in Eeyou Istchee? How do they navigate and rework changing relationships with the land and with their community? And what is the nature of these relationships? With these questions in mind I decided to return to Montreal and pursue doctoral research.

Chapter 2

From sovereignty to relational self-determination

One day, when things were not going according to 'the plan', Larry was frustrated and told me to 'stop bringing theory into the community'. As the Chisasibi healing project was developed, delays in funding, administrative burdens, and sometimes personal challenges arose. I was told on some occasions that all the paperwork was ok but we should just start doing something; people were understandably anxious for the project to actually begin, now almost two years after the first consultations took place. 'Academics come into communities with language that does not make sense to us. It should be the other way around. Don't waste time with theory in the community, listen to what the people need, do it, and then fit it into the theory on your own time. But use the knowledge to change policy, we want to change policy', Larry told me. Ironically, he was the one who knew much more theory than I when this research project started. He told me to 'check out' literature on historical trauma, internalized racism and lateral violence. He introduced me to James B. Waldram, Joseph P. Gone, Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, and Lawrence J. Kirmayer among others. We talked about how depressive Fanon seems and we both got excited when we discussed Stephanie Irbacher-Fox's book *Finding Dahshaa*. We often joke about the 'settler problems' we encounter in our interactions with the Band and Health Canada administrators and seriously consider how hard it is to decolonize locally.

For a very long time I was weary of theory. I began my BA in human geography wanting to 'save the environment' (in all honesty though, I really wanted to study geology but Concordia did not have a BA in geology, so geography was the closest, literally on the same page in the undergraduate calendar). Being partly raised on the land by my grandparents in Transylvania, where we subsidized most of the food that was inexistent in stores in communist Romania, I saw direct links between the state of the ecosystem and human wellbeing. Conservation and sustainable development seemed a sensible choice. Yet, my Indigenous resource management class showed that conservation policy can go only as far as the political will. So I enrolled in a MA in public policy with the intent of understanding how effective policy can be developed and implemented. My exploration of information and communication technologies (ICTs) was a bit removed from environmental conservation, but I soon realized that even the most well designed policy can fail in its implementation if the target population does not have the necessary social capital and physical infrastructure to do so. When I returned for my PhD I chose interdisciplinary

studies because geography and public policy did not provide me with enough theory to explain the interactions between local processes and external forces. I needed something else to bring the individual into this story. I wanted to show that theory is not practical and that outside the ivory tower people don't care for Bourdieu, Foucault, or Marx. I nevertheless spent the first two years of my PhD studying identity politics and Indigenous-State relations with my primary supervisor Dr. Daniel Salée. I approached him for supervision because I needed to better understand issues of citizenship, nationalism, and sovereignty if I were to advance the work that I had started in Nemaska. Another reason is because his work recognizes that cultural continuity is central to Indigenous political strategies and that Indigenous autonomy demands the right to self-identification and the freedom to choose a vision of the future based on Indigenous shared meaning:

> The ancestral customs and practices, however thin they may wear in some cases, serve as ideological mooring where the collective imagination can anchor and elaborate identity. This identity, even if invented, even if tainted by borrowings from the very culture it claims to oppose politically, constitutes the impregnable rock on which Aboriginal [people] lay their territorial claims, mobilize themselves, and express their desire to gain autonomous control of their collective destiny. (Salée, 1995, p. 293)

I therefore began to explore how Indigenous peoples, living within the confines of the Canadian nation state, navigate normative interpretations of autonomy and citizenship at the negotiating table, but also what do these concepts mean at home, and how they are operating in Indigenous everyday life.

Aboriginal rights and citizenship

For Indigenous peoples in Canada historical treaties assured a high degree of non-interference from the colonizing empires and later the Canadian state in their affairs. They understood treaties to be nation-to-nation agreements that recognized each other's interdependence based on the principles of mutual respect and cooperation. Indeed, the 1763 Royal Proclamation "portrays Indian nations as autonomous political entities, living under the protection of the Crown but retaining their own internal political authority. [...] It finds a balance in an arrangement allowing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to divide and share sovereign

rights to the lands that are now Canada" (RCAP, 1996). Nevertheless, these basic principles were circumvented by the state through the *Indian Act* of 1876 and replaced in practice with a forceful assimilation approach that culminated in the establishment of the residential school system, and more importantly denied First Nations full citizenship through its process of enfranchisement. The cultural, economic, social and legal domination experienced by First Nations since 1876 have fuelled Indigenous mobilization based on assertion of the terms of treaties within a rhetoric of autonomy and self-governance that include demands for both recognition and redistribution (Alfred, 2008; Borrows, 2002 & 2010; Macklem, 2001; Schouls, 2004; Tully, 1995; Turner, 2006). The right to self-determination claimed by Indigenous peoples in Canada means that "they should be able to choose their own destiny within Canada, free of external compulsion" and includes redressing the treaty process, the right to self-government, and the right to territory, (Schouls, 2004, p. 1).

In demanding representation as distinct people, Indigenous nations challenge citizenship by acknowledging and insisting on a plurality of groups. When First Nations invoke notions of sovereignty and self-governance they do not seek an Indigenous state. Rather, they aim to attain self-determination within the Canadian state as a nation or people – a distinct cultural group – with nationally and internationally recognized rights and to govern themselves in a way that is consistent with Indigenous ideology. Indigenous autonomy is not a demand for the creation of states, gaining absolute control over a given territory, as is the case with Quebec for example, but rather it is a fight for justice, of upholding the terms of treaties, and securing an equal position vis-à-vis the dominant state. This understanding of what a nation is fits with Castells (1997) conclusion that nations are independent from states as nationalism:

- does not necessarily demand the construction of a sovereign nation-state;
- that 'sovereignty of people' is not the same as 'national sovereignty' and to equate it as such is an inability of western principles that begun in Europe with the modern nation-state, but which in a non-European context has been prevalent before the French Revolution;
- it is not an 'elite phenomenon' and more so in current circumstances it is an opposition and reaction to global elite domination;
- and it is oriented to the defence of 'an already institutionalized' culture than to the construction of a state. It might be that nationalism is a reaction to the state's turn of

attention towards economic aspects of the market while living unaddressed issues such as education, health and housing to other social sectors.

Indeed, Schouls (2004) argues that Indigenous justifications for autonomy have met resistance because they are framed by the argument that the foundations of personal identity are culture and nation, i.e. Indigenous peoples are entitled to self-government so that they can preserve particular cultural traits and restore residual power. As feminist critiques have argued, he maintains that liberal interpretations of Indigenous rights have reduced culture to a way of life, a personal choice to be enjoyed outside the political and public realm, thus not permitted to 'govern publicly' (Brown, 2006; Benhabib, 2002; Green, 2000 & 2012; Fraser, 1997; Young, 1995). Brown (2006) argues that the continued domination of minorities by liberalism is achieved through a process of depoliticization of culture, while subordinating the Other through a process of culturalization of politics. In addition, recent struggles between and within Indigenous nations complicates the nationalistic and cultural arguments. As more than half of the Indigenous population lives in urban areas their claims and preoccupations are increasingly diverging form territorial based nations. Even within the reserves, women and youth are challenging the male political elites to expand both the meaning of Indigenous identity (by addressing issues associated with bill C-31) and the scope of self-government to include measures of political accountability and decision-making (Cairns, 2000; Flanagan, 2008; Green, 2001, Schouls, 2004).

Schouls' assessment reflects the arguments put forward by Cairns (2000) in favour of the Citizen Plus model that preceded the *White Paper* which insists on the continuation of ongoing entitlements from existing treaties while "simultaneously supporting a common citizenship as a basis for empathy and solidarity between the Indian people and the majority population" (p. 12). Similarly, Canadian philosopher John Ralston Saul (2008) argues that the contemporary Canada is a Métis nation which has been forged through a continual interaction between Aboriginal and Western philosophies and peoples over four centuries where the "underlying currents are more indigenous than imported" (p. 106). "Our idea of citizenship is a circle that welcomes and adapts", "an idea of a complex society functioning like an equally complex family within an ever-enlarging circle. That is the Canadian model" (pp. 107 & 322). Saul goes beyond the modern citizenship and the Citizen Plus models to join Schouls' conclusion that "peaceful coexistence, in other words, is far more likely when political agreement, cooperation, and mutual cultural influence are featured as central to the relationship rather than cultural and political

incompatibilities" (p. 129). Like Saul, many argue that Indigenous perspectives have already changed the social landscape in Canada (Battiste, 2000; Salée and Lévesque, 2010; Timpson, 2009). Indeed, the Cree Nation has navigated the normative and structural impediments of the sate to transform unequal relations of power and create a public space for self-definition. They have specifically linked notions of democracy and justice in their fight for recognition of their rights to self-determination. Their struggles and accomplishments have had and continue to have important political and ideological implications for their federal and provincial counterparts.

'From a few scattered villages to a Nation': conceptualizing autonomy in Eeyou Istchee

Successful Cree opposition to the Great Whale hydroelectric project in 1991 caused the largest public utility in North America, Hydro Quebec, to cancel a $12.6 billion project and forced the provincial government to reconsider the role of Indigenous people in resource development and decision-making. This struggle also marked the beginning of the Cree as a self-defined nation. The opposition to the Great Whale become a space in which the Cree formally expressed their understanding of citizenship and self-government to both the Canadian public and internationally. Moreover, it refocused international debate over aboriginal self-determination and more broadly over principles of equality and non-discrimination. In a speech made to the Heads of Foreign Posts External Affairs Grand Chief Ted Moses (1991) stated:

> *We do know what we want* in the constitutional negotiations, and our objectives are reasonable and achievable. The problem is that the present impasse leads to confrontation and an adversarial relationship between the indigenous peoples and Canada. Under these circumstances it makes good sense to consult with the indigenous peoples. *If you want to know what we want, ask us and we will tell you.* Do not ask Indian Affairs, and do not set conditions based on years and years of misinformed aboriginal policy. In the meanwhile, enactment of policies set out by the Department of Indian Affairs should stop until there is a consensus on these policies from the Indians, the people who are being governed. *This is another way of saying that we want democracy.* I hope there is nothing wrong with asking for that….The Crees of James Bay have tried to break free from the oppressive influence of Indian Affairs and have had some success. *We do not always do as we are told. We judge for ourselves. That is self-government*.…Recall that the

International Covenants clearly state that a people may not be denied their "own means of subsistence". Canada, Quebec, and Hydro-Quebec have *denied one of the most fundamental of all human rights*, and have violated other rights as well, they have forced us off of our land, flooded our graves, poisoned our water, and deforested our territory. We have no other country to go to. We do not come from somewhere else. We live in our original *homeland* (emphasis added).

The Cree asserted their rights not only as Canadian citizens, but have for the first time expressed their nationhood, a distinct people occupying a clearly indigenously defined territory. The ultimate test to maintaining their autonomy and formalizing a right to self-determination came in 1995, when the Quebec government held a provincial-wide referendum on secession from Canada. The Cree opposition might have been the single most pivotal action that preserved the shaky Canadian unity as they held a separate referendum in the nine Cree communities on the option of remaining within Canada, which was 95% in favour of preserving their Canadian citizenship. This action prompted indigenous groups across Quebec to hold similar referendums and initiate media campaigns against the secession movement. Moreover, the Cree formally adopted the *Eeyou Estchee[24] Declaration of Principles* in 1995, which states:

We are Eeyou. We are a sovereign Peoples. We are the original inhabitants of Eeyou Estchee and are one with Eeyou Estchee.…Eeyou Estchee comprises the ancestral and traditional lands which have sustained us and which we have occupied since time immemorial. It extends into other waters, territories and borders.[…]All the resources, including the land, water, air, animals and Eeyou of Eeyou Estchee, must be protected from unilateral decisions by external forces. We have the inherent right to self-determination and the right to govern ourselves. We have a distinct identity reflected in a distinct system of laws and government, philosophy, language, culture, heritage, values, customs, traditions, beliefs and territory.…Eeyou Estchee transcends the territorial boundaries of the Province of Quebec, extending into other borders. Cree consent is required and mandatory for any changes to our status as Eeyou or to the status of Eeyou Estchee. As Peoples with a right to self-determination, we shall freely decide our political status and

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[24] Since 1995 spelling has been standardized to Istchee

associations and freely pursue our future as a people. We will assert and defend our inherent right of self-determination and the protection of Eeyou and Eeyou Estchee (GCC, 1995).

It was also at this time that the Cree Nation made specific efforts to influence public opinion in Canada. The Grand Council of the Cree published two books detailing the Cree opposition on the inclusion of its territory in an independent Quebec in which they formalized a self-defined version of a just vision of Cree-State relationships:

> ...we are one of the world's indigenous people, as citizens of Canada, as residents of Quebec, and as a people[…] This is the ultimate circumstance in which the Crees' rights to self determination must be invoked....We hope that this in-depth study contributes to peaceful discussion and understanding of the status and fundamental rights of the James Bay Crees and other indigenous people in the current context of Quebec secession and in the future…there is great need to recognize and respect the rights of the Crees and other Aboriginal peoples in order to advance the well-being of its citizens. To do so will strengthen Canada's democracy, its respect for human rights, and its future as a country that includes Aboriginal people in its own vision of itself. (GCC, 1998, pp. ii,12,13)

Throughout its political activism the Cree Nation forced the provincial and federal governments to reconsider the role of Indigenous peoples in decision-making and resource development. It has forced both governments to honour treaty commitments and responsibilities and redefine its vision of itself to include Indigenous peoples not only on paper but also in practice. In 2007, the Cree Nation became a self-governing entity within Canada being formally recognized as such in the *New Relationship between the Government of Canada and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee.* Finally, after the announcement of the Plan Nord in 2008, the Cree have formalized a new agreement with the provincial government which extends their participation in resource development and their exclusive control over in their ancestral territories. Despite these achievements the social determinants of health in Eeyou Istchee continue to be a challenge, prompting local members to denounce the more celebratory attitude of the Cree leadership. Undoubtedly, it is in what Salée and Lévesque (2010) termed 'gray zones' of social relations characterized by struggles and cooperation between groups that Indigenous peoples-state

relations are being defined in practice. Indeed, the normative essence of modern citizenship has changed since Marshall first proposed equality of rights. To think that Indigenous-state relations are forever locked in the colonized/colonizer and oppressed/oppressor dynamic is to deny Indigenous peoples their agency and historicity. What is more appropriate is to recognize the relational intersubjective character of social relationships between Indigenous peoples and the state and within Indigenous nations in which forms of 'recognition of the specific experiences, identities, and social contributions of Indigenous peoples', are continually negotiated (Salée & Lévesque, 2010, p. 126). This is what citizenship should be about, but political theory cannot uncover these subjective spaces by itself only because it still largely insists on objectivity. It does not have the vocabulary to translate how history is performed and theory embodied in these intersubjective interactions.

Self-determination and Indigenous historytelling

The Humanities PhD program in which I enrolled requires students to frame their research within at least three disciplines from the Humanities, Social Science or Fine Arts departments. The supervisory committee should technically be established in the first year, but, as I was yet to define a proper research project I decided to first check back with the community before choosing the other disciplines that would inform the theoretical framework. In spring 2009 I met with members of the Cree Nation of Nemaska Youth Council to discuss my research in the community. Although some interest was shown and I had prepared specific questions, the conversation instead focused on 'catching up' on community life and my own experiences since I moved back to the city. Nothing specific came out of that meeting and I wondered if my close friendship with some of the youth made it hard to establish a formal research relationship. Like other Indigenous peoples, the Cree prize non-authoritative socialization based non-interference that is in line with experiential learning (Adelson, 2000; Absolon, 2011; Fixico, 2003; Simpson, 2011). I expected that if my friends did not agree with what I was doing they would not state it as a matter of fact. I interpreted their reticence as a sign that either they were not interested in the project or that they possibly wanted to 'move on'. Either way my intention of exploring socio-cultural impacts of hydro development in Nemsaka had no clear benefits or relevance for the community. I could have insisted and I am sure that some would have agreed to be interviewed but I doubt it would have made for an interesting project in the end. Instead I decided to take more time to reflect on my research project and finish the course work.

Cole & Knowles (2001), as well as other Indigenous scholars and oral historians, stress that research is often a result of "serendipitous moments and opportunities" (p. 57). A visit to a local gallery can inspire art-based life history research (Cole & Knowles, 2001), a conversation in a hotel room in Australia can inform the ways in which 'theory' is applied in Native Studies (Simpson & Smith, 2014), wanting to be close to a sibling's place of residence can lead to a career in nursing and revolutionize Indigenous health care (Ramsden, 2002), or the recording of folk songs can lead to theorizing the field of oral history (Portelli, 1991 & 1997). I was introduced and instantly converted to oral history while loitering in Concordia's library building trying to kill some time before an outing with friends. I noticed, posted next to the elevator, an invitation to a presentation about the Italian community in the Ville Emard neighborhood of Montreal. Since I had plenty of time and lived in Lasalle (the neighboring borough) I was curious enough to attend. Joyce Pillarella, then a MA student at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS), delivered the most engaging presentation that I had seen. Based on interviews with three generations of Italians who grew up in Ville Emard and in collaboration with an Italian school class, Joyce told the story of one hundred post-war era Italians living and working in this former industrial district. For me it was an emotional rollercoaster as she deftly navigated with compassion, charm and joy the complex experience of immigration in everyday life (see her interview here). This was a turning point in my own research as I realized that people's everyday life is a valid source of history-making. The next fall I enrolled in the Public History course taught by Dr. Steven High. The course introduced students to how history is remembered and represented through life-story interviewing and required developing a small oral history project. I took the opportunity to experiment with life-story research and conducted three interviews with Bertie, Pakesso and Thomas Jolly, which are included in this thesis. I also wanted to experiment with filming so I videotaped the interviews and used Bertie's to develop a long (12min) digital story[25] titled *Eeyou Histories* that can be viewed here.

Breaking through the veneer of objectivity: oral history and lived experience

The subtlety and challenge of interpreting subjectivity has been debated within many disciplines. The western scientific method based on rationality had negated the need to study orality in its own right, oral sources/narratives were therefore initially regarded as sources of

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[25] Digital stories are usually short, approximately 3 to 5 minutes (Levine, 2014).

additional information and were assessed against positivist criteria of 'fact', 'truth' and accuracy. Based on his extended fieldwork in Africa, Vansina (1985, [1965]) was one of the first scholars to argue for the need to regard oral narratives (and therefore subjectivity) as sources of history:

> [oral narratives] deal with the expression of experience....All these sources are reflexive, the product of thought about existing situations as well as about existing messages. They represent a stage in the elaboration of historical consciousness and are among the main wellspring of what we often call "culture." (p.8)

Although he devotes much of his book to various methods of abstracting 'truth' from oral sources he nevertheless considers oral tradition as a "reflection about the past, the goal of which was not to find out 'what really happened' but to establish what in the past, believed to be real, was relevant to the present" (p. 196). Oral sources therefore reveal new insights which could otherwise not have been gained and show that history is a living, changing interpretation of the past. Such narratives 'stress group consciousness and relate the group to an overall worldview of the community' and even though they are individual 'lives-in-context' they "bring us that much closer to understanding the complexities of lives in communities" (Vansina, 1985; Cole & Knowles , 2001, p. 11).

For example, in my own research, when I was interviewing Thomas Jolly, a Cree from Nemaska, about his experiences in school in Gatineau, he alternated stories from Gatineau with his time spent in the community of Waskaganish. At this point I became confused about chronology so I asked him to specify how much he travelled back and forth between school and the community. My question prompted him instead to elaborate on how he felt about going home:

> I stayed in Waskaganish for seven summers. In the seven summers I lived there I lived in a tent. All our family lived in a tent. It was tough going back to the city because people would generally ask 'so how was your summer?' 'Can you tell me about your summer?' I couldn't very well say 'well I stayed in a tent and my washroom was outside and we don't have much of anything'. So, I had a tough time to explain where I came from.
>
> It was hard [going back to Waskaganish] because I was so used to the city so I couldn't stay for too long. As soon as I would go there I had to get out. It took

me a couple of years to get used to it. [I asked myself] How can I come back to a place like this? It took me a major adjustment to come back home because the conditions were too harsh for me. I was spoiled, I was assimilated, I was everything that could be done to. At that time I think I was quite rebellious too. I didn't want to believe in certain things like what we were doing [traditional Cree activities]. I thought my way of living was much better than how they were living. The conditions might have been poor but they were happy people[26].

For Thomas in the present, his difficulty in adjusting to bush life reflects the impact of colonization and its partial success – he was indeed assimilated, to the point of rejecting the cultural values and worldviews with which he grew up. For Thomas in the past the 'poverty' of bush life was an embarrassment, an awkward situation not easily translatable to the southern non-Cree middle-class. We can also infer from his statement that for the younger Thomas poverty was closely related to unhappiness. For the older Thomas, happiness is not tied to material prosperity; in fact elsewhere in the interview he takes pride in his traditional rearing and considers it a rich source of teachings that are passed on to the younger generations:

But I am glad that my dad had taken the time to keep me home to actually see some of the things that had happened prior to any contact with the outside. And having to live this type of experience or life [in the bush], that now for a lot of us it's this vivid memory, but for my parents this was their way of life. So that portion of my life really affects me sometimes, particularly when I now have to tell my kids how I was raised and grown up in comparison to what we have nowadays.

Here Thomas links his experience to that of his age cohort – 'for a lot of us' – that have gone through the same uprooting and alienation affected by the residential school system. He also links the experience of his parents to that of other Cree adults of that time and hints at how these experiences can be used to educate young Crees.

Even when narratives are checked for accuracy, and testimony is challenged by written evidence, discrepancies can show how memory is shaped and reshaped for purposes other than social or political. Working with a German-born Jewish Holocaust survivor, Roseman (2006)

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[26] Interviewed, November 2009

discovers many inaccuracies in her testimony: exaggerated events, chronological discrepancies, untold experiences and 'forgotten' documents. Roseman contends that such inaccuracies help survivors manage the trauma and control an 'unbearable past'. In a case study of a before-and-after interview with a Vietnam War veteran, Allison (2006) shows that recollection of events years after the initial occurrence, while still true to the 'original' story line, are nevertheless expanded upon by adding justifications, details such as sounds and smells, and interpretation. He shows that subjectivity plays an important role in memory as individuals are trying to make sense of events by establishing coherence within their lives – "there is an elaboration, explanation, and cohesion to make it understandable and interesting, if not dramatic, story" (p.228). Portelli (1997) argues that it is this process of reflexivity or 'history-telling' - the attempt to link personal experience with broader historical processes - which sets oral history apart from other disciplines that use oral sources. By reconstructing the story of their lives individuals express 'the awareness of the historicity of personal experience and of the individual's role in the history of society and in public events: wars, revolutions, strikes, floods, and earthquakes' (p. 6). If oral history brings forth the subjectivity of the narrator it also forces the researcher to question the scientific claim to objectivity. Indeed, to paraphrase Portelli oral history is a dialog, an encounter between two people, 'one with a story to tell and one with a history to reconstruct'- "it begins with individual narratives and with encounters between individuals" (p. xi).

Tactical histories and clandestine discourse: Indigenous resistance in everyday life

The reflexive turn in social sciences, and especially in oral history, has therefore led to a realignment of the relationship between the researcher and the researched – the process is now based on mutuality, respect, equality, sharing authority and sensitivity. To paraphrase Greenspan & Bolkosky (2006) we no longer write *about* people but *with* and *for* them. Indeed, the intersubjective character of research led oral historians not only to reassess their posture towards their research partners but to acknowledge and value the political purpose of research itself as "both an *intellectual* and as a *social* endeavour." (Portelli, 1997, p. xvi, emphasis in the original). Oral historians' engagement with the broader political and social spheres has been especially instrumental for neo-colonial[27] peoples' struggle to reclaim authority and control over their lives and histories. It has enabled these communities to denounce the colonial practice of 'silencing

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[27] Following Ramsden (2002) and others I avoid using the terms postcolonial because Indigenous peoples "are still struggling for change in a climate of colonially inherited institutional racism" (p. 1).

subjects' and dispel constructed illusions of 'speaking subjects' (White, Miescher, & Cohen, 2001). From the Luo peoples of Uganda and Kenia to the Maori of New Zealand the struggle for authority and autonomy has found resonance in the academia, in the courts, and the public sphere at large. They have shown that personal stories tell about how history is constructed and how these stories have engaged with and negotiated the politics of knowledge production (Vaughan, 2001). Although it is probably not appropriate to equate the African and Aboriginal Australian or Maori experiences one similarity that can be identified is what van Toorn (2001) calls 'tactical histories'. In the face of remarkable and interrelated exogenous and endogenous social, cultural, political, environmental and economic changes Indigenous people (and neo-colonial peoples at large) produce written and oral histories by and for the community that are deployed as 'modes for political and economic action', 'histories which are inscribed by the people with the memories'(van Toorn, 2001; Vaughan, 2001). By exposing the continuity of Indigenous agency from a colonial to a neo-colonial world, Indigenous life stories, in their selection of what is said, are also sensitive to the potential audiences and the impact that their narrative can or might have on the collective struggles for autonomy. Therefore they are "stories for", they show the individual in the context of his/hers social roles while giving a purpose to the telling, that which serves the present best (Sansom, 2001, p. 111).

In her work with three Yukon elders, Julie Cruikshank (1990) shows how aboriginal storytelling, "in which metaphor and symbol play a role in how ideas are presented", is a strategy for adaptation to change (p. 3). While searching to analyze the impact of the Klondike gold rush of the late 1800s and the construction of the Alaska Highway in the 1940s, the elders participating in her research employed traditional narratives, songs and genealogies to reconstruct not only the history of development in their territory but more so to present a worldview specific to their culture. The resulting life stories unveiled an interpersonal network of relationships between people, between past, present and future, and between people and their territory. From the stories of the Stolen Woman that show the ingenuity and strength of women to stories of creation (Crow stories) that explain seasonal cycles and relationships between people and animals, they illustrate specific cultural skills, knowledge and know-how that inform the strategies that these Tlingit women employ to make sense of the world and adapt to new circumstances. These Yukon elders have used their stories and much of Cruikshank's research to create culturally appropriate written accounts for their communities. The purpose of these

products, which are written in English, is to preserve traditional narratives by passing them on to the younger generations, in a language and context easily understood by them.

Similarly, the exploration of the Ringatu faith of the Tuhoe people (Maori) in New Zealand revealed how traditional narratives and songs concerning the prophet Te Kooti are used to not only make sense of history but also to assert Maori (and in this case Tuhoe) authority and form the basis for current action. Indeed, by exposing the injustices of the colonial system (the repression of the Ringatu religious leaders) they espouse the moral foundations of freedom and peace of the Ringatu faith. The predictive style of these traditional narratives invites contemporary Maori to "live by them and act by them" therefore they bring into existence "new histories" (Binney, 2001, p. 96). Whether a Tlingit or a Tuhoe, by striving to ascertain the significance and continuity of their cultural traditions in a modern world, Indigenous peoples' stories are context bound and change over time. Indigenous life is embedded both in place and in collective social relationships. Deriving meaning from aboriginal stories requires familiarity with cultural values and traditions. Cruikshank (1999) has termed this familiarity 'cultural scaffolding', a broad 'framework' of collectively communicated traditional stories that hold morals and lessons about human nature and a community's articulations of kinship and belonging, land and connection to place, and communicative practices. The continual reinterpretation, reappropriation and reinvention of aboriginal stories depending on context and purpose has led Archibald (2001) to characterize them as 'having a life of their own' and Cruikshank to stress their 'social life'. They are therefore forces that shape and are shaped by the social relationships that they portray and spring forth from.

In a song titled *The last great men* (2010) by the Cree band Ceremony, the young Cree artists portray their interpretation of the significance of the traditional values and stories. They also insist on the Cree cultural continuity in the face of significant economic, social and political pressure.

Everything that we as a Cree people are today
Is in the hands of a generation that is passing away
All of our legends, our stories and traditional ways
Are threatened by the arrival of the modern day
What will we then become when we lost our touch with our roots?
When the last of our great rivers has a fatal rendezvous?

And the trees that spoke are silenced once and for all?

When the spirits that led us here bear witness to our great fall?

How are we to define ourselves to our children and grandchildren?

If the legends of greatness become stories of loss and regrets

If ceremonies become a thing of the past

The dreams that we hold on to will not last

But the day will come for the drums to complain

The songs of our elders will be sung

And their memory will stay strong

And speak to us in dreams

Showing us the way to believe

So we will have a chance to be like them

As the descendants of the Last Great Men

The song, as well as most of the album, encompasses a generation's critique to the recent political and economic decisions as well as broader cultural and social transformations that the Cree Nation has experienced since the signing of the JBNQA. It laments the fighting spirit of the older generations (the last great men) during the negotiations and the opposition to the Great Whale River. It makes a pointed commentary on the decision to sign the Paix des Braves and allow another river to be dammed, living the Great Whale (the last of our great rivers) up for grabs in a not so distant future. Contrary to most commentaries regarding Indigenous youth, this song demonstrates that this generation has a strong connection to the land, to the culture, and to their elders. Similar to the Tuhoe Maori, these songs have a predictive style (what will happen if) and invite others to act accordingly. As Pakesso (lead singer of Ceremony) has mentioned, the youth understand, and indeed live with, the impacts of increasing resource extraction in the territory and hold a different vision of where the Nation should be heading in the future. But, in an environment in which overt criticism may have significant impacts on the professional and personal life of young Crees, similar to the Akan tales (*anansesem*) of Ghana or Zanzibar's Siti binti Saadi's songs, Ceremony uses songs to articulate dissidence and still preserve, if not harmonious, at least cordial social relationships (Yakah, 2001; Fair, 2001). The song manages to target its critique at the center of power by excluding the leadership from the generation that holds the cultural foundations (the elders that are passing away) that should guide decision

making, which so far has brought both cultural and environmental destruction. Although the song has been performed only in the past couple of years it may well serve as "a hook" on which the events leading to and emanating from the signing of the Paix des Braves will be fastened in the memory of the new generation and give today's youth authority of voice (Fair, 2001).

Embodying impacts: contesting the development discourse

Between 1984 and 1997 the Witsuwit'en and the Gitxsan Nations of British Columbia spent 369 days in court giving testimony about their traditional occupation and use of their ancestral territories. The landmark decision of the *Delgamuukw* case reversed the *Van der Peet* assertion that Indigeneity is a static cultural trait relegated to a distant past by recognizing contemporary Indigenous uses of the land. More significant was the recognition and admissibility of oral traditions as evidence for asserting aboriginal title to the territory. In their evidence the Witsuwit'en and the Gitxsan elders used traditional stories, songs, dances and cultural artifacts to describe the intricate relationship between culture and the land, local knowledge, environmental change and Indigenous-settler relationships. Similar to the traditional narratives of the Maori Land Count of the late 1800s, Witsuwit'en and Gitxsan histories were used to clarify their rights and to assert the recognition of these rights by others (Parsons, 2001).

From the detailed testimony of Witsuwit'en elder Johnny David an intricate relationship between people and nature emerges, a relationship that is filtered, expressed and understood through complex social and cultural values (Mills, 2005). This culturally grounded worldviews and knowledge termed Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) has received increased recognition within environmental management, nevertheless its role in providing alternatives has yet to reach its potential. As Cruikshank (2005) concludes "indigenous people then face a double exclusion, initially by colonial processes that expropriate land, and ultimately by neo-colonial discourses that appropriate and reformulate their ideas" (p. 259). From La Pérouse's interpretation of his voyage into the Lituya Bay (Alaska) to the various boundary making undertakings in the region, the normalization of colonial experiences in the past and into the present has marginalized oral traditions as well as the reality of and the Indigenous peoples themselves. By weaving national histories built through both oral narratives and colonial accounts with evidence of environmental change, Cruikshank shows that local knowledge provides a space of reflection not only on nature but also on embedded social relations that together 'co-produce the world'. This collective meaning-making is nevertheless internalised

through individual experiences with nature. The embodiment of everyday engagement with the environment through, sounds, smells, touch and sight "encodes a politics of sentiment, or a sense of eco-place" (Magowan, 2001, p. 45). In other words experiencing nature produces personalized meanings that operate at spiritual and emotional levels as much as the rational and cognitive levels. Like Freddie Jolly who engages with the land using his "five senses", for Johnny David his territory is "like your own skin. Sometimes you can even feel the animals moving on your body as they are on the land, the fish swimming in your bloodstream…" (Johnny David, quoted in Mills, 2005, p. 3). Whether expressed through song like the Yolngu of Australia or through glacier stories like the Tlingit of Yukon, embodied eco-places infuse the territory with memory, emotion and identity.

Joy Parr (2010) uses the concept of 'embodied histories' to show that we create knowledge by doing as much as by thinking and that everyday experiences are internalised through bodily senses. This embodied knowledge becomes one in the repertoire of tacit, experiential and intuitive knowledges enacted in praxis. But these

> corporeal embodiments […] by their resistance to communication in words, the parts of technologies, environments, and everyday practices accessible through these senses are those most marginalized by the methodological turn to discourse analysis. (p. 10)

This is why traditional scholarship struggles to make sense of lived experiences of megaproject impacts and why oral history, by allowing subjectivity its voice, can capture the socio-cultural concepts of development. In her collection of case studies Parr shows how various communities displaced and replaced by megaprojects lost not only their livelihood but a 'carefully internalized sense of doing and being'. In the Saint John River Valley of New Brunswick the arrival of a NATO training base erased almost two centuries of carefully tended woodlots and prosperous farms. It not only physically displaced the people but also broke down their social and religious affiliations, devalued the financial worth of timber and agricultural products, and induced serious health effects from Agent Orange use. Raymond Scott, a well-established farmer, summed up the human cost of state imposed development: "I'm all through. It took 17 years to build up what I've got, and I haven't got the heart to start again" (p. 42). The relocation of Iroquois village in Ontario caused by the hydroelectric projects of the St. Lawrence

Seaway to a 'modern' 1950s suburb expunged fishing activities and the active pedestrian practices that held the community together. The river that gave Iroquois and its inhabitants a distinctive identity was "a place that made you feel like a millionaire" and a "respected life-imbued entity" (p. 89). Once the dams were built it became "just a navigational body of water for shipping", "there was just nothing there" (p. 89).

For some, the mourning of a life lost recedes by replacing one activity with another just like Raymond Scoot taking up hooking mats. For others, like the Spicers and Donald Waterfield, the disappearance of tended land by generations under the raising waters of the High Arrow Dam on the Columbia River, BC, marked the loss of a 'good life' and an agricultural practice based on sustainable mixed farming. For the residents of the valley, the Columbia Treaty was a sell-out to a foreign power that ultimately decided how the dam was to manage the water levels in time and space, a management that was utterly alien from the natural cycles that had become embodied in the way of life on the shores. Their loss extended beyond the material encompassing "blessings both tangible and intangible, visible and invisible, material and spiritual" (p. 114), a worldview that was impossible to reconcile with foreign decision makers who "want to commercialize and make profit out of every good gift God has given for the benefit of all" (p. 121). Similar to Bertie who found happiness on the shores of the Rupert River and lost it when the gates were closed, the Arrow Lakes families lost the pleasures that farm life brought – the 'fun' and 'fascination' of tending animals, and the balance of work, leisure and play.

These stories and countless others show that local knowledge expressed through oral narrative contextualizes environmental change, provides more locally sensitive solutions to management practices as well as puts forward different conceptualizations of development and living a 'good life'. Nevertheless, putting this knowledge into action, especially in instances of state imposed development is not always evident. In their analysis of international development work Slim et al. (1995) show how oral testimony can be used to understand local knowledge and use it to better frame interventions in a variety of cultures. Since development interventions are themselves politicized activities and are "about meeting human rights", their implementation should be undertaken within the frame of self-definition so that long-term positive benefits can be achieved (p. 49). Not only does local knowledge has an indispensable role for contextualizing the development and implementation of interventions by providing insight into changing socio-cultural and economic circumstances, but more importantly, it empowers local communities to

'set their own agenda for development'. This is the most important issue and perhaps the most controversial one at the heart of development and of autonomy and self-governance in the Indigenous context – the right to define one's future on his/her own terms. Whether the goal is conservation or development, in a contemporary world ultimately concerned with the survival of our species and 'those others' on which we depend, we have to "step out of our own disciplinary or cultural worldview, or put another way, to pull back the blinders just enough to see that they are there." (Lutz & Neis, 2008, p. 17).

In the remarkable collection of essays derived from the *Coasts Under Stress*, a 5-year Community-University Alliance (CURA), Lutz and Neis (2008) argue that acknowledging other ways of knowing is not enough, knowledge creation and co-creation has to extend to its mobilization beyond the 'community' from which it originates. In the context of resource development and environmental management, knowledge production and movement needs to be linked to power relations and take place within a view for cross-cultural interaction especially since state intervention and planning has largely failed to respond to the needs of local communities and often has detrimental effects on the regional scale, such as the cod fishery management in Newfoundland and Labrador (pp. 85-99). Participation in knowledge production, interpretation and dissemination implies that "actors can affect the boundaries and indeed the conceptualization of the possible" and therefore continued, open and flexible dialog within the process of knowledge co-creation is key to 'living a good life', 'think about possibilities for overcoming problems in our communities' and 'bring together people that are potentially at odds'(Archibald, 2008; Cruikshank, 1999; Gaventa & Cornwakk, 2001, p. 72, quoted in Lutz & Neis, p. 10).

Difficult memories and community cohesion: what kind of research intervention?

One of the first assignments for the Public History course was to watch a short digital story produced in the context of the Montreal Life Stories project which is housed at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS). The [Montreal Life Stories](#) project is a Community-University Alliance (CURA) that brought together a core group of forty community and university researchers to explore, through life history interviewing, the experiences of five hundred Montrealers displaced by war, genocide, and other human rights violations[28] (High,

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[28] For a detailed presentation of the Montreal Life Story project see High, 2014.

2014). I watched a nine minute excerpt of <u>Genevieve Channaret Srey's interview</u>, a survivor of the Cambodian genocide, in which she recounted her hasty departure from Cambodia and her experiences as a refugee student in France. Her testimony was emotionally charged, oftentimes the memories of the family left behind and eventually killed in the fighting destabilized the narrative, Mrs. Channaret cried a good deal and the video was edited to remove the many pauses that necessitate a space for emotional support. The emotional impact on both the interviewee and interviewer in recounting and listening to difficult memories calls for a different ethics framework whose goal is to create "a work space of respect, deep listening, and dialogue" (High, 2014, p. 42). Often the interview in which difficult memories are explored can function as catharsis, "telling one's story to an emphatic listener is therapeutic, thus casting survivor testimony as part of the healing process" (p. 40). Nevertheless, High (2014) brings attention to the difference between testimony and life story in the context of difficult memories, in which he argues that large-scale testimony projects in their aim to establish "moral and political authority" over injustice and to demand recognition may "inadvertently diminish the long-term impact of the violence as it ripples through the lives of individuals, families and communities" (p. 37). He calls for an approach that is interviewee-centered, a methodology that is flexible and shares authority over what is being said and how memories are curated in the public. Most important, the relationships developed through multiple interview sessions allow to consider "how and why these stories are told and to whom" (p. 40).

The three interviews I conducted with Bertie, Thomas, and Pakesso, touched on the many aspects of doing oral history. Thomas was a frequent visitor while I lived in Nemaska, and the interview felt more like a familiar storytelling evening among friends. There was an engaged dialogue with many interruptions from my part. Although I was friends with Bertie as well, our friendship was built in the context of the opposition to the Rupert River diversion. His interview had a clear political message and while we were comfortable with each other, it was the first time I videotaped an interview by myself. Audio problems and probably my incessant camera verification created awkward moments in which he lost his narrative thread and often prompted me to ask him questions. I knew Pakesso very little and only as the lead singer of Ceramony, thus the interview was largely guided by him with very little intervention from my part. Many of his statements were politically charged and in the post-interview analysis I was reluctant to include some of his more pointed reflections. Although the memories shared by them were not overtly

expressed as difficult (in the sense of traumatic), on further reflection I realized that I had conducted them in November 2009, right after the gates of the Rupert dam had closed. Maybe that emotional burden was carried over either through what was being said or through the underrunning nervousness experienced by them or myself.

Issues of difficult memories and my experiences with life story interviewing prompted a period of deep reflection on my own research. I was worried whether my project, in foregrounding land loss, might not have a negative impact on either the interviewees or community relations, or both. I doubt that my research would have had lasting negative impacts, but the possibility of further dividing or destabilizing community relations even if in the short term, was not acceptable. Given the often decontextualized state intervention in Indigenous contexts, especially in regards with resource development, how could I build a project that concretely responded to local needs while also honoring dissenting voices? Would I be able to link power relations to individual agency in a way that built spaces for local empowerment? With the little interest shown during my first visit, I realized that my participatory project focused on youth life stories, was nevertheless far from an effective community-based research endeavour. I needed to engage with more than just individuals, I needed to understand youth dynamics from a collective perspective and with a collective empowerment goal in mind. Indeed, my former students had taught me that Cree youth are not a group apart; they are embedded and derive their notions of self and identity from the daily interactions with the community at large. Their aspirations are very much tied to the range of opportunities that the community offers and in their virtual and real interactions with the world at large. A participatory youth research project without the community was nonsensical. But where do we start?

Chapter 3

Doing research with and for communities

While I put my own research on hold hoping to better gauge local needs, in January 2010 I was asked to facilitate a community consultation on health and social services in Nemaska. Although I didn't know much about how the health and social service system functions in Eeyou Istchee besides my own occasional visits at the local clinic, together with the local Cree Health Board representative, we organized a three-day meeting with a one day pre-meeting and a one day post-meeting consultations. I also drafted a report that was eventually presented at an executive Cree Health Board meeting. The Nemaska meeting aimed to familiarize community members with the services provided by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay (CBHSSJB) and other local health and social service providers, as well as to discuss the health and social service needs of the community and to identify how the providers can cooperate to meet these needs. This was my first experience in facilitating a community-wide consultation and conducting focus groups with local staff. During the pre-meeting preparation we consulted with band employees and leaders, with the local clinical staff as well as community professionals, and with the justice committee. The post-meeting workshop focused on devising a thematic list of needs and priorities from the perspective of the health and social service providers as well as those identified by the community members.

What I took from this meeting was that although existing programs worked well for the community the most pressing challenge faced by the local office is that of staffing; that community engagement and participation in service provision necessitated a structured approach; and that responsibility for community wellness rests as much with services providers as with the members at large (CNN, 2010). With respect to my own approach of devising community-based research, I realized that I needed to identify a set of shared values that will underline an eventual collaboration. In Nemaska, these were wellness and responsibility. Unfortunately, I wasn't ready yet to let go of my initial development theme and instead I concentrated on exploring ways to develop a collaborative research process with local communities based on available literature. My involvement with the Montreal Life Stories project was minimal. Although I took the *Ethics, interviewing and listening to survivors* training to address issues of ethics procedures as well as the subtle questions of sensitivity in the context of emotional and psychological impact of difficult memories, I did not participate in the interviewing process of the CURA. Instead, I was

hired as a summer intern at DIALOG - Aboriginal Peoples Research and Knowledge Network, housed at the Institut national de recherche scientifique in Montreal. DIALOG aims to create

> …the conditions that foster constructive discussion and exchange between researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds and between researchers and collaborators from Aboriginal organizations and Aboriginal communities, and by setting up a relationship of dialogue between the academic and Aboriginal milieus. (Lévesque, 2009, p. 98)

In essence DIALOG responds to a new research culture premised on knowledge mobilization and research partnerships. It aims to employ both explicit and tacit knowledge, scientific and practical (bringing back every day Indigenous experience), as well as to incorporate in its structure a variety of actors that can contribute knowledge and know-how that are proper to them. As discussed in the introduction, DIALOG brings together students, researchers, and Indigenous institutions and community representatives to think and develop together a research paradigm that is at once anchored in theory and in practice, one that responds in concrete ways to the perspectives and priorities of its members. As Lévesque (2009) explains, DIALOG

> …is not only a matter of infrastructure, dissemination or transfer of knowledge; it is also and especially a matter of re-examining epistemological positions, rethinking scientific paradigms and recognizing diverse relationships with the sphere of knowledge. […] It is a process that is based on the social link, on the equality of its members whatever their backgrounds, on the fact of belonging to a collective project for the mobilization of knowledge, and on the cross-fertilization of research—unlike other, more traditional forms of grouping based on institutional status, the superiority of academic knowledge over other forms of knowledge, hierarchical relations and the collecting of individual research work. (p. 93)

As an emerging researcher, my work with DIALOG has profound implications, on the one hand, on how I engage with theory, and, on the other hand, on how I built a community-based research project. The diversity of activities in which I had the privilege to take part contributed to building my skills in view of collaborative and partnership-based research. I participated in a graduate class on knowledge mobilization where we had to develop a collective

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research project. I was inspired by this pedagogical approach in my own teaching at Concordia and developed a [wiki on the Indian Act](). I encouraged students to apply the research presented in class to their own current interests and particular skills. The final projects ranged from posters, to curated Indigenous art, to oral history interviews and [digital stories](). DIALOG also developed a unique intensive course, the Nomadic University. This university-accredited course takes place over a 5 day period and is structured as a seminar in which affiliate students, researchers and Indigenous partners lead discussions relating to particular Indigenous issues. Topics range from questions of autonomy to arts-based research. Participants/students come from various professional, educational, and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the Nomadic University strives to embed participants in Indigenous social worlds and places by holding at least one session a year in a significantly Indigenous location, from Val d'Or to Puebla (Lévesque, 2011).

For me, being a member of DIALOG has had two important implications. First, in a knowledge mobilization perspective in the context of Indigenous research collaboration, an effective research project is built and remains flexible in terms of both theory and practice over the life of the project. As such not only a variety of methods (from surveys to life story interviews) are necessary to test theoretical frameworks on the ground, but also any such endeavour calls for a sustained long-term relationship. As discussed in previous chapters, collaborative community-based research is time consuming, necessitates constant dialogue between its members, and is embedded in local power relations. Navigating these complexities requires a high level of commitment from all parties. Second, it has opened up a new perspective on Indigenous knowledge. In the case of Indigenous people, knowledge creation and mobilization has a long history of oppression, marginalization and effacement that "have been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then through the eyes of the West, back to those that have been colonized" (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.1). Similar to oral history, knowledge mobilization in Indigenous contexts aims to 'ground research practices in the social and political realities of Indigenous peoples while foregrounding their knowledge reflective of culturally and temporally bound worldviews (Lévesque, 2009).

Researching for the empire: Indigenous people, colonization and research

As the science and art of the Other, knowledge production in the social sciences gained authority from the institutionalization and professionalization of ethnographic research "both

scientifically validated and based on a unique personal experience" (Clifford, 1983, p. 121). In anthropology, the "men on the spot" (missionary, trader, or traveller) were replaced by a new generation of academically trained ethnographer-anthropologists that had developed the 'best scientific hypotheses' and mastered a refined level of neutrality, starting with the seminal work of Malinowski in Trobriand Islands (Clifford, 1983; Geertz, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Moreover, as positivist epistemology spread by way of anthropologists and later sociologists to all corners of the world, social science took upon the task of not only understanding the 'dynamics of collective life' but also to alter them towards a desired direction (Burawoy, 2009; Geertz, 2000). Coinciding with the colonial expansion and influenced by the social-contract theory of Hobbes and Locke, which viewed civilization as an evolutionary path from the 'savagery' of nomadic hunter-gatherers societies to civilized societies characterized by intensive agriculture and formalized government, social science research until the latter half of the 20th century had a devastating impact on the cultures and people with which it engaged, and especially on Indigenous peoples.

Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues that there is a direct relationship between the expansion of knowledge, the expansion of trade, and the expansion of empire (p. 88). Early anthropological research followed the ideals of Enlightenment as modernity and was used to colonize Indigenous knowledge by claiming 'positional superiority'. Such has been the impact of early colonial anthropology that Tuhiwai Smith argues that it [...]has collected, classified, and represented other cultures to the extent that anthropologists are often the academics popularly perceived by the indigenous world as the epitome of all that is bad with academics" (p. 67). She criticizes the early posture of disciplines in which dedication to objectivity and authority depoliticized research while working towards a totalizing discourse and universal values that selected what counted as knowledge. Indeed, Geertz (2000) argues that:

> The various disciplines and quasi-disciplines that make up the arts and science are, for those caught up in them, far more than a set of technical tasks and vocational obligations, they are cultural frames in terms of which attitudes are formed and lives conducted. (p. 14)

Used as a tool of domination and marginalization research during the colonial period evoked the chronology of events related to 'discovery', conquest, exploitation, distribution, and appropriation to gain access to resources and land. The conceptualization of development as "the

active principle according to which new and higher stages of human society might emerge out of old and more simple ones: the driving motive in human history" was born out of the encounter between western settlers with 'new world' peoples (Ferguson, 1997, p. 153). These 'new' and 'higher' stages characterised by 'modernity' grounded in reason, emancipation, and progress which branded 'discovered' Indigenous people as 'backward' and 'traditional', elevated the superiority of colonizing states. This inferior-superior relationship between those perceived to need help and those that have the resources to provide it furthered the universalistic Enlightenment principles and provided the primary source and legitimacy for the authority of the colonizer (Fixico, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Wilson (2008) identifies three phases in which Aboriginal people were constructed as a 'problem' to either solve or make disappear. Although uneven, colonization has had similar effects on Indigenous people, particularly in North America, Australia and New Zealand (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). During the first phase, identified as Terra Nullius and spanning from 1770 to 1900, Indigenous people were both invisible and deemed inconsequential (a sub-human species) or outright eliminated through warfare or deliberate introduction of diseases. In Australia the doctrine of Terra Nullius effectively effaced Aboriginal people and opened their lands to settlement and exploitation. The stronger economic links through the fur trade and rivalries between invading empires in North America led to the signing of 'questionable' treaties with Indigenous nations closest to the colonies. Although treaty commonwealth initially gave First Nations some degree of control over their lands and people, subsequent legislation – the British North American Act (1867) and the Indian Act (1876) - transformed them into wards of the state, relegating entire nations to reserves and regulating their everyday lives (Fixico, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

Between 1900 and 1940, research on Indigenous peoples, supported by the government through agents of the church and trade, further entrenched racist and derogatory views about them. Whether through clinical and physiological studies that proved the inability of Indigenous people to think and care for themselves or through anthropological "traditionalizing" research that either tried to 'salvage' dying cultures or assess the degree of assimilation, this phase further destabilized Indigenous people and their cultures. Finally, between 1940 and 1970, the Assimilation phase, both anthropological and sociological research provided 'empirical evidence' for government policy in both Canada and Australia that led to the removal of children from their

families to be 'educated' in residential schools and missions as a way to integrate into white society or, as during the 1960s Scoop, adopted them out (Fixico, 2003; Smith 1999; Wilson, 2008). The abuse experienced by this generation of displaced youth has had far reaching consequences on individuals and nations through generationally transmitted trauma that still affects their nations' wellbeing to this day and will certainly continue to do so in the future (Brave Heart, 2004; Adelson, 2001; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009).

Reaching across the divide: subjectivity and political engagement in the social sciences

The reflexive and interpretative turn[29] in the social sciences become evident in the late 1950s and 1960s and coincided with the breakup of the colonial regimes throughout the world. It led to a realignment of the relationship between the researcher and the researched and questioned colonial interpretations of the Other. Indeed, the intersubjective character of research led social scientists, and especially those engaged in ethnographic research, not only to reassess their posture towards their research partners but to acknowledge and value the political purpose of the research itself:

> ...neither the experience nor the interpretative activity of the scientific researcher can be considered innocent. It becomes necessary to consider ethnography, not as the experience and interpretation of a circumscribed "other" reality, but rather as a constructive negotiation involving at least, and usually more, conscious, politically significant subjects...the language of ethnography is shot through with other subjectivities and specific contextual overtones...the multiplication of possible readings reflects the fact that self-conscious "ethnographic" consciousness can no longer be seen as the monopoly of certain Western cultures or social classes."
> (Clifford, 1983, pp. 133 & 141)

Reflected in part in critical theory, the reflexive and interpretative turn was a reaction to positivism and argues that reality is fluid and shaped by cultural, social and other values. Thus the interaction between the researcher and the researched influences the inquiry and moulds reality. Methodologically the goal of the encounter is to change and improve that reality through the knowledge gained in the research activity. It acknowledges the relationship between

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[29] Although this discussion is specifically focused on the interaction between western science and Indigenous experience, earlier work of 'pragmatists' such as John Dewey and Jane Addams, with later postcolonial scholars such as Freire and Fanon, espoused the development and proliferation of "self-critical communities of inquiry" central to social justice through sustained dialogue across cultures and social classes (Westbrook, 1992).

knowledge and power and therefore led to a more reflexive understanding of the role of researcher in the field (Burawoy, 2009; Geertz, 2000; Wilson, 2008). For example, in his exploration of Zambianization, Burawoy explicitly focuses on his positionality in the field as a white, graduate male from the UK, working in the personnel research unit of the mine where he reproduced the racial order that he studied (pp. 33-35). Such positionality he argues, shapes the kind of relationships he built or failed to build with the workers and the management personnel, including what knowledge they shared (situational knowledge) and how that knowledge shaped the results of his research.

In sum, critical theory uncovered the multiple knowledges participants possess, including both explicit and tacit knowledge, which are locally and temporally bound reflecting the changing position of different actors within a social situation. Moreover, social scientists are "inherently part of the world they study" and carry theories and tacit knowledge that allows them to 'see the world in a specific way' (Burawoy, 2009, p. xiii). With subjectivity back in the researcher's epistemological tool box, social sciences and especially anthropology focused on meaning and signification – "understanding how we understand understandings not our own" or seeing from the 'native's point of view' (Geertz, 2000, p.4):

> …attempts at formulating how these people or that, this period or that, this person or that makes sense to itself, and understanding that, what we understand about social order, historical change, or psychic functioning in general...to distinguish the materials of human experience. (p. 22)

Accepting that knowledge is local and culturally framed, social scientists pushed the boundaries of the subjective and dialogically informed epistemology towards what some have labelled constructivism in which reality is seen as multiple and specific to peoples and locations. The aim becomes that of arriving at a consensus in which the resulting knowledge and shared understanding helps to bring about equitable relations and improved living conditions (Geertz, 2000; Lutz & Neis, 2008; Wilson, 2008). The reconfiguration of the social sciences, Geertz argues, came about from the blurring of disciplines, the inclusion of hermeneutics, literary analysis, game theory and other theories and epistemologies:

> ...there has been an enormous amount of genera mixing in intellectual life in recent years, and it is, such blurring of kinds, continuing apace....It is a phenomenon

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general enough and distinctive enough to suggest that what we are seeing is not just another redrawing of the cultural map – the moving of a few disputed borders, the marking of some more picturesque mountain lakes – but the alteration of the principles of mapping. Something is happening to the way we think about the way we think. (p. 20)

From objects to subjects: Indigenous peoples as partners in research

The evolution of inter- and transdisciplinary research is also embedded into larger social and political forces that characterised the beginning of the end of the colonial era. For Indigenous people this reconfiguration intersected with important (if not unique) political mobilization from their part as well as the even larger global ferment of human rights in the international arena following WWII. Within this broader socio-political context, the new era in social science research that rejected colonial theories, aimed to understand the life of Indigenous people from the internal perceptions and representations of the Indigenous actors themselves (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These researchers tried to correct the damage inflicted by their predecessors - the 'huge devastation and painful struggle' - but also to better understand the 'persistent survival' and agency of Indigenous individuals and nations. In short, the reconfiguration of social sciences aided neo-colonial peoples' struggle to reclaim authority and control over their lives and histories (Lévesque & Tremblay, 1991; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

Nevertheless until the 1990s, and to some degree even today, the increasing recognition of Indigenous values and worldviews has not been consistent within and across disciplines or continents, yet a significant shift in methodological and epistemological positions led social scientists to focus on historical change within Indigenous communities in terms of social organization, interethnic relations, cultural identity, and social representation of beliefs systems, to name just a few (Lévesque & Tremblay, 1991). The opening of academia to Indigenous peoples and knowledge was accompanied by an intersecting movement from Indigenous communities towards research institutions and a broader engagement with policy decision-making relating to their peoples and lands. At the end of the 1960s Indigenous peoples began to make their way into academia. Although a challenging process, framed within the devastating legacy of the residential schools, assimilationist policy, and Western epistemology, research by and for Indigenous people slowly diffused within the larger society (Fixico, 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008).

In the United States the establishment of the National Indian Council, the founding of the American Indian Movement in 1968 and the takeover of Alcatraz in 1969 "ushered in a new era of Native American deconstruction and reaction to begin a burgeoning generation of Native American studies and Indian self-determination" (Fixico, 2003, p.106). Seminal works such as *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (Vine Deloria Jr. – 1968), *Bury My Heart At Wonded Knee* (Dee Brown – 1970) or *House Made of Dawn* (N. Scott Momaday – 1968; which won the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1969) represented an Indigenous reinterpretation of history and opened up Indigenous intellectualism to the larger settler public. They have shown that Indigenous ways of seeing the world tell about how history is constructed and how these stories have engaged with and negotiated the politics of knowledge production.

In Canada, the year of 1969 marked the beginning of Indigenous political affirmation at a national level. The government published the *White Paper* that called for the abolition of the *Indian Act* and the negation of differentiated Indigenous rights in Canada. The promising but failed round of negotiations of the *White Paper* led Harold Cardinal, a Cree from Sucker Creek Indian Band, to publish *The Unjust Society*, a personal Indigenous riposte to the assimilation program set out by the *White Paper*. The book was not only giving voice to marginalized Indigenous worldviews but constituted a theoretical engagement with the foundations and practice of liberalism in Canada. It became the groundwork of an intellectual legacy of Indigenist research in Canada and galvanized First Nations into action. In short, it mobilized Indigenous knowledge and epistemology towards political action. The 1970s were also marked by legal challenges such as the Calder Case (1973), the Cree Nation of the James Bay injunction (1972), and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry (1974) in which testimony from an Indigenous point of view regarding interpretations and perception of territorial rights, unique relationship with the land, as well as the importance of cultural continuity, were heard for the first time (Lévesque, 2009). This increased presence of Indigenous peoples in political decision-making and knowledge production deepened in the 1990s especially during the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), which was unique in its engagement with Indigenous epistemology and generated a considerable collection of research relating to Indigenous peoples.

The sustained engagement of Indigenous peoples in matters of rights and governance has challenged the research community to shatter the walls separating the disciplines and build a transdisciplinary research project that aims to disseminate the knowledge widely and make way

for "diverse and collective forms of teaching and learning" (Lévesque, 2009, p. 95). As Lévesque rightly asserts "the specificity of this research field also derives from something more fundamental. No longer seen as distant and exterior focus of study, Aboriginal people have gradually emerged as knowledgeable and aware subjects" (p. 95).

This is what Indigenous intellectuals such as Tuhiwai Smith (1999), Fixico (2003) and Wilson (2008) among many others have been calling for: the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous values, perceptions, and knowledge in a way that responds to their "self-determination and liberation struggles, as it is defined and controlled" by their communities (Wilson, 2008, p. 53). Tuhiwai Smith (1999) argues that Indigenous epistemology and methodology are

> …factors to be built into research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in a culturally appropriate way and in a language that can be understood (p. 14).

Knowledge mobilization in the academia

If the violence of the past (imperialism, colonization) has not been enough to show us that we are so deeply intertwined, information and communication technologies as well as transportation networks have awakened the reticular nature of our existence (Callon et al., 2001; Lévy, 2003). This new awareness means that "we must be prepared to engage in the hard work of listening across boundaries and enter into the strangeness on the other side. That is the hard part" (Lutz & Neis, 2008, p. 17).

At its most fundamental level knowledge mobilization aims, through a relational perspective of convergence, partnership and reflexivity, to build an ecosystem of ideas that contribute to our shared collective intelligence. It provides the knowledge and know-how necessary to cope with the unexpected and to foster cross-cultural interactions for mutual understanding and benefit. It implies linking the production and movement of knowledge to power relations in a circular movement within and across "institutional frameworks, pathways and social conventions" (Bennet & Bennet, 2008; Callon et al. 2001; Lutz & Neis, 2008, p.18). Moreover, diverse and contextualized learning and appropriation tools have to be developed in a way that knowledge does not move selectively, that meaning is adapted and applicable to the

time, place and individual, and the focus is placed on the approach and process of knowledge creation (Bennet & Bennet, 2008; Callon *et al.* 2001; Lévesque, 2009; Lutz & Neis, 2008). Above all, knowledge cocreation implies the movement across a network of social, cultural, technical and intellectual capitals that make up our collective intelligence (Lévy, 2003).

This new approach is beginning to change the academic research culture in various ways. First, it decentralizes (transversally) the role of researchers as *the* primary creators of knowledge by inserting other knowledgeable actors (Indigenous peoples, community groups, practitioners, citizens at large, etc.) into the research process – knowledge users become knowledge producers – by way of collaborative research groups. Second, it fosters inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration whether by way of the actual composition of research groups and/or by hybridizing epistemologies and methodologies. Third, it reorients research towards the needs of the community (policy decision-makers, local communities, businesses etc.) by insisting on its utilitarian role. Fourth, through convergence, knowledge cocreation and appropriation takes place on a continuum, from the first stages of determining the research topic, all the way through the interpretation and dissemination of results. Thus, learning takes place at all stages of the research process. Lastly, it requires researchers to learn and implement a variety of skills (use of new technologies and development of different research products) and values (reflexivity, openness, alterity) not explicitly affirmed within academic research.

Cocreation of knowledge and Indigenist research

The various socio-technical-political forces that have shaped knowledge creation and, who in turn, has shaped these forces, have indeed led to rethinking and restructuring epistemology and methodology in academia. For Indigenous peoples this reconfiguration is uniquely central in their struggles for autonomy and self-determination. They have, after all, long been the unacknowledged actors in this transformation.

Even if their place in the academy is still problematic, Indigenous peoples have now begun to 'center their concerns and worldview in a way to know and understand theory and research from their own perspectives and for their own purposes' (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Whether it is defined as a Ceremony, a Circular way of thinking, or Kappua Maori, Indigenist research shares an epistemology based on relationality in which "relationships do not merely shape reality, but they are reality". In other words, reality is a process of relationships. This implies a methodology of accountability to those relationships: respect, reciprocity and

responsibility. Taken together Indigenist and the newly restructured (albeit at various levels of internalization) settler research have now come to a point of intersection in the way research is thought about and applied, and more importantly, the role it plays in society. As Onondaga scholar David Newhouse (2004) states:

> Over the past three decades we have seen the emergence of an Aboriginal modernity that forms the context and foundation of modern Aboriginal societies: confident, aggressive, assertive, insistent, desirous of creating a new world out of Aboriginal and western ideas, and selfconsciously and deliberately acting out of Aboriginal thought.…Indigenous scholarship, rooted in traditional Aboriginal thought, is a fundamental part of the governance landscape. The ability and capacity to decide for oneself what is a problem, the parameters of the problem, the nature of inquiry into the problem, the inquiry itself including the definition of method, the data to be gathered, the analyses to be done, the interpretation of data, the construction of options and solutions, the dissemination of results, the translation of these results into action, and the eventual re-examination and reappraisal of the scholarship and its ideas is central to governing. (p. 141 &143)

Indeed, Indigenist research paradigms have significantly altered academic methods, ethics, and dissemination of knowledge derived from or cocreated in Indigenous contexts. Possibly one of the most structured Indigenous institutional research body in Canada, the Aurora Research Institute oversees the licencing, coordination, promotion, dissemination, and mobilization of research in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Headquartered in Inuvik, it mission is to "to develop our northern society through excellence in education, training and research that is culturally sensitive and responsive to the people we serve." It conducts and supports research that aims to 'improve the quality of life of NWT residents' and contributes to 'the social, cultural and economic prosperity' of the region (ARI, 2014). The Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (PRE) that oversees issues of ethics of research involving humans for Canada's three federal research agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) has added in 2014 a new chapter (Chapter 9) to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)*. The first such development at a national level, Chapter 9 clarifies values, obligations, and control of research in Indigenous contexts. It aims to foster an "ethical space for dialogue on

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common interests and points of difference between researchers and Aboriginal communities engaged in research" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2015). In Quebec, the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (APNQL) first developed an Indigenous Research Protocol in 2005 "in response to the needs expressed by several First Nations communities and organizations" (APNQL, 2014). An extended version was released in 2014, which lays out guidelines of collaborative research based on foundational values of Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP™). Among its statement of principles the Protocol acknowledges that the "First Nations in Quebec and Labrador are the guardians, interpreters and collective owners of their cultures and past, present and future knowledge systems" that is in line with Indigenous rights to autonomy and self-governance (APNQL, 2014, p. v).

Emerging as political actors in the quest for taking their own self-defined place in society, Indigenous people call into question the procedures on which representation is based and exercise the right to speak, to be heard, and to take part in the definition of the common world. It is what Callon et al. (2008) call the 'democratization of democracy', an emphasis for "procedures more open to debate, more welcoming towards emergent groups, and more attentive to the organization of the expression of their views and the discussion it calls for" (p. 118). In sum, knowledge cocreation needs to recognize the power dynamics of the relationships between the researcher and participants in a way that builds strategies for culturally and politically sensitive approaches.

It takes more than theory

Armed with this theory, I was confident that my second community engagement attempt would go much smoother when an opportunity to visit Chisasibi arose. The Nemaska community consultation report that was presented at the Cree Health Board executive meeting was circulated among the community representatives. In the fall of 2010 I was contacted by Larry House, the local Cree Health Board representative, to repeat the activity in Chisasibi. I also met with the Chief to discuss my research interests there, hoping to get a better idea of what the community might need in terms of research. All the topics I enumerated where satisfactory, I was given a letter of consent to conduct research in the community, and was told to stop by once I have 'made up my mind'. I felt confident that the Chief would help focus my research since we already collaborated on the Rupert diversion opposition. Alas, here was another confirmation that theory and praxis are not easily reconciled. My expectations of the level of community and leadership

engagement in the research process were framed by knowledge mobilization theory, yet based on these initial interactions, defining a research agenda was left to my discretion.

On the other hand, the Chisasibi community consultation was a great success. This first installment explored the implications at the local level of implementing the CBHSSJB Strategic Regional Plan (SRP - 2004). Similar to the meeting in Nemaska, the Chisasibi Symposium on Health and Social Services aimed to facilitate dialog between community members and local services providers in determining needs and priorities, as well as establishing guidelines for the development of a long-term vision for a local wellness plan. Service providers from social services, the clinic, youth protection, community health, as well as representatives from the justice committee, the police force and elders' council were present. Broad recommendations for closing gaps in service provision were identified. Issues of consultation and communication between regional entities and local community organizations and population were also discussed. A report was drafted and a second installment was planned for February 2011.

Concurrently, my work at DIALOG involved analyzing Indigenous participation in environmental assessments for projects falling under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). The resulting report "will support the James Bay Advisory Committee on the Environment's (JBACE) aims in the development of guidance materials for the public participation activities in the traditional Cree territory under the JBNQA" (JBACE, 2011, p. 4). Twelve projects outside Quebec were assessed, including local approaches and initiatives that have allowed the affected First Nation groups to change conceptual or functional elements of these projects, and have increased inclusion in the development of their territory's natural resources. In addition to the literature review I also participated in some of the JBACE meetings. As a tripartite institution, these meetings brought together federal, provincial and Cree representatives to clarify and finalize the community consultation guide. The literature review convinced me that public hearings and submissions to reviewing committees do little to affect conceptual and functional elements of large-scale projects. The JBACE meetings further confirmed that high level multi-jurisdictional institutional bodies do not provide the appropriate platform for the type of local intervention that I was hoping to support through my research (one that offers both short- and long-term results). Most of the work and discourse of these institutions take place at the normative level, and while they do provide clarity and a certain framework for local action, they are nevertheless removed from the immediate and often imminent community

priorities. For example, the JBACE research regarding public participation included a qualitative assessment of the hearings conducted for the Matoush Advanced Uranium Exploration Project. While certain 'best practices' in terms of participation were identified the issue for the Cree Nation of Mistissini was not the hearings per say, but the uranium industry in general. The community wanted, and eventually secured, an official position from the Grand Council of the Cree against uranium exploration and exploitation in Eeyou Istchee (and not only in Mistissini territories). A provisional province-wide moratorium was eventually passed in 2012 as more grassroots groups across Quebec joined the Mistissini Youth Council protests (for a detailed assessment of the Matoush case see Abitbol, 2014). Moreover, a culturally pertinent consultation and participation guide, from a decolonization perspective, would call for an exploration of these concepts from the Cree perspective and worldview, as opposed to being formulated along 'internationally recognized parameters'[30].

This experience had taught me to be vigilant in my own exploration of everyday acts of agency among Cree youth, which at this time was still largely concerned with resource development. As I began my literature review on youth studies and Indigenous youth engagement with self-governance discourses I noticed that they used healing as a central concept from which issues of responsibility, participation in decision making, and relationship with the land were negotiated. Why was healing so pervasive in young people's self-governance discourses? How does the concept of healing help them reflect and shape discourses of identity, cultural change, and empowerment? Does it create spaces in which youth can voice their needs and frustrations and engage in an open dialogue to identify actions to address these? If so, how can these spaces be enhanced?

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[30] I am not in any way inferring that the work of the JBACE is without value or flawed, the institution is a successful model of Indigenous participation in Canadian EIA and as the work discussed attests, it strives to improve existing legislation to respond to Cree priorities, nevertheless it is (as many anti-colonial intellectuals argue) still inscribed within the mandates of the State and has few opportunities to attend to and promote Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. See also Salée & Lévesque (2010) on Cree forestry regime.

Chapter 4

Autonomy and wellness

In May 2011, a second Symposium on health and wellness, titled "Inspire, Educate and Activate" was held in Chisasibi. The work initiated at the end of 2010 became structured under the auspices of the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee which was legislated in 2009 through the passing of a local bylaw[31]. Throughout 2010, the community organized various healing lodges, workshops on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, conflict resolution, substance abuse, and continued traditional counselling services. I was rarely called upon to support these activities, but I did help facilitate the second symposium. This activity had a one day community-wide reach, with the following two days reserved for focus groups with youth and women to identify the issues specific to these demographics. The recommendations identified during the first installment were updated and a strategic meeting was held to decide what the next steps for the wellness plan were. It became evident that despite the fact that the Regional Strategic Plan (SRP – CBHSSJB) made provisions for implementation of culture-based services and programs (formerly known as Cree Helping Methods), nothing was yet developed at the regional level. In addition participants had raised many questions regarding iiyiyiu healing. As elder Robbie Matthew had stated:

> As a family man I think love must come first. Children need love from the first moment they come into this world. We need to go back to the truth and the traditional teachings of our ancestors. We need to go back to the cultural practices of our ancestors and connect ourselves to those teachings. We need to find out where we came from. The answers to our society are in you and me. Ask yourself – who am I? (CNC, 2010, p. 7)

Specifically, the following main questions were raised: What role can iiyiyiu healing have in service delivery? What is the procedure for implementing Indigenous medicine? How can healers' practice be assessed in terms of ethical conduct and overall case management? (CNC, 2012). In light of these questions, as well as because certain tensions between the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee (and more specifically its focus on iiyiyiu healing implementation) and its institutional partners in the community, the Committee decided to hold another two

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[31] Details on the local evolution of health and social services will be discussed in chapter 6.

community meetings on culture-based services at the beginning of 2012. I was given the task to prepare a literature review on how Indigenous healing is conceptualized and implemented elsewhere in Canada.

The participants at the second symposium also recognized the need to encourage and strengthen youth participation in local decision-making. Despite the fact that the youth are often seen as a struggling generation in terms of psychosocial stress, their personal stories and viewpoints are rarely heard or sought. The participants agreed that specific deliberative spaces in which the youth can feel comfortable to share their experiences and debate relevant approaches to their wellbeing should be created. Indeed, similar concerns have been expressed in other Indigenous contexts (Allen, 2000; Degnen, 1996; Schouls, 2004). This need is especially important since a majority of youth are reluctant to appeal to existing services thus they often feel marginalized and misunderstood, a reality that has also been documented by Shecapio & Iserhoff (1996). Personal testimonies by various participants, including youth, underlined the need for access to culturally relevant programs and services. In many cases, a sojourn in the bush in the company of competent elders and healers have had very positive results and helped individuals understand their state of mind and how to overcome negative tendencies, strengthen intergenerational relationships and transfer of knowledge, as well as reconnect with the land and bush practices (participant observation; CMC, 2012). This expressed need for exploring ways of empowerment and engagement, met my own research interests in youth participation in community governance.

This second community consultation became another turning point in my own epistemology. Here converged concepts of healing and autonomy in relation to youth, aspects that I had also identified in self-governance literature. I took the decision to refocus my research on healing as a means through which Cree youth negotiate identity and strengthen agency. I also reencountered youth critiques of community assumptions about their apparent disengagement from and apathy towards community life in general and cultural practices in particular. What were then, the types of social and political practices they currently undertake to create deliberative and participant spaces within their own communities? More broadly, how were these practices shaped by and how, were they in turn, shaping power dynamics and cultural ethos?

Troubled youth - in the quest for a relevant research agenda

The category of youth life-stage, and youth studies in general, are still considered ambiguous, and until recently, at least in the western social sciences, 'youth' was conceptualized as an independent socio-generational category. Beginning at the onset of the 20th century biological determinism entrenched them into a predefined age category or generation characterized by angst, which was followed by state sanctioned policy and programs regulating their lives and aspirations. Almost a century later, researchers, policy makers and the media have begun to accept and explore the relational nature of 'youth' as a "relative social position rather than a fixed generational category" (Abebe & Kjørholt, 2003, p. 14; Comacchio, 2006; Durham, 2004; Tilleczek, 2011).

Although adolescence, as a specific life-stage, was commented upon as early as ancient Greece and was characterised as a period when reason overcomes passion, the first theory of adolescence was developed by the American psychologist Grandville Stanley Hall in his 1904 seminal work *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education* (Comacchio, 2006; Tilleczek, 2011). Hall viewed young people as 'stormy and stressed', a condition brought about by biological and psychological changes of puberty which was the root of the social ills scandalizing the emergent modern society at the beginning of the 20th Century. The developmental transition from childhood to adolescence developed by Hall was influenced by evolutionary theory and Freud's psychosexual development approach. With the perceived erosion of traditional socializing institutions, such as the nuclear family and the church, the state began to develop policies and programs aimed at regulating young people's behavior (Comacchio, 2006; Durham, 2004; Tilleczek, 2011). In Canada the first youth justice legislation, the *Juvenile Delinquents Act (JDA),* was passed in 1908 setting up the first distinct sentencing procedure and court for young offenders between the ages of 7 and 16. While not criminally charged, the young 'delinquents' were charged with offences for which adults usually received no punishment, such as truancy and sexual promiscuity (Green & Healy, 2003). Comacchio (2006) shows that in eight years, between 1912 and 1920, the Montreal juvenile court doubled its contingent of reformed schools. Young girls also faced the possibility of institutionalization based on public discourses of appropriate gender 'moral purity'. Coupled with a large number of youth left orphaned by the Great War, the state surveillance and

regulation of young men and women become an increasingly acceptable measure to protect the moral order of society.

Biological determinism remained unchallenged until the latter half of the 1920s, when anthropologist Margaret Mead conducted research among young Samoan girls. Her ground-breaking publication *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), one of the most successful anthropological studies ever published and possibly the most controversial as well, sought to challenge the perceived universal angst characterizing western youth and argue for the role of culture in mediating adolescent life experiences. According to Mead, the relatively calm disposition of Samoan adolescents was a result of fairly stable and homogeneous social roles, conventions, and demands. In contrast, Western youth not only faced contradictory demands of what 'really matters in life' but they are also pressured to make their 'own' choices and are led to believe that they are free to do so:

> A society which is clamouring for choice, which is filled with many articulate groups, each urging its own brand of salvation, its own variety of economic philosophy, will give each new generation no peace until all have chosen or gone under, unable to bear the conditions of choice (Mead, 1973, p. 131).

With the Depression on the heels of the Great War, the young generation having voiced their disaffection with the system's barriers to accessing the job market, protested across Canada. Similar to the 2012 Maple Spring in Quebec, the social commentators of the time, cast aside their critiques of the failure of the state to alleviate poverty and instead characterized youth as "lazy and indifferent at a time when our national life needs everything we have to give" (G. Arnold[32] quoted in Comacchio, 2006, p. 39). The Depression was even ascribed as a cure to the youth's excesses of the 1920s, a sobering wakeup call to engage in more responsible behaviors and become responsible citizens. The similarities with the 'generational conflict' between baby boomers and Millennials are undisputable. As Maclean's succinctly summed up the discourse in its June 4th, 2012 cover, the students were "Quebec's New Ruling Class", taking hostage an entire province for petty demands: "How a group of entitled students went to war and shut down a province. Over $325." In an article about the *Quebec-Ontario Student Solidarity Tour* organized by Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois, then student co-spokesperson of the *Coalition large de*

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[32] G. Arnold, "Flaming youth", Maclean's July 1934, p. 3

l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante (CLASSE), Maclean's journalist Urback states:

> That would be dandy, of course, if Quebec student leaders had more success to boast about for their efforts over the last few months. In truth, they've done a formidable job of dividing the student population and alienating public opinion for their cause. Never mind racking up security costs and strangling Montreal's typically-bustling tourist season during the annual Grand Prix. Oops. (2012)

Not only are young people demanding social justice labelled as hooligans causing economic damage, but also come across as spoiled children. The above quote also reflects a second perspective in youth studies. In this instance, adolescence (which, in many studies, groups age cohorts between 14 and 25) is conceptualized as a transitory phase between childhood and adulthood where young people are seen neither as 'immature' children nor as 'responsible' adults. Inspired in part by Piaget's (1953) theory of processural personhood, in which adulthood is "constructed as the superior and final stage of human development", adults have continued to constrain youth autonomy and increase expert intervention in their lives (Abebe & Kjørholt 2011, p. 15; Comacchio, 2006; Durham, 2004; Tilleczek, 2011). In addition, during moments of social and economic instability, young people's agency is devalued and their actions often criminalized (as was evidenced during the Quebec students protests[33]).

Troubled and transitory youth arguments have waxed and waned with broader social forces: during WWII young people were commended as heroes and saviours as sons and daughters perished on battlegrounds; in the 1950s psychologist Erik Erikson characterized adolescence as an identity crisis, influenced by the perceived erosion of traditional social values as well as the higher participation of young adults in the labour force; the 1960s young people were portrayed as a collective social actor with studies focused on student associations, student unions and student demonstrations from the perspective of social movements; the following decades have portrayed youth as passive and depoliticized, associated more by interest and affinity than by common demands (Abebe & Kjørholt 2011, p. 15; Comacchio, 2006; Durham, 2004; Gauthier & Pacom, 2001; Tilleczek, 2011).

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[33] For more details see Kruzynski, A., R. Sarrasin & S. Jeppesen, 2013 and 2012.

A profile of young people commissioned by the Ministere de l'Education in 1982 clearly sums up the sentiment towards young people (Dumas, Rochais, & Temblay, 1982). The study titled *Une génération silencieusement lucide?* (a silently lucid generation? - personal translation) characterizes young people as vacillating between political apathy and capitalist escapism (evidenced in their use of media and leisure activities), but nonetheless makes some of the first arguments towards a more integrated analysis that takes into consideration the socio-cultural and economic contexts in which this generation is inescapably embedded in. In one of the most comprehensive edited volumes on youth studies in Canada, Gauthier and Pacom (2001) have quantified the research output between 1986 and 1998. In terms of themes, they report that 21% of French language literature was focused on entry into the labor force, 9.5% on delinquency, followed by education (9.4%), health (7.9%), and suicide (6.6%). Delinquency makes up the largest proportion of English language research at 20.1%, followed by health (13.1%), entry into labor market (9.9%), violence (9.6%) and substance abuse (7%).

Situating youth in the broader societal contexts has led researchers to recognize that 'youth' is not a 'homogeneous cultural entity in and of itself'. A new research paradigm therefore requires a more sensitive analysis of this concept, one that aims to understand the "historical and socio-generational processes within which the concept emerges, derives its meaning, and operates" (Abebe & Kjørholt 2011, p. 20). Youth is therefore now considered as a social construct (as opposed to a stage in the linear development from childhood to adulthood) with multiple and sometimes conflicting co-occurring paths embedded in specific historical, cultural, social, political, economic and environmental contexts. The point of departure is to consider youth as social, cultural, and political "competent agents rather than in transition towards becoming such agents" (personal translation, Gagné & Jerôme, 2009, p. 18). Durham's (2004) concept of "social shifter" has brought to attention not only the relational aspect (self-identity) but also complicated intergenerational relationships and the long durée nature of youth agency. Indeed, as she succinctly explains:

Finding youth, or maturity, involves exploring what it means to be a person, what power is and how it is exercised, how people relate to one another, and what moral action might be and who may be engaged in it and how. (Durham, 2004, p. 601)

Tilleczek (2011) proposes the "complex cultural nesting approach" as a more comprehensive interpretative framework of young peoples' experiences that are "nonlinear and occur in social contexts that are nestled inside one another" (p. 4). "Complex cultural nests take into consideration the intersection of social class, age, race, region, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender at multiple levels of systems while focusing on the daily activities of young people as lived at the meso level" (p. 144). The meso level in this case is understood as the "in-between zone" of negotiation of issues of belonging, being (who they are in the present) and that of becoming (complex and non-linear transitions, tensions, and engagements with macro contexts). Practically, Tilleczek proposes a youth studies agenda that is built in collaboration with young people in terms of research focus, methodologies and analysis. Using critical social methods, in this case discourse analysis, institutional ethnography and participatory action research, young people's experiences are explored in terms of work and leisure, education and use of technology, as well as social action and identity formation. In line with the reflexive turn in social sciences, youth studies call for a recentering of personal experience within various power relations operating in the family, school or workplace environments; all within a perspective of social justice.

Listening to Indigenous voices – youth studies among Quebec's Indigenous peoples

Too often youth studies in general, and more specifically on Indigenous populations focus on 'at risk' individuals, measures of acculturation, delinquency, school dropout, substance abuse, suicide, teenage pregnancies and violence. The picture that thus emerges is one in which Indigenous communities, and youth in particular, are labelled as dysfunctional, in need of fixing (generally by outside 'experts') or in the midst of an identity crisis (opposing traditional and modern worldviews). This apparent malaise characterizing the youth prompts community adults and experts alike to lament young people's disengagement from and apathy towards community life in general and cultural practices in particular.

Moreover, there is a dearth of literature pertaining to contemporary Indigenous youth in Quebec in general, and on Cree youth in particular, which is confirmed by Gauthier and Pacom (2001) who noted that only 2.2% of English language youth studies articles and books published in Canada concern Indigenous peoples, while the French language literature was barely 0.5% (p.

13). Recent research includes a special issue of *Horizons*[34], dedicated to exploring "insights into the emerging trends, opportunities and policy implications related to a rapidly growing Aboriginal youth population" (PRI, 2008). A French language collection, *Jeunesses Autochtones* (Gagné & Jérôme, 2009), focuses on Indigenous youth contemporary experiences and was an extension of a thematic volume of the journal *Recherche Amerindiennes au Quebec*, titled "Jeunes autochtones: Espaces et expressions d'affirmation" (2005). Unfortunately Cree experiences were missing from these collections. I found only three sources on contemporary Cree youth experiences, that of Hayes (1998) on the impact of mass media and Pan-Indian ceremonies on cultural change as expressed by youth in an eastern James Bay Cree community;[35] that of Lessard (2006) on the aspirations of Mistissini youth; and James' (2001) exploration of teenage pregnancy among a group of young women also from Mistissini. Apart from these, research on Cree youth still focuses on 'traditional' topics such as school dropout (Wintrob & Sindell, 1968), obesity and nutrition (Bou Khalil, 2008; Bou Khalil et al. 2010; Louttit, 2005), attitudes towards AIDS (Corbeil, 1993), and smoking (Pikering, 1988). Even these are few and far between. Of the earlier literature from the 1960s and 1970s, given the historical, intellectual and political circumstances it focuses almost exclusively on acculturation and cultural loss (Hayes, 1998; Lessard, 2006). Of these, of note are Wintrob (1969), Sindell (1968), and Preston (1979).

However, Indigenous youth across Canada and Quebec are actively engaging with culture-based ways of empowerment either through direct action, healing activities, or artistic expressions from a perspective rooted in Indigenous culture proper to their community and personal experience. In the Cree Nation, a myriad of local activities by and for the youth are taking place throughout the year, from winter snowshoe journeys, to elders and youth conferences, music festivals, powwows and Sundances. Unfortunately, these innovative and fluid practices are seldom found in academic literature, which tends to focus on formal structures that govern education, entry into the labour market, health and social service provision or civic engagement. Less so are explorations of the relationships that youth maintain and strengthen with the land and cultural practices, albeit in various indirect and unconventional ways. Instead of focusing on 'risky' youth and 'risky' situations, recent youth studies in Indigenous contexts take

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[34] The Policy Research Initiative (PRI) publication
[35] The author does not indicate the specific Cree community where his research was conducted

a strength based approach, placing emphasis on the mechanisms, processes, skills and knowledge young Indigenous peoples already employ and nurture (Brough et al., 2004; Blanchet-Cohen & Salazar, 2010; Gauthier et al., 2001; Tilleczek, 2011). In other words, they focus on the present, 'here and now', youth experience as perceived and expressed by them.

Taking a stand: land and autonomy

The expressed need for exploring ways of youth empowerment and engagement expressed at the meetings in Chisasibi aligns with debates about the nature of contemporary youth cultural (re)appropriations, territorial relational dynamics, and inclusion in community governance. What are the ways in which youth reconnect with the land and strengthen intergenerational bonds? How do they create safe spaces for individual and collective reflection on pressing issues? Do they ensure cultural continuity while reappropriating contemporary expressions of Indigenous ethos? And in what ways do they engage more broadly with local power dynamics and promote collective responsibility?

Cree youth were among the most vocal opponents of the Eastmain1A/Rupert River hydroelectric project included in the Paix des Braves, yet their participation is not limited to debates about resource development. Following the signing of the New Relationship Agreement (2007) with the federal government, the Grand Council of the Cree (GCC) created the Cree Nation Governance Working Group (CNGWG) whose role is to develop a model of Cree governance that reflects "the will of the people" (GCC, 2011, p. 16). Part of this process included consultation meetings in all Cree communities and major urban centers (Val d'Or, Ottawa, Montreal, North Bay and Sudbury) aimed to identify the "Cree core values and guiding principles" of Eeyou governance (GCC, 2011, p. 16). Consultations were conducted with focus groups, such as the youth, elders, leadership, women and the public at large; the results were recorded and are available online.[36] A thematic analysis was conducted on the youth consultation groups from each community and the student groups in the urban centers to identify the values and principles put forward. The main five themes included: education, respect (both for the land and for others), land and territory, transparent and responsible leadership, and Cree culture (varying form preservation to enhancement and valorization of elders' knowledge). The figure below was created using Wordle,[37] an online "word cloud" generator which displays in greater

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[36] http://cngwg.ca/cree-governance.html
[37] http://www.wordle.net/

prominence the words most often cited in a given text, giving a quick and efficient visualization of data (McNaught & Lam, 2010).

Figure 9 Themes identified by youth at CNGWG

While the reports available from CNGWG are not extensive, it is clear that the land and respective Cree ethos flowing from it are a main preoccupation for the youth. All groups indicated that Cree governance should include a greater degree of decision-making powers over development in Eeyou Istchee, including protection and preservation of the territory as a site of cultural renewal and source of identity. In addition, a significant demand for culturally relevant education, as well as cultural programs and services, was made by youth in all communities, whether as part of the formal community education system or of health and social service provision. Another important concern was increasing opportunities for local consultation and for youth in particular. It would be interesting to know if this concern for political transparency stems from the Rupert River confrontations specifically or if it is reflective of broader community power dynamics.

These preoccupations and confrontations are also present among the young Indigenous population in the province as a reaction to the provincial Plan Nord. For example, a group of Innu youth from the community of Pessamit set up a roadblock on highway 138 in June 2011, protesting the lack of consultation from the part of the provincial government concerning their

consent to resource extraction as well as the failure to protect their territorial rights. Their direct action proved beneficial for the community as it forced the government to begin negotiations with Pessamit regarding past grievances (Paradis 2011, Richer 2011). A year later, in April 2012, another group of Innu women and youth set up a roadblock[38] next to the community of Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam in protest over plans to build a transmission line for the Romaine mega hydroelectric project across Nitassinan (Innu territory) following two failed negotiations attempts with the community. After an injunction forced the group to take down the barricades, they marched to Montreal (900km) to join a protest against the Plan Nord during Earth Day (Mallinder, 2012). The youth council of the Cree Nation of Mistissini joined the same protest to voice their opposition to a planned uranium mine in their community's territory and actively participated in the public hearings during the environmental assessment for the project. Despite recognizing the project's potential employment opportunities, they argued that the negative long-term environmental and health impacts outweigh the short- to medium-term economic benefits (German, 2012). Their involvement has, in part, led to a provincial temporary moratorium on uranium development (AFNQL, 2013).

Finally, the Idle No More movement has unequivocally asserted the role of Indigenous youth in awakening and shaping the political and environmental struggles of Indigenous people in Canada. Led by young Indigenous women, the Idle No More movement has exposed the ongoing injustice and social suffering experienced by Indigenous people while also building solidarity and convergence across ongoing battles against corporate encroachment, violence towards Indigenous women, and the failure of the State to uphold and respect Indigenous treaty and self-determination rights. In Quebec, young Indigenous leaders such as Melissa Mollen-Dupuis and Widia Larivière, the co-founders of the Idle No More Quebec chapter, have built a network of solidarity with settlers opposing pipelines, developed an educational program at the Montreal First Nations Gardens, and actively publish opinion pieces in leading provincial newspapers, to name just a few of the many actions that they and other Indigenous youth have taken in recent years. Indeed, the Idle No More movement has shown that direct action is only one approach that youth use to engage with governance discourses. Round dances and flash-mobs, poetry and paintings, teach-ins and ceremonies are now (and have always been) part of a

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[38] See filmmaker Real Junior Leblanc short *Blocus 138*, done in collaboration with Wapikoni Mobile

repertoire of collective Indigenous actions that celebrate and honor Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies (Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014).

New forms of expression and engagement

Contrary to stereotypical images of disengagement and despair, young Indigenous people express their interpretation of Indigenous values and worldviews as well as their daily experiences in a multiplicity of contemporary contexts, while insisting on cultural continuity in the face of significant economic, social and political pressures. Increasingly, Indigenous youth also voice their concerns and propose courses of action through various artistic mediums from music to video, literature, and art. For example, Samian, a young Algonquin from Pikogan, uses rap as a medium of expressing his life journey, his identity as an Indigenous person, and engages with broader political and social concerns specific to his community and nation (Janin, 2011). Similarly, Natasha Kanapé Fontaine, a young Innu poet from Pessamit, engages with identity discourses and cultural change though poems and slams, which, while internally focused, they nevertheless illustrate the broader processes of Indigenous self-determination and political affirmation (Fouquet, 2012). Wapikoni mobile, a traveling film studio, is another example in which Indigenous youth from approximately twenty communities across Quebec express their lived experiences and create innovative, artistic, and deliberative spaces proper to their specific contexts. As a project focused on youth, Wapikoni mobile aims to strengthen their empowerment and also engage the non-Indigenous public in exploring contemporary Indigenous realities (Guimont Marceau, 2013). Jérôme (2009) also shows how the Atikamekw drumming group Wemotashee Singers, through creative reinterpretations of 'traditional songs' and appropriation of Pan-Indigenous styles and symbols, negotiate social transformations and express a contemporary Atikamekw identity firmly rooted in Nehiro Pimatisiwihn (way of life). Their participation in local festivals and Powwows, as well as international cultural events underlines their dedication to cultural continuity while also developing an Indigenous consciousness in which resistance is built through creative and innovative spaces.

Finally, in solidarity with the Idle No More movement, six Cree youth from the community of Whapmagoostui embarked on a winter snowshoe journey from James Bay to Ottawa (some 1,600 kilometres) passing through Indigenous communities along the way to 'reestablish relationships with their historical partners as well as to confirm the youth as keepers

of language, culture and traditions' (Nishiiyuu[39] Journey, 2014). As David Kawapit Jr., one of the original Nishiiyuu Walkers, stated: "This is to show the youth have a voice. It's time for them to be shown the way to lead. Let them lead the way" (CTV, 2013). Approximately 270 young walkers arrived on Parliament Hill two months after the initial group set out from Whapmagoostui "to send a strong message to Ottawa about unity among the Cree and other First Nations people" (CTV, 2013). Their message continues to resonate across the country as other Indigenous youth begin to engage in culture-based forms of action.

By and large, new forms of expression and action have enabled Indigenous youth to denounce power imbalances within and outside their communities, and dispel constructed illusions of youth as disaffected subjects. In essence, by insisting on the continuity of Indigenous culture and agency from a colonial to a postcolonial world, Indigenous youth realign their social, cultural and political practices with the broader collective struggles for Indigenous autonomy. In the case of Cree youth, by framing their criticism within a concern for equality or the freedom to have an informed consent to the impending resource development in the region and to have a say in the way such development takes place, their narratives point towards new deliberative spaces they are creating within their own communities. Moreover, these discourses and spaces are imbued with ideologies and practices that are perceived by the youth as central to the Cree culture, such as bush life, ethics of non-interference, family values, and childbirth to name a few (James, 2001; Lessard, 2006). As the Cree governance consultations clearly show, cultural continuity and enhancing Cree identity are very much part of young Cree's individual and collective reflections, contrary to what some community members and the literature assert.

Relational responsibility and self-determination

Despite this clear and documented youth agency, young Cree are still struggling to escape essentialized and stereotypical images both outside and, more importantly, within their own communities. It is also disconcerting that the research on Indigenous youth has yet to explore their lived experiences and local agency, choosing instead a social problem discourse and more importantly contributing to maintaining marginalizing stereotypes despite its calls for 'empowerment' and 'resilience'(Hollands, 2001). This challenge is not specific to Cree youth but also expressed more broadly by young Indigenous peoples in Canada. The testimony given by

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[39] Loosely translated as 'contemporary Cree'

youth during the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples identified cultural continuity and participation in local decision making as the main priorities of their generation (RCAP, 1996). They have consistently used the rhetoric and practices of healing as a means of breaking out of stereotypes, gain legitimacy, and empower individuals and communities to action (Conradi, 2006; RCAP, 1996; Schouls, 2004):

> Youth, it seems, are somewhat wary of government-designed solutions, even those of Aboriginal governments. In the past, programs designed to assist them have been scattered and often misdirected. They feel their concerns are not taken seriously by their leaders and their communities. When they speak out, their voices go unheard. Feeling marginalized, excluded or devalued, some have lost faith in their communities. Aboriginal governments have to become more accountable to their communities and to youth. Through hundreds of hours of testimony and thousands of pages of presentations to the Commission, it became clear that the priorities of youth are healing, education, employment, culture and identity, and recognition of and involvement in the institutions that affect their lives. (RCAP, 1996, Vol. 4, p. 142)

Although being almost two decades apart, RCAP youth testimony centered on similar themes as those identified by young Cree during the CNGWG. In 1996, young Indigenous peoples brought attention to issues of loss of culture and identity through denial and suppression by older generations in their communities as well as the non-Indigenous education system. Language was key to maintaining Indigenous knowledge systems in which parents and elders have a primary responsibility for ensuring intergenerational transmission. Finally, they recognized major challenges for institutional change in all spheres of life, a necessary systemic change that would ensure that Indigenous values, needs, and priorities are reflected in local and regional institutions (RCAP, 1996). Healing, both individual and collective, was seen as a prerequisite for youth empowerment which will enable them to deploy local solutions that matter to them:

> Aboriginal youth want to be the solution, not the problem. Healing youth today will lead to their empowerment tomorrow. With empowerment, they will have the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual energy to help those around them: their

peers, their parents, and their communities. The circle of wellness will grow…as

steps are taken to heal communities, self-government and self-determination will

fall naturally into place. (p. 181)

Linking autonomy and wellness has been at the core of Indigenous resurgence at least since 1970s and reflects central aspects of cultural continuity. When the Trudeau government's *White Paper* proposed to erase Indigenous identity from the social and cultural fabric of Canada, First Nations advanced and affirmed their own vision of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the State; one based on respect and reciprocity which recognizes Indigenous treaty and self-governance rights as well as the government's responsibility to accommodate and facilitate Indigenous life-worlds within the Canadian society (Belanger & Newhouse, 2004; Daniel Salée, 2004; Tully, 1995; Turner, 2006). Indeed, the Hawthorn-Tremblay Report (1967) having documented the poor socio-economic conditions of First Nations, recommended that recognition and respect of treaty rights and cultural difference within Canada were conducive to a balanced citizenship regime. The various Aboriginal responses from *Citizens Plus* (1970)[40] to *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* (1971)[41] consistently argued that Indigenous wellbeing (and in a broader sense Canadian wellbeing) was intimately linked to the ability of First Nations to articulate and exercise a comprehensive approach to community development based on local needs and realities reflective of particular historical and cultural circumstances (Belanger & Newhouse, 2005). In other words, self-governance and political agency are integral part of individual and community wellbeing.

Nevertheless, Belanger and Newhouse (2005) argue that while the self-governance discourse "began with community statements and direction and concern with community well-being" it has progressively detached itself from its embodied and locally anchored realities becoming "a conversation of elites: Aboriginal, government and academic" (p. 183). The authors call for returning self-government processes to communities in a way that expands and responds to their contemporary circumstances by creating spaces of reflection and exploration. "Unless this happens," they argue, "Indigenous thought becomes peripheral to the self-government movement while well-being becomes a latent idea to be engaged only after the governance structures are firmly in place" (p. 184). Indeed, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP)

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[40] Indian Association of Alberta
[41] Indian Tribes of Manitoba

identified the relational nature of autonomy and wellness: "the relationship between self-determination and health is a circle, however; thus, only when whole health is achieved will successful and mature self-determination be possible" (RCAP, 1996, vol. 3).

The direct links between self-determination and wellbeing brings to focus healing as the process by which this relationship is developed, nurtured and redefined depending on specific local contexts. Healing is thus both a contemporary expression of knowledge systems and values and a repertoire of practices that mediate its mobilization within a circumscribed community. It is a concept that is both diverse and multiple reflecting particular conceptions of identity, place, culture, empowerment and responsibility. To borrow Degnen's (1996) metaphor, healing is a collection of "orbiting discourses" circling around "and through each other, connecting at certain points, and swinging away at others, only to be reunited again in an endless spiral" (p. 10). As a mobilizing process reflective of power dynamics and social relations, healing also includes uncertainties, conflicts, apprehensions, and compromises that are continually renegotiated (Adelson, 2001 & 2008; Allen, 2000; Degnen, 2006; Kirmayer 2004; Kirmayer et al., 2006; Martin-Hill, 2003; NAHO, 2008; Tanner, 2008; Waldram, 2008). In other words, healing is a dynamic and contested process that operates in people's daily life.

Developing a research methodology in Chisasibi

The Chisasibi community members wanted an open forum in which issues of transparency, appropriation, and ethics could be discussed. Two roundtables on iiyiyiu healing were held in February and March 2012 where topics were identified based on the literature review. The first roundtable focused on specific aspects of iiyiyiu healing and how it can address the root causes of illness and psychosocial issues in the community. The majority of participants were healers who already work in the community and are familiar with its members and their needs. The roundtable was held over a period of two (2) days. The first day focused on Indigenous knowledge and healthcare practice during which topics such as the valuation of healers and the challenges of Indigenous healing in diverse communities were discussed. The second day focused on cultural protocols and ethical considerations with discussion on the relationship between patients and the healthcare system and specific approaches to a structured implementation of iiyiyiu healing within the existing Cree healthcare system (CMC, 2012).

The second roundtable was held over the course of three (3) days at the Youth Center. The format was somewhat different than the previous community consultations in order to

respond to the community desire of having a balanced program, including specific cultural activities. Thus, mornings and early afternoons were reserved for participant presentations and community discussions, while cultural activities such as a community feast, sweat lodge ceremonies and dances were held in the evenings. While the first roundtable focused on specific aspects of iiyiyiu healing, concrete steps that the community can take for the implementation of iiyiyiu healing services were identified during the second roundtable. The consensus emerged that although iiyiyiu healing may not be relevant to all community members, it *does* respond to the needs of a considerable portion of the Chisasibi population. It was underlined that the perspective should not be presented as an 'either/or' issue but simply as diversifying health and social services in order to respond to as many needs as possible. The long-term goal, when using either clinical approaches or iiyiyiu healing, is to help individuals achieve balance in their lives. The community identified three major aspects for implementation: broad community activities focused on awareness; inter-agency coordination; and strategic management (CMC, 2012a).

To increase community awareness, the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee suggested that a land-based program be ethnographically documented and its results presented to the community, preferably in a video format. In addition, while some culture-based services were already offered in the community very little quantitative data was available. The Committee therefore asked me include in my research methodology a healing and wellness survey to be administered to the Chisasibi youth. The work of the Committee also coincided with the creation, under the 2004 CBHSSJB Strategic Plan, of the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department which is mandated to provide integration for traditional approaches to medicine and social services within the CBHSSJB (CBHSSJB, 2004). The Committee was therefore invited to participate in the Department programming and planning activities and attended various meetings with the Council of Chishaayiyuu (CBHSSJB Elders' Council). Given the increasing workload for the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, I became the de facto research advisor and was consequently hired to provide research and programming support to the Committee on a part-time basis.

In a community-based research process it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint when the collaboration concretizes as relationships are built over many months and sometimes years. My decision to refocus my research following the community consultations aligned with the research needs of the Committee, and even though my initial intention was to only conduct life-story interviews with the youth, I quickly realized that if I were to provide the kind of support that the

Committee needed, I had to change my methodology to accommodate these needs. Almost four years into my PhD program and after two years of collaborative work with the community, we began to formalize our community-based research process by signing a research agreement that set out our respective roles and responsibilities (see Appendix A). Larry House remained my principal research partner and took on the responsibility of keeping the Committee informed of all our activities. Sam W. Gull, the director of the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department, provided institutional support and helped to align our work with the strategic vision of the CBHSSJB. This collaborative nature of the research process is also evidenced in the present autoethnography that, from this point forward, will inevitably acquire a collective dimension as well; it will alternate between the collective 'we' (in this case Larry House, myself and various members of the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee) and the more self-reflective 'I'.

We agreed to proceed with both the video ethnography of the land-based program and the youth healing and wellness survey. Because we had to function within the CBHSSJB institutional arrangement as well as that of the university, we faced some challenges in terms of research ethics. First, some community research partners found the formal university ethics review redundant and an administrative barrier to local activities, since our collaboration was almost three years into the process. From their perspective our relationship was already based on trust and reciprocity and a signed research agreement was not needed to validate this. Second, since the land-based program is not regularly held, as is dependent on CBHSSJB funding schedule, it did not align well with the university ethics approval process. Third, although the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department was given a formal research agreement to sign, given the hectic schedule of the Director we did not receive a copy in time to submit to the university. Nevertheless, these challenges helped us to continuously reflect on the ethical implication of doing research in the community.

While the university ethics review was ongoing, I was asked to undertake a first field test of the youth survey. The survey aimed to assess: 1) what healing means to the Chisasibi youth, 2) whether there is a broader interest in healing services among this population, 3) if and how existing healing services have been used and 4) what types of needs and gaps in health and social services can healing programs and activities fill. This information was to be used by the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee to configure its programs and services to better reflect the unique

needs of this population. I modelled the survey[42] on the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy Longitudinal survey[43] (2007) as well as the Inuit Health Survey[44] (2007-2008) and was culturally adapted to the Chisasibi context in consultation with the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee (see Appendix B). Although it may seem counterintuitive from a formal ethics process to begin preliminary fieldwork while university ethics approval is still pending (at the time I only received a 'conditional' approval), local circumstances have a more important impact on the research process.

First, given the long-term nature of community-based research and especially one that is embedded into local and regional institutions and process, a change in leadership (chiefs, directors, youth representatives, etc.) can sometimes mean either a significant lag in the research process or an outright end to it, as new leadership needs to be acquainted with the process and sometimes new priorities are identified and pursued. Second, community life in the north still follows cyclical seasonal patterns which affect individuals' availabilities to participate in research. In the Cree Nation for example the Goose break (late April to late May) and the Moose break (late September to late October) are important holidays that a majority of community members take advantage of to spend time in the bush with family and friends. During the summer months, at least seven out of the nine Cree communities hold celebrations at their original community sites from which they have been displaced by resource development projects. Chisasibi for example, holds a week-long celebration on the island of Fort George every July. The summer is also a busy travel season for various meetings, conferences and negotiations for the leadership, thus limiting their availability in the community. Third, although research agreements are key to clarifying knowledge ownership, consent and benefits, communities can still exercise control over all research conducted within their territories through a close collaboration with researchers before and after such agreements are signed. Indeed, ethics engagements do not expire once the data has been collected, they constitute a foundational element of research that extends to data analysis and the knowledge mobilization process that follows the formal 'end' of field activities.

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[42] The results will be presented in the following chapter
[43] Ministry of Ontario, Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS)
[44] International Polar Year Inuit Health Survey: Health in Transition and Resiliency

'You're trying to make the youth look bad'

At the end of February 2013 I went to Chisasibi to conduct a first field test for the youth survey. The aim was to conduct at least 40 surveys with youth between the ages of 18 and 35[45] using the snowball sampling method. The field test was designed to validate the survey and make adjustments if necessary. Having participated in the provincial survey of the Aboriginal population in Québec cities developed by the University-Community Research Alliance Odena, a CURA headed by DIALOG, I learned that field tests are key to 'improving the content, rephrasing some of the questions and adding sub-questions of a qualitative type' (Lévesque et al., in print). Similar to Odena, the aim of the Chisasibi survey was to go beyond the usual "categories found in a sociological survey" to include categories that reflect "the shared realities, values, trajectories, heritages, experiences and visions existing within the Aboriginal world" (Lévesque et al., in print, p. 7). For example, section 2 of the youth survey was designed to build a wellness and metal health profile of the participants, but instead of assessing alcohol and drug use it asked questions about the social network in which the youth participants are embedded (see Appendix B). Indeed, the university ethics committee had this comment attached to my 'conditional' approval: "The UHREC was concerned that reference to alcohol and drugs are conspicuously absent from the questionnaire except for one occasion. Is the survey standardized so that comparisons are possible between this and other surveys?" The survey was not standardised for comparison and I argued that such data was already widely available (Pikering, 1988; Shecapio & Iserhoff, 1996; Torrie et al, 2008; Torrie et al, 2006), while pressing issues about culture-based services and programs have yet to be assessed for the Cree Nation, or for Chisasibi in particular.

Nevertheless section 2 of the survey did have sensitive questions that posed at least a low-level emotional risk on the participants, such as questions designed to assess levels of stress and anxiety (see questions 15 through 20 which are designed to calculate Kessler-6[46] score, Appendix B). Personally, I was ambivalent about section 2 following the points raised by the youth at the

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[45] Age limit as per the Cree Nation Youth Council policy regarding eligibility to membership

[46] Kessler-6 psychological distress scale is designed to "screen for psychological distress experienced by persons with anxiety and mood disorders. The Kessler-6 scale asks respondents how frequently they have experienced six forms of psychological distress in the past 12 months, which include feeling 1) nervous, 2) hopeless, 3) restless or fidgety, 4) so sad or depressed that nothing could cheer the respondent up, 5) that everything is an effort, and 6) feeling worthless[…]An individual's score is calculated by adding the items together, which gives a score ranging from 0 to 24. A score of 13 or more indicates the person has experienced serious psychological distress" (Galloway & Saudny, 2012, p. 19).

community consultations regarding the social problem burden placed on them. After many discussions with both the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department, we agreed that at least a minimal mental wellness profile was needed to validate the need for culture-based services in the community and argue for a broader implementation of iiyiyiu healing at the regional level. I therefore set out to conduct the questionnaire first with members of Larry House' family since we hoped that they would feel more comfortable to provide critical feedback. Some language issues were identified but overall, the survey was appreciated, thus we arranged a couple of visits at the local Youth Center.

On the first visit at the Youth Center my initial reluctance was confirmed when one participant took issue with the questions in section 2. The individual was extremely upset and accused me of designing the survey to intentionally 'make the youth look bad': 'You fucking white consultants come into our communities and spend our money on useless surveys like this', the individual charged, 'I am taking this survey to the Chief and Council and show them what you really think of the youth'. 'Who gave you permission to do this? And who is paying for it?'[47] I had followed the formal consent procedure in which I explained to each participant what the research was about, I provided information sheets, and detailed the collaboration with the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department. On previous occasions I had presented the research to the Youth Chief, including supporting documentation, and had sent by mail a poster detailing the research that was presented at the 5th DIALOG Forum in 2012 (see Appendix C). I assured the individual in question that the Committee and the Band were aware of the survey, that at least the Committee had already validated the questionnaire, and that anything could be brought to their attention. I took the opportunity to ask which questions led to this conclusion (unsurprisingly they were indeed questions 10 through 20) and prompted the individual to help me change them. I later found these comments on the section 2 of the questionnaire filled by the individual:

- for question 4 which asks to rate the level of violence in the community the individual wrote: "some of the answers seem to make it look like to be answered the way you want to be answered"

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[47] Field notes, March 2013

- for question 10 which asked about reasons for not sleeping well, an extra "none of the above" option was added as well as the following comment: "you seem to want people to answer the way you want them to answer". The individual took issue with the "sleeping in shifts" option later saying "who the hell sleeps in shifts? What kind of stupid question is this?"[48]

- for question 16 which asks about feelings of hopelessness an extra "none of the above" option was added, followed by "there is always hope"

- for question 17 regarding feeling of restlessness no response was given except the following comment: "life is life, have to work in the modern world"

- for question 18, asking to assess levels of depression, no response was given except the following comment: "I learnt not to dwell on stuff that can stop me from moving on"

- question 19, asking "how often you feel that everything is an effort?", was just commented on with "what kind of question is this?"

- finally for question 20 which asked to assess feelings of worthlessness the comment was "lol[49]. I never feel like this"

My openness to the individual's critique exacerbated further the situation; I was accused of being patronizing and 'thinking that this was a joke'. By this time I was at a loss, not least a little intimidated by the individual's fierceness, and I just blurted that I work with Larry House and he can be contacted at any time regarding my activities in the community. I handed the individual my cellphone and told him to call Larry. Once Larry's name was mentioned the individual immediately relaxed and assured me that he knows Larry well and that if he was involved with the study then my activity was 'legit'. He apologized and agreed to finish the questionnaire. Even though I was quite rattled, we chatted a little longer about the research and what the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee was doing, and I asked the individual do an interview the next day. To my surprise the individual agreed on the condition of anonymity.

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[48] In retrospect I realize that this particular survey option is not culturally relevant to the Cree. It was taken from the Inuit Health Survey which aimed to assess issues of community housing as well as homelessness – what is sometimes termed 'hidden homelessness' and 'couch surfing' issues in Inuit communities (Lévesque & Turcotte, 2010)

[49] Means 'laugh out loud' in Internet slang

This unsettling experience provided both methodological and theoretical lessons. First, from a methodological perspective, briefly explaining a research project in the context of signing consent forms does not guarantee that the participants are indeed making an informed decision to take part in the survey. By their nature, sociological surveys have a very limited opportunity to create a dialogical space and thus participants are at a disadvantage of bringing out issues of questionnaire design. Nonetheless, quantitative data is often needed to frame policy and programming decisions, as was the case for the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee. A rigorous preparatory phase in which local awareness of research projects is heightened is necessary for a successful participation that minimizes harm.

In what concerns research with Indigenous youth specifically, approaching surveys in an informal basis and over the course of days or weeks can allow the youth to better understand and trust the formal ethical process that frames the research in which they participate. For example, members of Larry's family may have been more at ease answering questions in section 2 because they were well acquainted with the work of the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee as well as with my presence in the community. On the other hand, youth with which I had no prior relationship may justifiably regard me as an insensitive intruder. Given the social problem burden carried by the youth it is not surprizing that wellness research can be a particularly charged process. Indeed, Lessard (2006) points to this issue in his exploration of youth aspirations in Mistissini where he also struggled with difficulties in engaging youth. He notes that the social workers, health providers and other service providers/facilitators approach youth with replies already formulated and from a position of authority over the 'truth' or over the youth themselves which 'turns them off' (pp.93-95). In my case, after the heated exchange with the individual that took issue with the survey, the youth center coordinator (also a youth himself) approached me to make sure I was ok and pointed to several youth present saying that they all are very active on the land and practice cultural activities often, that they are bright and engaged in the community, but they will 'not talk about it with me because they don't know me'.

Issues of increasing capacity at the local level are not easy to address either. Most community-based research recommends that specific steps be taken to increase local social capital by training local research assistants or through various knowledge transfer activities (Ballonoff Suleiman, Soleimanpour, London, 2006; Ball & Janyst, 2008; Brough, Bond, & Hunt, 2004). We strived to hire local community members to administer the questionnaires but

unfortunately we could not find anyone who was interested in participating the in the research and who did not already have a job. We appealed to the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department to share at least one employee for this purpose, unfortunately the department was itself understaffed and conducting a large-scale consultation on Cree birthing in the nine communities. We also attempted to secure extra funding to train local members but the administrative burden and funding schedule was impossible to meet with the human resources we had available.

Apart from the methodological and logistical aspects the confrontation also pushed me to rethink the theoretical framework of the project. Feminist, critical theory, decolonization and community-based scholars constantly underline the importance of constructing theory from the community up, a theory that reflects Indigenous intelligence and lived experience. The deeply personal and emotional reaction to the questionnaire, as well as the distrust towards my attempts at revising the questions, pointed towards something more than a simple power differential between myself and the participant. The interview we did the following day uncovered complex "conflicting social forces and institutions" affecting the everyday lives of community youth that were best summarized by the interviewee as follows: "Every time I tried to do good in my life something came up, something negative came in my life" (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 18; interviewee[50]). Alcoholic parents, grandparents that attended residential school, witness to sexual abuse in the family, involuntary psychotropic treatment[51], personal as well as spouse substance abuse, attempted suicide, gossip and community alienation for participating in traditional healing are just some of the issues affecting the participant. Despite or maybe because of these challenges this individual remains engaged in the community[52] and has, through participation in traditional healing, regained a positive cultural identity and maintained a healthy life: "traditional ceremonies helped me a lot in my life. Before I thought I stood strong in making my life drug/alcohol/abuse/negativity free, but since I have been going to traditional ceremonies (sweats, Sundance) my faith in living my life with pride, positively and well has made me stronger". If anything, this participant has taught me that healing is not only a personal journey but also a collective process that points towards the decolonization of self, community and nation. Local and regional institutional supports are part and parcel of the success of individuals in living a

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[50] The individual agreed to be quoted anonymously

[51] As a cover-up by certain family members to the individual's witnessing of sexual abuse and subsequent disclosure to authorities, the individual was coercively medicated

[52] The participant is a key local resource in organizing traditional healing activities

good life, and youth successes and failures are therefore a direct reflection of institutional, familial and community relationships. As youth studies scholars increasingly argue, young people are embedded within complex social structures and dynamics that, when bracketed, only further marginalize and misrepresent them (Abebe & Kjørholt, 2011; Blanchet-Cohen & Salazar, 2010; Durham, 2006; Tilleczek, 2011).

Moreover, these relationships and by extension young people are also inscribed within the historical and contemporary Indigenous-state relationships that, as has been discussed previously, are characterized by oppressive and culturally damaging effects. The social suffering caused by ongoing colonial and assimilatory policies was made manifest in the lived experiences of this particular youth who made a stand and forced me to take responsibility for the potential impacts of the research on the young community members. Most poignantly, my self-presumed status of ally and partial 'insider' was shattered. As much as I had hoped to receive the same validation from the survey participants as from the community research partners, in the end, from the perspective of this youth, I was just another white consultant perpetuating dominating and stereotypical views of Cree youth. This has been by far the most important lesson in decolonization that I received, one which alerted me to always mind illusions of 'colonial empathy' and take responsibility for my own positionality as researcher and ally. Indeed, as Hale (1991) underlines, critical research (in her case feminist research in Somalia) with its focus on process and solidarity can lead to "false assumptions of mutuality" in which the 'colonizer' researcher 'expects to be equally affirmed' by her 'colonized' narrator (p. 133). Working on an oral history project with the Ndinawe Youth Resource Center in Winnipeg, Brownlie and Crowe (2014) were challenged by similar ethical issues concerning the 'politics of working with youth':

> We had originally intended to have youth offer their own stories in the context of the project, if they chose to do so. It was only when we met the youth face to face that we understood, on an experiential level, the power dynamics of the research situation and the multiple vulnerabilities they faced as young people living with the devastating effects of colonization, racialization, extreme poverty, and marginalization. We felt powerfully that it would have been unethical to involve their stories in this short-term pilot project, that under the circumstances we would end up feeling that we had simply "taken" their stories. (p. 208)

The interview with the participant left me both saddened by the immense challenges faced by young Cree in their daily life, but more angry and disappointed at the little support available to them at the local level. I realized that exploring what healing means to young people was not enough. The literature pointed to many similar aspects that could be synthesised for a theoretical discussion, yet I had not found a comprehensive study of Indigenous healing or culture-based service implementation that spoke to both internal process and external forces that affect how such implementation takes place. If healing mediates the relationship between autonomy and wellness but is only one aspect of the decolonization process, what else was I missing? What other forces and processes was the young person pointing to? And, from a decolonizing perspective, what does healing aim to address both at the individual *and* collective levels?

Chapter 5

"What the village would do is within one man"

The healing and wellness survey was in some ways successful, yet given the few local resources available I was not able to attain the goal of 40 questionnaires. My visit in Chisasibi coincided with the arrival of the Nishiiyuu Walkers on Parliament Hill, a momentous event that many community members attended in Ottawa. That meant that many potential survey participants were not in the community, that the Youth Center was mostly closed during my stay, and the local restaurant (a potential recruiting place) was closed for a couple of days due to technical and staffing issues. Because I only managed to fill 15 questionnaires, I developed an online version and attempted to enlist the help of the James Bay Eeyou School to reserve a couple of hours to complete the survey with the secondary 4 and 5 students. I visited with the principal and presented the research but due to the nature of the questionnaire (the mental wellness profile), the ethical requirements needed to be debated and assessed by the local school committee and permission from parents had to be secured. It was agreed that September would be a good time for me to come back and conduct the survey at the school. Unfortunately in September 2013, all high schools in Quebec, including those in Eeyou Istchee, were undergoing the *Québec Survey on Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs and Gambling in High School Students* (ETADJES) a multi-year provincial health survey developed and delivered by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux, which took precedence[53]. The results of the healing and wellness survey presented in the following section are based on 15 questionnaires, and while it is not a statistically representative sample, it does point to some interesting findings for future research. Moreover, it needs to be strongly reiterated that the sample is too small to make any generalizations respective to the overall young population in Chisasibi.

Portrait of healing and wellness of Chisasibi youth

As stated in the previous chapter the survey aimed to assess: 1) what healing means to the Chisasibi youth, 2) whether there is a broader interest in healing services among this population, 3) if and how existing healing services have been used and 4) what types of needs and gaps in health and social services can healing programs and activities fill. This information was to be used by the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee to configure its programs and services to better reflect

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[53] Personal communication with James Bay Eeyou School principal

the unique needs of this population. In total there were 83 questions divided into four main sections. The first covered a short demographic profile; section 2 aimed to build a personal wellness profile, including questions about community and social supports; section 3 assessed use and access to existing health and social services in the community; and the last section identified the kinds of culture based healing services used by the youth and their assessment of these services. A section was also designed to assess the awareness of culture-based services for youth that had never use this type of service (see Appendix B). Of the total 15 participants, only three (20%) had never used traditional healing or culture-based services, which strongly suggests that these services are an important aspect of personal self-care in Chisasibi. Finally, five survey participants completed the questionnaire while also participating in the land-based healing program in April 2013, the rest were community youth chosen using a combination of snowball and random sampling.

Demographic profile

The median age of participants was 22 years of age, with the youngest being 15 and the oldest 34. The gender distribution of participants was greater for males (9) than females (6). Of these more than half or 12 have lived in an urban region, with Ottawa being the main place of residence outside Chisasibi.

Figure 10 Residence outside the community by city
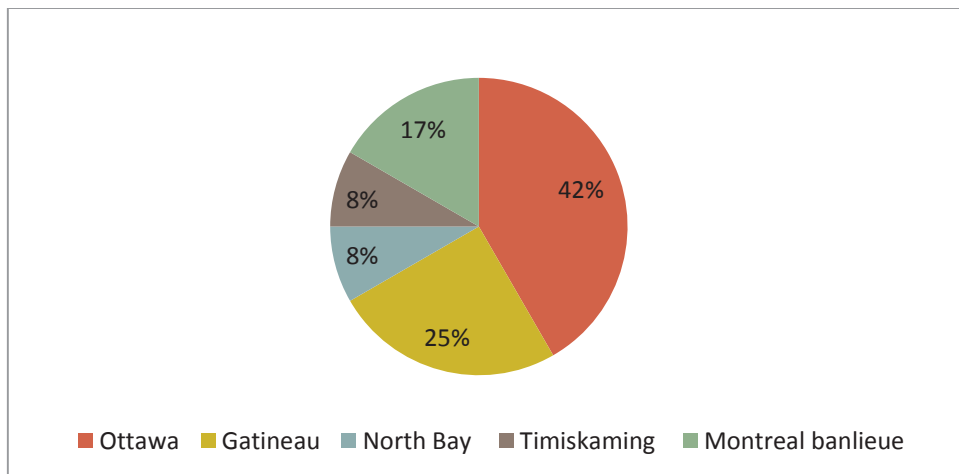
Many participants (40%) identify as Eeyou (Cree) an option that was not initially included in the survey and was listed in the 'other' category. Three, or 20% of the participants identified as James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement beneficiaries, while only 13% did not know what

their legal status was. Of the remaining 27%, only one identified as Métis while some identified as Cree-Italian, Cree-Innu, and Cree-Acadian, with one youth identified as Naskapi-Anishnabwe-human being. Some of the comments received for this particular identity question revolved around tensions between being identified as JBNQA beneficiary, which was viewed as a bureaucratic and imposed identity, and self-identifying as Eeyou. In the latter case, some youth even objected to identifying as Cree, preferring instead the more culturally relevant identifier Eeyou. In addition a majority or 87% stated that they spoke Cree regularly, with one in the process of learning the language and another only understanding but not speaking Cree.

In terms of education, less than half or 44% had finished secondary at the time of the survey. One individual did not have any secondary education while two (13.3%) had some college or CEGEP education, and three (30%) others had received a technical or vocational diploma or certificate. More than half or 53% were single and 40% were in a common-law relationship. A little under half, or 40% did not have any children while the majority or (60%) had on average 2 children. Finally, on average there were 6 individuals living in the same household, with the largest household counting 10 people.

Wellness and social network

Many Chisasibi youth stay connected with their culture and take part in land-based activities. The majority of participants (62%) spend at least one to five weeks in the bush in any given year. Two individuals added the qualifier "I lost count" of time spent in the bush, suggesting that they spend at least half a year on the land.

Figure 11 Time spent on the land

Legend: 1 to 3 ■ 3 to 5 ■ more than 5 ■ I lost count ■ Don't spend time in bush
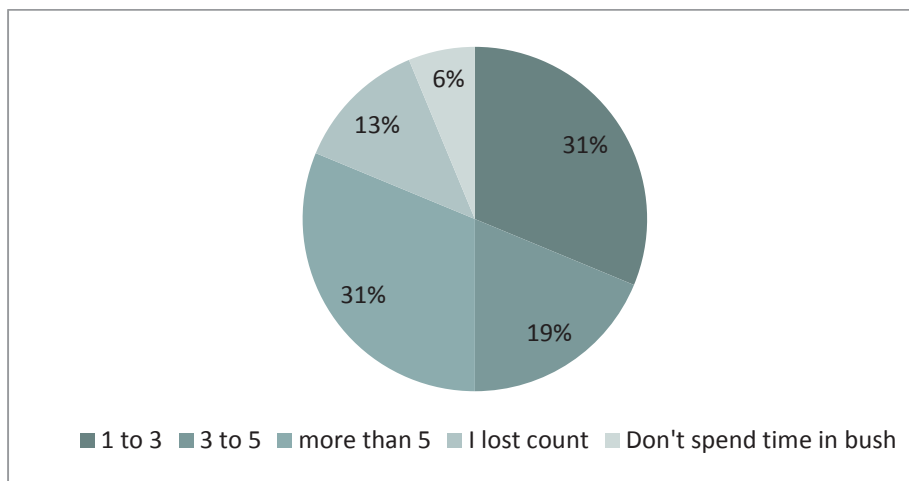
While on the land Chisasibi youth participate in a variety of activities, most often fishing and hunting, while also helping around the camp hauling water, chopping wood, and cooking.

Figure 12 Types of activities carried out on the land
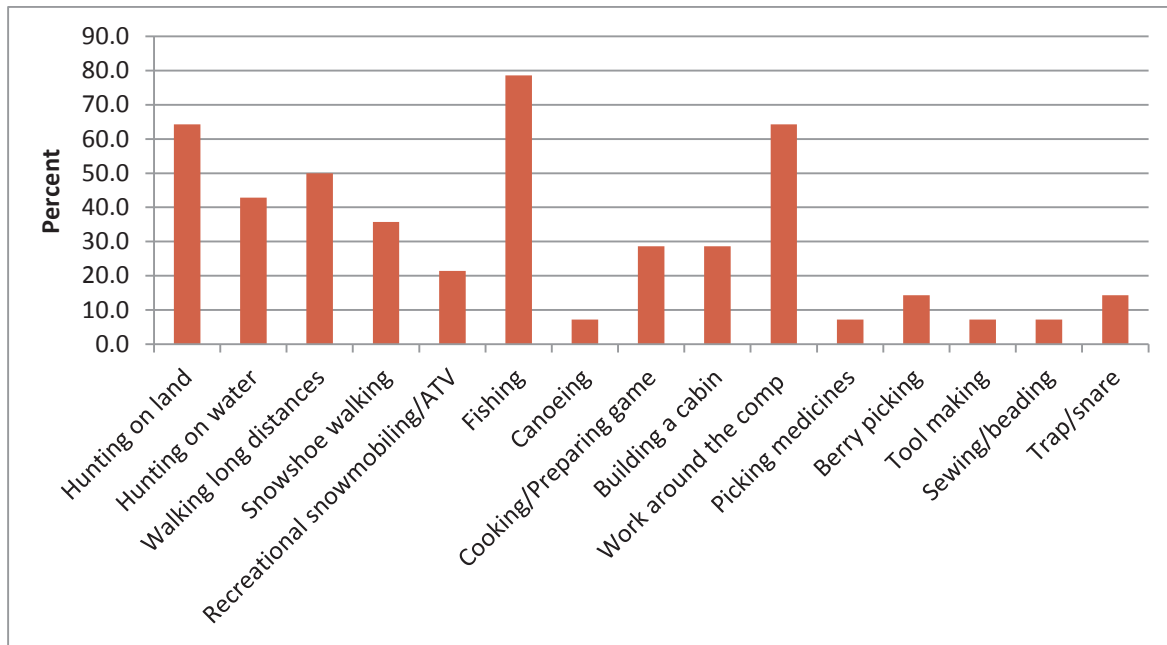
The majority of participants or 72% deemed very important to spend time in the bush, and many indicated during the survey that the bush helps them "forget things" and reflect on issues of personal importance.

Figure 13 Significance of having access to the land
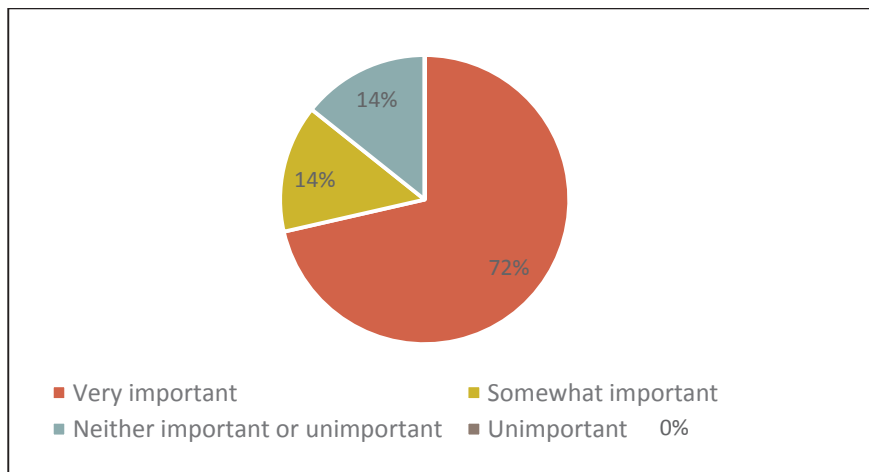
Generally participants qualify the community as being mostly peaceful (36%) or have a neutral opinion (29%), with some having identified "alcohol and fighting" as the main disrupting factors to community cohesion (this information was volunteered by participants). It is important to note that these numbers do not represent *actual* levels of violence, they rather represent how youth *feel* about their community. Participation in community life was, on the other hand, split between those that participate in community activities or recreational activities regularly and those who rarely participate in public events or activities. The majority (67%) have a job and almost all (90%) are happy with their employment situation.

Figure 14 Participation in activities where people came together to work for the benefit of the community
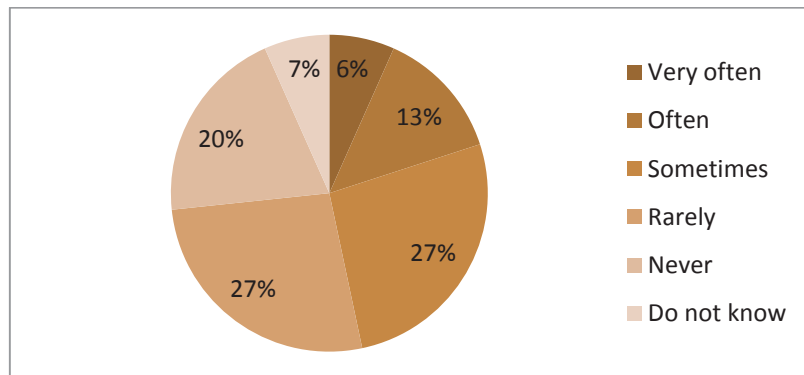
Figure 15 Participation in recreational activities
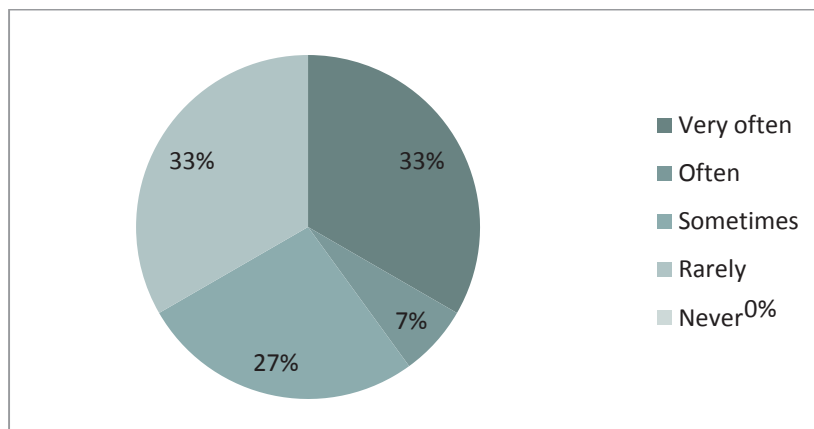
Individual mental health

Sleep quality can have a significant impact on the health of individuals. In Canada approximately 3.3 million individuals suffer from insomnia, which is defined as 'always or often having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep' (Galloway et al., 2012). Survey participants have slightly lower incidence of insomnia with an average of 8.9% compared with their Canadian adult counterparts (13.4%), nevertheless stress was the main cause of sleeplessness with 44%, which is on par with national trends (Tjepkema, 2003).

Figure 16 Overall sleep patterns
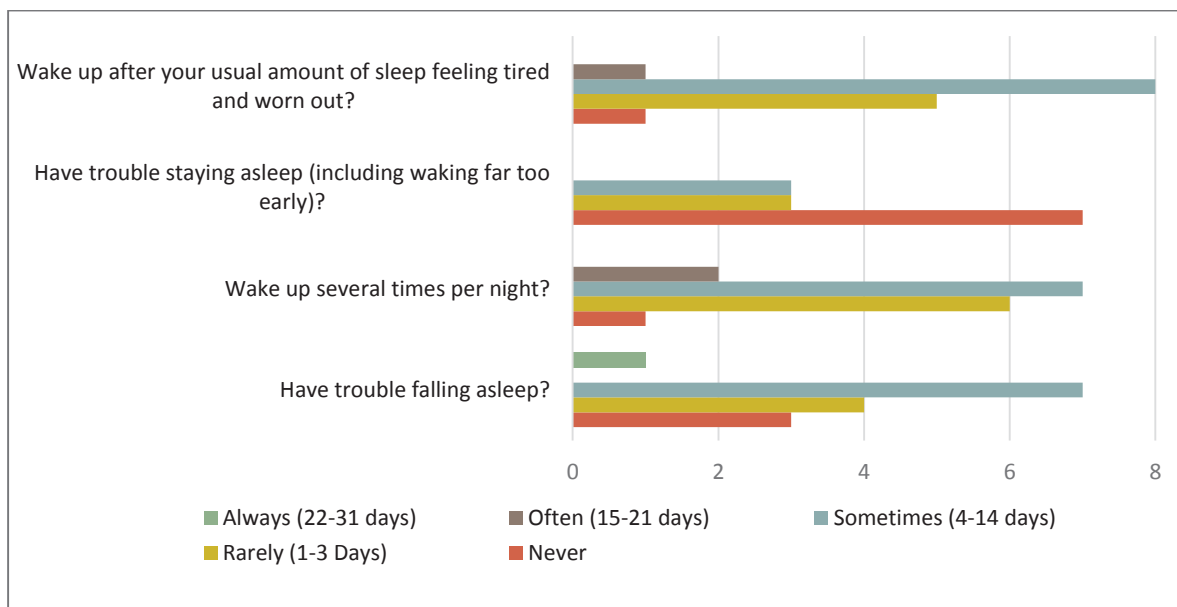
Figure 17 Reasons for sleeplessness
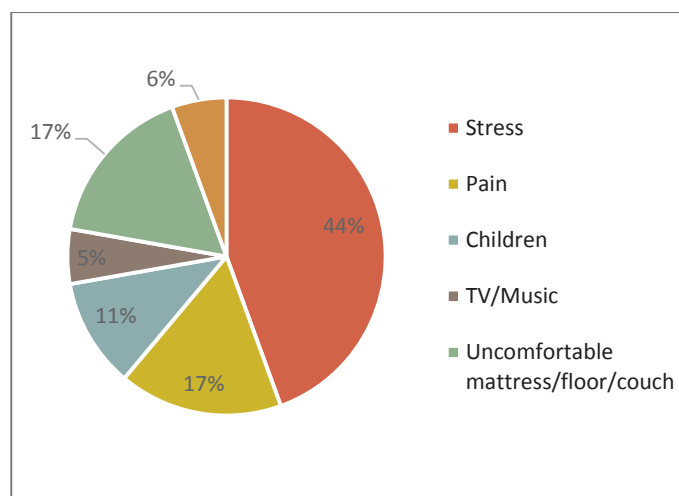
Kessler-6 psychological distress scale is designed to "screen for psychological distress experienced by persons with anxiety and mood disorders. The Kessler-6 scale asks respondents how frequently they have experienced six forms of psychological distress in the past 12 months, which include feeling 1) nervous, 2) hopeless, 3) restless or fidgety, 4) so sad or depressed that nothing could cheer the respondent up, 5) that everything is an effort, and 6) feeling worthless….An individual's score is calculated by adding the items together, which gives a score ranging from 0 to 24. A score of 13 or more indicates the person has experienced serious psychological distress…but does not identify a specific mental illness" (Galloway et al., 2012, p. 19). Data suggests that half (50%) of survey participants had scores indicating serious psychosocial distress, nevertheless on average this score was very close to the 13 point mark with and average score of 13.7. Scores varied from a high of 20 to a low of 6. Of the five youth that completed the questionnaire while on the land-based program, they all scored above 13 with an average score of 15.2.

Figure 18 Feelings of hopelessness
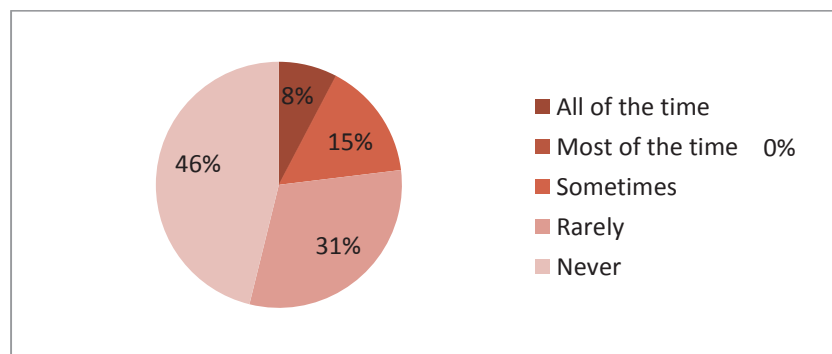
Figure 19 Feelings of worthlessness
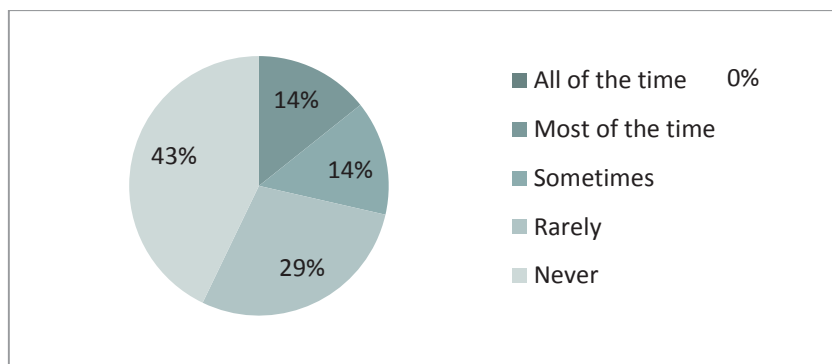
Figure 20 Feelings of restlessness
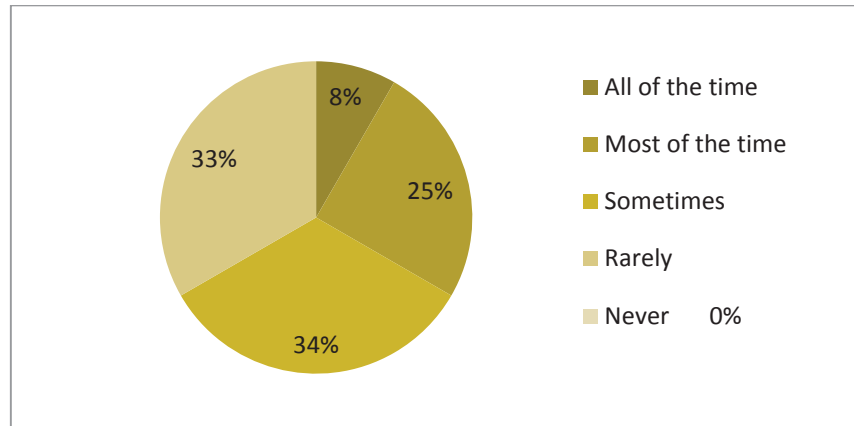
This data shows that while many youth exhibit significant distress they nevertheless exhibited the highest scores in the restlessness category and the lowest scores in the hopelessness and worthless categories, which suggests that the distress may be a result of factors less related with psychosocial dimensions and more with lack of activities available locally or regionally. On the other hand, given the low representativeness of the sample no definite conclusion can be derived at this time. A more comprehensive assessment with a more representative sample needs to be carried out to get a more accurate profile of individual psychosocial distress.

When asked to describe their best qualities many participants identified their ability to help and care for others above all else, as well as excelling at sports and hunting. When asked about what qualities they admire in others caring, being a good listener and hardworking were most appreciated.

Figure 21 Best personal trait

Figure 22 Best quality admired in others

Finally, when asked about what would help people thrive in the community they recommended more activities for youth as well as developing local social capital. In their view more caring and hardworking individuals would help community cohesion and address social issues such as availability of drugs. "Letting go of the past" will help people "take care of each other" and work together to achieve "unity" in the community.

Social network

Emotional support from a good social network is strongly associated with a good overall mental health and is conducive to people developing coping skills that help deal with stressful life periods (Galloway et al., 2012). Approximately half or 53% of participants have sought help, 13% decided to address issues by themselves, while 20% did not appeal to anyone for support. The majority of participants (72%) have indicated that they have someone to talk to if they feel troubled or if they needed emotional support. Of these 50% indicated that such a person was available all of the time, while 22% indicated that most of the time they could appeal to their social network. In addition almost all participants (13) have someone that they like with whom they can spend time as often as needed.

Overall, participants have a varied and supportive social network. Parents are friends figure as the most important sources of emotional support for young people (47%), as well as the immediate and extended family (40%). Social workers and traditional counsellors figure as the most used professional support (40%) followed closely by teachers (20%). The least consulted

social resources were NAADAP workers, police officers and clergy people with 6.7% respectively.

Figure 23 Composition of social support system
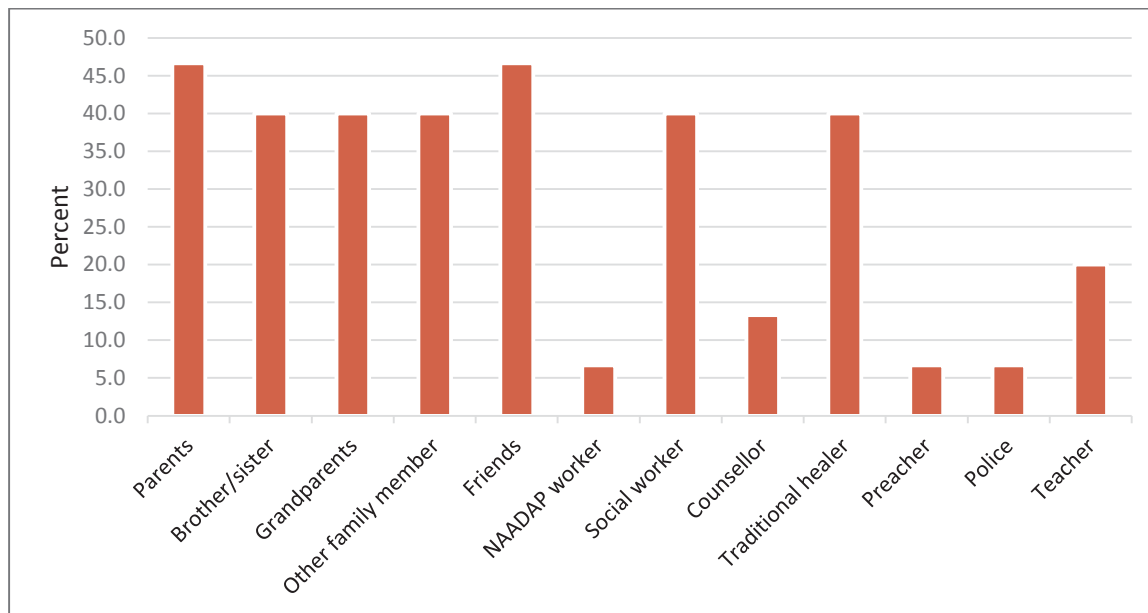
Although half of participants scored more than 13 points on the Kessler scale, on average the score was very close to the 13 point limit. This can be indicative of a particularity of younger generation reporting higher levels of depression compared to the adult population (Galloway et al., 2012). It is also important to note that a survey such as the one administered cannot diagnose depressive illness or disorder even though it employed clinical evaluative tools. While levels of insomnia are lower than the national average, young people indicated that stress is the major factor for sleep quality. In sum, while young people seem to struggle with stressful situations they nevertheless appear to have strong self-esteem as well as good social support where they can get the needed emotional support from many sources including family and friends as well as local professionals.

Community services

Access to and good quality of community health and social services is strongly associated with good health and mental wellbeing. Although others (Shecapio & Iserhoff, 1996) have found that young people are reluctant to appeal to existing community services, based on the results

presented above, social service providers and counsellors do make up an important proportion of individual's social network. We therefore aimed to assess the gaps in service provision.

Half of participants indicated that they did not receive the health care needed, either because the service or the staff was not available (14% and 21% respectively). In 21% of the cases no reason was given to the client as to why services were not available and on one occasion band membership was a barrier to service accessibility. Of the services sought but not received in 29% of cases it related to an assessment or treatment of an emotional or health problem; in 14% of cases participants had sought help with an assessment or treatment of an injury or substance abuse. Standing at 7% the following services were not available when the participants attempted to access them: assistance with family issues, rehabilitation or chronic condition, suicide prevention, dermatology, and help with going in the bush. Half of participants think that services could be improved in the community while 28% believe that available services do not address community needs. The following figure identifies the types of service that the participants think are missing in the community

Figure 24 Type of services that need improvement
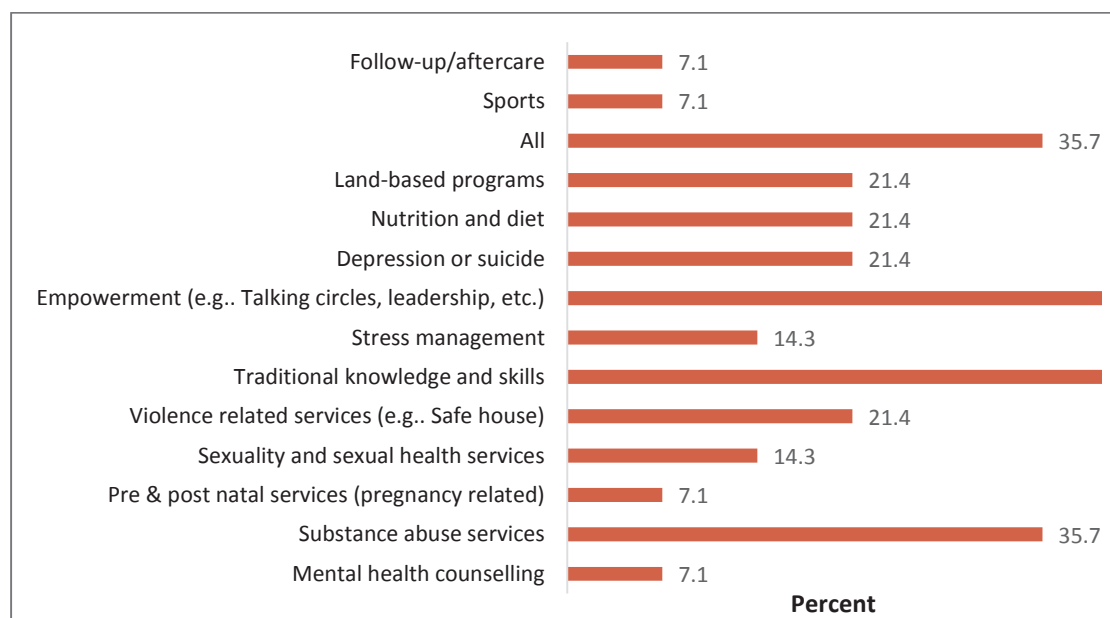
The majority or 64% of participants are interested in engaging in community consultations regarding health and social services while 21% did not indicate an interest in participating and 14% indicated that they may participate in consultation activities. In terms of responsibility for the quality of health and social services half of participants believe that

responsibility is shared across all local entities, while 21% respectively believe that Chief & Council or the community members at large are responsible for improving local services.

Almost all participants indicated that a combination of Cree and non-Cree services is ideal to address their needs. They strongly disagreed on using an either/or approach whether it was the case for Cree only or exclusively non-Cree models of care, yet Cree culture continues to be an important part of their life.

Table 1 Role of culture

	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Traditional Cree cultural events are important to my life	28,6	**71,4**
Traditional Aboriginal events (not Cree) are important to my life	50,0	42,9
I would like to learn more about my culture	35,7	**64,3**
I would like to know more about other Aboriginal cultures	**57,1**	35,7
I would like to incorporate more Cree culture into my life	**57,1**	42,9
I would like to incorporate more Cree culture into the life of my family	50,0	42,9

Traditional healing

For the participants miyupimaatisiiun means to "have faith in living life with pride and positivity", to be a "compassionate individual who cares for others" and who is 'passionate about what one does'. It means participating in traditional activities such as ceremonies, sweats, and hunting in "every season to learn what activities are good" for wellbeing. Finally, being well means keeping active, whether by playing sports, working out, or being on the land; maintaining a good nutrition; and surrounding oneself with healthy people that avoid drugs and alcohol. When asked to describe their own culture based models of care, being on the land and eating traditional food were among the most important aspects. In addition maintaining "traditional family roles", "showing respect for all things and people", and experiential learning ("if you can't find what you need keep on seeking it") were identified as foundational values that are passed on through 'legends and teachings shared within families'. Interestingly, when speaking about wellness in general or about their own models of wellbeing many youth underlined the embodied dimension of miyupimaatisiiun in the sense that each individual needs to work hard to be a role

model for others: "what the village would do is within one man". Finally for 65% of participants, healing is understood holistically as it addresses physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of wellbeing. A majority (80%) of participants have used traditional healing services at the time of the survey, the results of the following section are based on responses from 12 participants. Of these, hunting/fishing/being on the land with family and sweats were the most used forms of healing. Moreover, all participants had used a combination of many different services and culture-based activities.

Figure 25 Type of healing method used
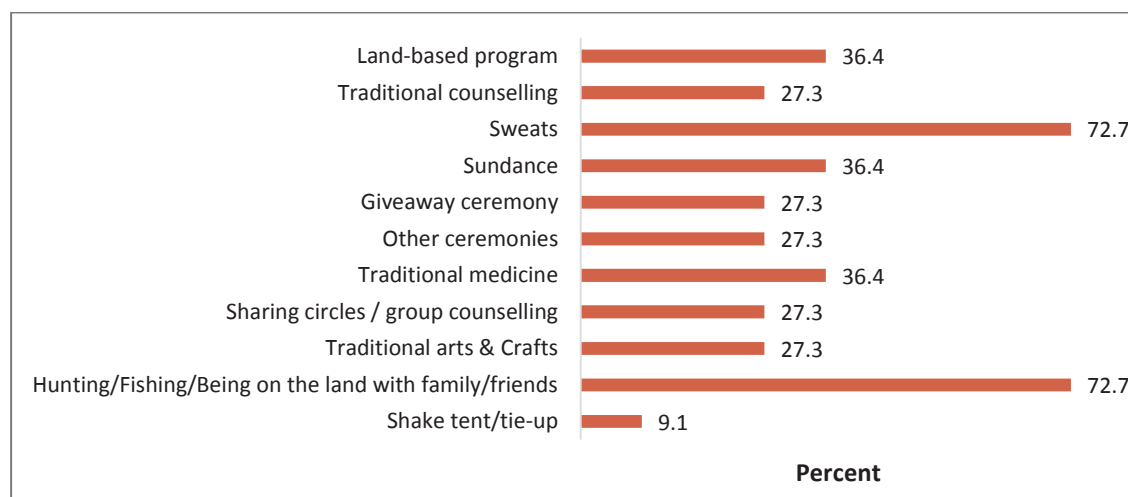
Most participants have been introduced to culture-based services and healing activities either by family members (30%) or they sought them out on their own (40%). Two participants had been referred by a counsellor or had such activities as part of a care plan developed by local service providers. Almost all youth had participated in healing activities to address a variety of needs. Healing services were primarily (64%) used to address substance abuse issues or to acquire traditional knowledge and skills (54%). Coming as a close second (27% respectively), participants also appealed to culture-based services to deal with issues of depression and to manage stress.

Figure 26 Type of need met by culture-based services

Service	Percent
Land-based programs	18.2
Nutrition and diet	0.0
Depression or suicide	27.3
Empowerment (e.g.. Talking circles, leadership, etc.)	18.2
Stress management	27.3
Traditional knowledge and skills	54.5
Violence related services (e.g.. Safe house)	18.2
Sexuality and sexual health services	0.0
Pre & post natal services (pregnancy related)	9.1
Substance abuse services	63.6
Mental health counselling	27.3

While some were newcomers to participating in culture-based healing having used such services for 2 to 6 months, other had used them for years and in some instances for more than a dozen years. When asked to assess healing programs in which they participated, survey respondents qualified them as good and excellent, nevertheless improvements in facilities should be considered as some indicated.

Table 2 General assessment of healing activities

	Very Good (%)	Excellent (%)
Overall assessment of healing activities	42,9	21,4
Activities met my expectations	35,7	14,3
Staff & elder were helpful (they provided support and were understanding)	42,9	28,6
Treatment Plan (the tasks help me to address my issues)	35,7	14,3
Instructions/introduction was clear (I knew what I had to do)	42,9	14,3
Dialogue between participants (was dialogue well facilitated)	35,7	21,4
Facilities	35,7	7,1

Overall healing activities provided the majority with enough support to feel comfortable and confident where 72% felt that healing helped them develop their strengths and feel good about themselves. More than half (54%) believed that healing was very good at helping them move beyond traumas of the past, while 18% believed that such activities helped them extremely

well. On the other hand, one respondent believed that healing activities only helped minimally. Nonetheless, almost all (11) participants felt that participating in healing activities has made a positive difference in their life, chief among these was to take responsibility for their own life. On the other hand, few (2) believed that participating in healing correlated with political participation.

Table 3 Individual positive changes

I am working at improving my family relationships	63,6 %
I have left an abusive relationship	27,3 %
I have begun to eat healthier foods	45,5 %
I have increased my physical activity	54,5 %
I interact more with other people	**72,7 %**
I have moved to a healthier home	27,3 %
I have taken more responsibility for my own health	63,6 %
I have taken more responsibility for my own lifestyle	**90,9 %**
I participate more in cultural activities	**72,7 %**
I participate more in decision-making/self-governance related to community life	**18,2 %**

Contrary to some studies (AHWS, 2009; NAHO, 2008), healing had little or no impact on participants' access to a doctor (8 indicated "not at all") or increasing access to other health care services (3 "not at all" and 5 "a little"). This difference may be due to both the current proximity and access to clinical services in the community compared to other regions where culture-based community services are "providing essential primary care services", or the little integration of culture in existing service provision in Chisasibi which may not entice clients to appeal to clinical services preferring instead to see traditional counsellors and other cultural resources (AHWS, 2009, p. 61). On the other hand more than half indicated that participating in healing activities increased their access to traditional health providers and supports (3 respectively answered "a lot" or "a great deal"). Changes in behaviour such as making healthy lifestyle changes, improved stress levels, and an increase in participation in culture-based activities in general were also recorded.

Table 4 Overall benefits of healing

	Improved	Not improved
Stress levels (improvement means they decreased)	72,7	9,1
Social supports (e.g.. family, friends, co-workers)	**81,8**	0,0
Sleep habits	63,6	9,1
Levels of happiness, contentment	72,7	9,1
Balance in your life (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)	**90,9**	0,0
Participation in self-governance	54,5	**27,3**
Connection with Cree/Aboriginal culture	63,6	0,0
Understanding of Cree/Aboriginal culture	**81,8**	0,0

Individual healing not only improves individual health and wellness but also has positive effects at the level of family, community and the nation. According to the majority of participants (63%) their own healing has lasting positive effects on family by strengthening familial relationships (72%) and reducing family violence (63%). Although many agree that such positive effects extend at the level of the community and nation these benefits tend to decrease with each level of societal diffusion.

Table 5 Nature of impacts of healing

	Community	Nation
More awareness of traditional healing methods/activities/services	54,5	18,2
More people know more about how to live a healthier life	45,5	9,1
Increased awareness of how to develop stronger, healthier family lives	45,5	18,2
Increased opportunities to access Elders	36,4	27,3
Renewed relationship with the land	18,2	18,2
Use of Cree language	27,3	18,2
More individuals are committed to healing	36,4	18,2
Reduction in violence issues	36,4	18,2
Increased access to holistic health care	9,1	9,1
Increased community dialog on pressing health and social issues	27,3	18,2
Creation of more safe spaces to share experiences and solutions of pressing issues facing the community	27,3	18,2
Increased participation of community members in decision-making/ self-governance	9,1	9,1
Increased understanding of impacts of history on individuals and community	0,0	18,2
Increased understanding of personal and collective trauma	18,2	18,2

Overall healing has helped participants to "reduce anger and be more spiritual", to "better understand problems and how to deal with them", to "keep in shape and learn new things", "have more confidence and self-esteem" to 'address the root causes of the issues' they deal with. Some felt that participation in healing activities has had some negative effects such as being confronted by judgemental attitudes from some community members as well as difficulties reconciling with estranged family members or friends because their participation in ceremonies. One individual expressed some concern over the behavior of some traditional counsellors outside of the ceremonial/counselling context. Indeed, of the three individuals who had never participated in healing activities they cited objection from the part of family and sacredness of ceremonial aspects as a barrier to participation.

Participants who had used healing services recommended that culture-based services should be more visible (advertised) in the community and "more open" to youth on a "continuous basis throughout the year" and receive "more support from the community" in terms of funding. Indeed, even for those who had not used healing services they agreed that traditional healing should be included as part of health and social program delivery because it helps address health and social priorities for the community.

Future directions

While the survey is not representative of the young population in Chisasibi it has pointed to some interesting and important aspects. For the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and myself, the high percentage of youth already using culture-based services has been a surprising result. As mentioned in the previous chapter, adults and institutions tend to speak about young Cree in terms of acculturation and psychosocial distress, yet the survey points towards aspects that mitigate the negative impacts of, in this case perceived, culture loss. Even though young Cree do have a high level of distress in their lives they also have good and supportive social networks that may be responsible for the lower incidence of depression and low self-esteem. Appealing to elders and other cultural resources is seen as a good way of developing cultural skills, maintaining Cree values, and strengthening links with the land.

Overall, even though young Cree do not speak in terms of 'positive cultural identity', it is exactly what they are aiming to build by engaging in healing activities. They understand that by building a strong link with Cree culture they gain coping skills, bring balance in their lives and gain spiritual awareness. As explained by Eddie Pash in the following section, a culturally safe

healing model strengthens family relationships, instills a sense of control and responsibility over life decisions, and motivates individuals to maintain a healthy life.

On the other hand, it is evident that young people continue to be confronted by difficult situations, often outside of their control (such as family violence) that negatively impacts their mental health. They are keenly aware of their own social contexts as well as the historical processes that continue to influence health outcomes. For these reasons they have identified the need of local institutions and community members to develop concerted actions and structured processes that support healing in Chisasibi. Moreover, they have indicated that such programs need to be multidisciplinary, both in terms of the composition of intervention teams as well as in terms of models of care. This suggests that the 'identity crisis' that is often associated with young Indigenous peoples has less to do with a 'clash of cultures' and more with weak cultural supports at home. In other words, it is not that Cree youth are less interested in hunting than in playing video games, but more that they have fewer opportunities (financial or familial) to go in the bush. Although they are young, their own life experience has provided skills and knowledge that should be mobilized in local decision making, and especially in terms of devising appropriate and culturally safe environments. The land-based healing program, developed by elder Eddie Pash, is one such initiative that aims to address the healing need of young people in Chisasibi.

Nitahuu Aschii Ihtuun[54]: the Chisasibi land-based healing program

While discussions with the school regarding expanding the administration of the survey were ongoing, in April 2013, the land-based program organized a bush trip. We took the opportunity to conduct the video ethnography and spent two weeks in the bush with a group of five participants and the staff (two elders and two camp helpers). The ethnography consisted of formal interviews with the participants and the staff regarding the program and the recording of lectures given by elder Eddie Pash which took place twice a day, in the morning and in the afternoon[55]. In addition to filming, together with Larry House we also took the opportunity to work with Eddie Pash and develop a program curriculum to be presented to the Cree Board of

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[54] Land-based healing (CBHSSJB, 2014, p. 31) Most of the present chapter has already been published (Radu, House & Pashagumiskum, 2014) and only slight changes have been made here. I would like to thank the editors of the special issue on "Indigenous Land-Based Education" of the *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* journal for helping us clarify the healing model developed by Eddie. Special thanks to Matthew Wildcat whose gentle suggestions has helped me better understand and conceptualize the role of healing for decolonization more broadly.

[55] We recorded approximately 9 hours of lectures on which the healing model described in the following sections is based.

Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) as well as to the courts as a justice diversion measure. The program manual now serves as a model for other Cree communities and the Chisasibi program is the first bush healing pilot program to operate in Eeyou Istchee. We also distributed the healing and wellness survey to the participants. In conducting interviews with the participants we realized that sometimes the formal approach to signing a consent form at the onset can be intimidating and that it can be done during or after the interview. Some participants had prior negative experiences with social services which included complicated release of information procedures that created insecurities to sharing personal experiences. By initially approaching interviews on a more informal basis and over the course of a couple of days, we were able to establish an environment of trust and enabled us to respect the institutional ethics requirements while honouring individual experiences and needs of the participants.

During the formal and informal discussions with the participants and the staff we identified gaps in health and social service provision in the community as well as the links with issues of justice (since most participants had been referred by the court). First, the young participants told us of their personal experience with substance abuse within their family, having grown up with parents or other family members that struggled with addictions and family violence. They easily traced these behaviors as a symptom of the residential schools, an observation that the young survey dissenter had also made, translating it as unresolved trauma ('they never talked about it but we knew something had happened with them' were usual comments made). For example they spoke of older family members that although obviously struggled with trauma refused to express it or attend to it through formal psychosocial or other culture-based treatment. Having grown up in an environment of family violence, the participants acknowledged that they had also turned to substance abuse as a 'self-medicating' option, and in turn had used violence as a response to perceived and actual threats. Second, the participants also brought attention to the lack of inconsistent local services, and often spoke about the racist and demeaning attitudes form the part of service providers, in some cases Cree service providers but mostly non-Cree professionals (nurses, doctors, psychologists, lawyers, etc.). Third, issues of case management and referrals between institutions (in this case justice and social services) were also identified as a barrier to first addressing imminent mental health issues, and second, to providing ongoing support for long-term treatment and recovery. The elders and staff discussed some difficulties in establishing and delivering local culture-based services. In this instance, the

elders talked about local tensions in terms of treatment and recovery from substance abuse that some community critics viewed as 'unsuccessful' due to relapse. They stressed on many occasions that healing should be seen as a life-long and gradual process in which quick and permanent 'cure' was unattainable, especially if abstinence was an expected goal. For them 'harm reduction' was a more appropriate approach that was in line with the Cree concept of miyupimaatisiiun. For example, when dealing with suicide ideation, a positive result of bush placement was an increase in the participant's positive interactions with family and friends, even if the individual continued to struggle with depression.

On the other hand, using culture as treatment was sometimes understood by community members only in terms of ceremonial practices (such as sweats, shaking tents, or Sundance) that even though are practiced in the community, they are but one of the many forms of culture-based treatment or service provision. They linked this tension to the ongoing effects of colonization of which Christianisation has been a major disruptor to Cree models of care and wellness. In the case of the land-based healing program for example, Indoh-hoh (Cree bush skills) forms the basis of treatment, i.e. learning to hunt, trap and fish, food preparation and Cree nutrition, as opposed to ceremonial practices. Finally, the elders spoke passionately about the role of nature and presence in the bush for wellbeing in terms of both the benefits of an active lifestyle on the land and also as a source of local cultural ethos and identity. They were critical of imposed jurisdictional boundaries in terms of access to and management of family territories (i.e. land categories under the JBNQA) as well as increased resource development that together restrict territorial occupation and Cree control over decision-making. In sum, the participants and staff pointed to both historical and contemporary effects of neglect, oppression and systemic discrimination that undermine the potential of individuals and communities to lead a good life.

Program characteristics

The Chisasibi land-based healing program was developed in 2012 by Eddie Pash and is delivered on his hunting territory. It is the first formal and structured[56] land-based program in Eeyou Istchee. The program promotes personal, family and community wellness from a perspective rooted in iiyiyiu pimaatisiiwin (Cree way of life). Its mission is to strengthen the

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[56] Other Cree communities such as Mistissini hold retreats in the bush as part of a repertoire of culturally safe intervention and knowledge mobilization initiatives. To our knowledge, the Chisasibi Land-based Program is the only one that has developed a structured manual that sets out mechanisms for interagency collaborations in terms of intake, case management and aftercare.

ability of participants to lead a healthy, fulfilling and resilient life. Ultimately, the program aims to improve the mental health of individuals so that they can effectively participate in the life of their family and community and make positive contributions to the collective development of their Nation (CNC, 2012).

As knowledge keepers, Eddie Pash and Elder Noah Snowboy deliver and guide this culture-based model of healing by teaching Indoh-hohn[57] (Cree bush skills), and values embedded in them, in the Cree language. Because a majority of participants struggle with addictions, the program focuses on treatment that promotes harm reduction, personal responsibility and harmony of relationships. Harm reduction is thus understood as helping clients move away from self-harm to a state of being that promotes holistic wellness, which may or may not include total abstinence.

Although the program is available to all community members regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or spiritual practice, so far, it has provided services for young community members (18 to 30 years old males) that were either self-referred or referred by the Chisasibi Justice Committee (not necessarily as a sentence, but as a diversion option)[58]. The choice of participants has therefore been organic, responding to the most pressing needs at a given time, as well as respectful of the participant's personal choice and readiness to partake in the program. This approach is in line with cultural safety theory in the healthcare system in Canada and elsewhere.

Since 2012, the land-based program has held 8 bush trips (intakes) with 25 participants completing the program, including three clients that participated in three intakes (repeats). Each intake consists of a two- to three-week stay at Eddie's bush camp located 500km east of Chisasibi and accessed by the Trans-Taiga road. The group is usually composed of 6 to 8 participants, Eddie Pash and Elder Noah Snowboy, as well as the program coordinator William Bearskin and camp helper Linda Bearskin.

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[57] Cree cosmology that informs life in the bush including Cree bush skills/harvesting activities (including the activities of hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering plants and berries, cutting wood for personal use and other related activities which are central to life in the bush) (CTA, 2009).
[58] The program functions as a restorative approach to justice as opposed to retributive justice currently employed by the courts.

Figure 27 Land-based healing program team & video crew

From left to right: first row: William Bearskin (program coordinator), Eddie Pash (elder), Mike Wong (film crew), Wesley Washipabano & Martin Labe (participants); second row: Linda Bearskin (camp coordinator), Daniel Bearskin, Johnny Bearskin & Gabriel Bearskin (participants), Noah Snowboy (Elder), Robbie Bearskin (participant), Abdul Butt (film crew), Ioana Radu (researcher). In the background the waashaaukimikw built by the participants.

The typical schedule includes morning lectures given by Eddie and an afternoon bush activity (hunting, fishing, trapping - depending on the season), followed by an evening lecture and/or group discussions. One-on-one counselling with Eddie or Noah Snowboy takes place on an ad-hoc basis - either at the request of the participant or as part of the bush activity (e.g. harvesting techniques used and how they relate to personal or environmental health). Lecture topics may include: history of iiyiyiwich (Cree people) before modern transportation, living in harmony with nature, navigational mind, healing as an ongoing process, and others. In order to promote life-skills and good relationships, participants are expected to contribute to the upkeep of the camp by cleaning and cooking, chopping wood, bringing water and helping each other. A typical day schedule may be structured as follows (reproduced from CNC, 2012):

Time	Activity	Content
Morning (8AM-12PM)	Opening Prayer	
	Forgiveness	The story about a victim's father forgiveness of the person responsible.
	The impacts of hydro development	Social: loss and grief Environment: loss of Eeyou Istchee Ongoing impacts
After noon (1PM-5PM)	Hunting teachings	Survival Health
	What has hunting got to do with abuse?	Killing animals for nothing Killing game for more than you need. Bragging
	Bush activity: Ice fishing (night lines/nets)	
Evening (7-9PM)	Jealousy (within you and towards others)	Laughing at people, not asking advice from peers, etc.

It is important to stress that the program is not as structured as the above schedule may imply and instead it follows the natural rhythm of life in the bush, as well as emerging circumstances. For example, during the video ethnography[59], Eddie alternated between English and Cree to facilitate translation, taking into consideration that some participants were not fully proficient in the Cree language. In addition, during this trip, three days were spent constructing a waashaaukimikw[60], again to facilitate the research being conducted by keeping the participants together. Eddie indicated that he alternates between this group activity and sending the participants alone in the bush. The individual activity is designed to help them reflect on the topics covered in the lectures, as well as their application to the particular life circumstances of the participant. It also helps manage interpersonal relationships by instilling self-confidence in the bush skills learned or defusing tensions, if necessary.

Healing on the land: The Chisasibi healing model

Despite long histories of displacement and encroachment experienced by all Indigenous peoples in Canada, the land continues to provide traditional foods essential to good health, a space for self-reflection and renewal, intense physical activity required in everyday life, joy and love in the interactions with family and friends, and experiential learning through interactions with nature and topography. The bush is often seen as a 'place of healing' that enables individuals and families to strengthen and renew their physical and spiritual bond with the land

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[59] The 30 min documentary is available here: www.chisasibiwellness.ca/land-based-healing-program
[60] A dwelling made of four upright poles with poles tied horizontally across the top.

(Adelson, 2000; Fletcher & Denham, 2008; Kirmayer, 2004; Kirmayer et al. 2009). As Luig et al. (2013) underline: "Learning and well-being are life-long intertwined processes that emerge from a field of interrelationships that include individual dimensions of mind, spirit, and body, as well as social and natural environments" (p. 22).

The Chisasibi land-based healing model recognizes the healing power of nature and the 'return to the land' as a way of connecting individuals to Cree culture and language; as promoting intergenerational knowledge transfer; and offering a safe space in which individuals can share personal experiences and detoxify (when necessary). Although it is intended as a culture-based treatment program for youth in need, the delivery method is largely educational. The program was conceptualized by Eddie Pash, who shares iiyiyiu knowledge about personhood and relationships that are rooted in his personal connection with the land and the ecosystem (CMWT, 2012).

Storytelling is employed to underline the Cree ethos of living a good life. Stories of bravery, survival, respect and forgiveness provide a foundation from which participants can draw strength and make sense of their particular personal contexts. The overall approach is very flexible to accommodate different personalities and needs of the participants. As the following story illustrates, Eddie's approach teaches participants to pay attention to the central role of experiential learning for wellbeing:

> If you are sad or down and you go fishing, something is bound to happen to help you. When we went fishing probably you were not aware of what happened. It is amazing what happened, you witnessed it. We asked nature to help us experience something that we needed to heal. When things like that happen, go back and try to see what we asked for and what happened. We caught a fish, we got all excited. But the fish got away. Then, we fished with a bare hook, with no bait. But we caught it. It was the biggest fish. It just happened. Something can happen if we ask nature to give us something to go by. We remember and are excited. We all felt it. We can say thank you to nature for giving us something we needed, thank you for sharing

Thus, Eddie's healing pedagogy incorporates three interrelated aspects of experiential learning: the land and nature, the Cree concept of miyupimaatisiiun, and intergenerational

knowledge transfer. Because Cree life finds its ultimate expression in its interaction with the land and nature, these essential elements are central to healing.

Nature takes care of us

The constant interaction with the land, by knowing it with all five senses, guides individuals and provides what is needed to live in harmony with the environment, with each other, and with oneself. The reciprocal and dialogic relationship with nature provides not only the material needs but also the ethical, moral and spiritual underpinnings of living a good life. As Eddie explains:

> If I am stressed or worried or sad, for me nature and what we have gone through [surviving on the land prior to settlement] helps me. If I sit down in the middle of the woods with all this pain, what am I going to do? If I look up I see all the trees. If I look at the tree that is alive and well, beautiful…how did he become like that? He didn't get mad at anybody to be like this. Ask nature to take care of you. Don't be afraid to talk to the nature.

The bush therefore provides a space and a place for self-reflection. Through the vigorous activities necessary for survival on the land, the bush also provides strength and resilience that help individuals deal with contemporary community life (Adelson, 2001; Kirmayer et al., 2009). The mastery of bush-skills therefore reflect an "ordered and productive self" that is in line with Indigenous conceptions of wellbeing (Fletcher & Denham, 2008, p. 121). For Eddie Pash, the relationship between the individual and the land and nature are articulated in terms of respect for the living resources and their spirit. Showing respect in everything one does, hunting activities, game handling and food preparation, as well as maintaining the bush camp, ensures harmonious relationships between individuals and with the ecosystem. Maintaining harmonious relationships implies responsibility for oneself, for others and for the community:

> All through these traditional ways of living we respect nature. If you respect nature, you have to respect each other too, and you have to respect yourself. How did I ever survive [when I was young]? Because nature respected me, in return I have to respect myself. This is the most important part. Respect is a gift in our traditions, because it is the way to be happy.

In its various contexts, healing thus functions as a mobilizing agent towards action, a call for taking responsibility for finding solutions to self and communal empowerment by using culturally appropriate and locally negotiated forms of action (Adelson, 2009; Kirmayer et al., 2006; Tanner, 2008). Going in the bush, participating in a sweat lodge, sewing moccasins, fishing and trapping, cooking geese, and many other cultural activities are all healing practices. Healing thus anchors and shapes identity in line with the local cultural ethos of what it means to live a good life:

> In the imagery common to many Aboriginal cultures, good health is a state of balance and harmony involving body, mind, emotions and spirit. It links each person to family, community and the earth in a circle of dependence and interdependence (RCAP, 1996, vol.2, p. 57).

Living a good life

The psychological and social afflictions that healing aims to redress are conceptualized as consequences of the loss of culture and identity. Hence, healing is often understood in terms of cultural reclamation (Gone, 2008) or recuperation (Adelson, 2001) with 'culture' as a treatment modality (Waldram, 2013, p. 196). In other words, culture-based healing creates and restores the "order of the community and the relationship to the environment, the larger cosmos and with it, the sufferer's experience of meaning and morale" (Kirmayer, 2004, p. 41). The Cree way of life, or iiyiyiu pimaatisiiwin, reflects the ways in which individuals interact with the land and, more specifically, harvesting activities, including the activities of hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering plants and berries, cutting wood for personal use and other related activities which are central to life in the bush.

For the Cree of Eeyou Istchee, miyupimaatisiiun (to be alive and well) means that an individual is able to hunt and trap and pursue other land-based activities, that he or she has access to good food (game meat and anything that comes from the land) and warmth, and is able to enjoy life and to participate actively within the community (Adelson, 2000; CBHSSJB, 2004; Tanner, 2008). It includes the biomedical concept of health (or absence of disease), but moves beyond it by linking the body to the land and identity. From Eddie's perspective, healing in the bush, especially for younger generations, means learning about their ancestors, reconnecting with history and the physical landscape, as well as reappropriating the Cree ethos of relationality:

Every time you meet people, doesn't matter who it is, you treat them the best way you can. To be a friend to everybody, it leads into the respect for the environment and people. Sometimes they say the white man is different but in our society, when you say respect, you respect any human being. That is how I was taught, and don't say that you are more important than anybody else. We are all equal.

Thus, fostering positive relationships is the principal goal of Indigenous healing. In our case, respect, responsibility and relationality are foundational values that help participants rethink the way they engage with each other and find purpose in their lives. Since iiyiyiu pimaatisiiwin embodies an active and respectful presence in the world, miyupimaatisiiun depends on adults teaching and setting an example of healthy living and sustaining harmonious relationships. The responsibility of maintaining and strengthening miyupimaatissiiun is therefore contingent on active intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Teaching and learning on the land

While they vary in their specificity, healing practices foster cultural belonging by strengthening intergenerational bonds and transfer of knowledge. The cultural reclamation, within which healing is situated, involves a learning process with knowledge keepers (Elders, traditional counsellors, healers) as teachers and participants as students (Simpson, 2001). The process of learning is bidirectional, as knowledge keepers share their personalized experiences through storytelling and personal narratives; the students then situate themselves within this framework, apply culturally specific interpretations, and in turn share their own understandings. As Simpson (2011) explains:

We can access this vast body of knowledge through our cultures by singing, dancing, feasting, dreaming, participating in ceremony, apprenticing with Elders, practicing our lifeways and living our knowledge, by watching, listening and reflecting in a good way. Ultimately we access this knowledge through the quality of our relationships, and the personalized contexts we collectively create. (p. 42)

Indeed, for Eddie, the healing model is not understood as therapy in the biomedical sense (as treatment of disease) but as a learning experience that is rooted in his personal connection with the land and the ecosystem, as well as the teachings that his elders passed on to him.

I like to welcome these young people into this. You know, is like the way it was for me, I try to prepare things for them. How happy I was [as a child], to greet each other in a Cree way, my traditional way of living. I was born and raised with these traditional ways. This is how I came to know a lot of this. Now, I can only teach what I know, and that is the traditional ways. Out here we are tapping into tradition. Where I came from I had lots of practices, and they [the young people] do not have the chance, the chances I had, to know who I am and where I came from.

The treatment programs presented by Waldram (2008) also underline personal experience as the site of meaning making and source of knowledge used in various healing contexts. The bidirectional interaction of the counselling session underlines the pedagogical aspects of healing as "therapists were simultaneously patients learning from their clients as they continued on their own healing journey; and clients were simultaneously therapists offering their own troubled life experiences as a reflective tool for self-healing by the therapists" (Waldram, 2008, p.7). Indigenous counsellors and healers involved in these programs invariably used their personal experiences with addiction and family violence as well as their healing process as a teaching tool (providing coping skills) and to validate the healing process itself (embodying healing as 'role models').

In the context of the Chisasibi land-based program, intergenerational learning also functions as a tool for cultural continuity and empowerment. As witnesses of iiyiyiu pimaatisiiwin, elders have the responsibility to guide the younger generations in the determination, exercise and practice of iiyiyiu decision-making and governance. As Eddie explains:

I try to teach them to know where they come from in order to carry on what we [elders] are doing. We need the young people to carry on what we know....We have to come into this thing about the government part of it. When the government decides, we have to follow. If we don't follow that, they will probably get us into trouble. I am supposed to keep my traditions but the things that are leading me off are following the government regulations and laws.…Now, we came from here, from the land. We survived on this land. Our ancestors lived through this land and

they had laws, just like the government has laws. Now, we follow those laws. That

is why you keep your traditional ways.

Negotiating private stories for public learning

The land-based healing program developed by Eddie Pash is one aspect in a series of decolonizing practices that are operating in the community. The stories shared by Eddie underline that respect, love and forgiveness are key to healthy relationships and that by understanding their personal and familial histories, the participants can cope better with the multiple stressors in their life. The historical context of the community, from residential schools to the flooding and relocation, is explained in terms of unresolved grief and hurt that impact the emotional state of individuals. With this, the participants are therefore able to better understand their own state of mind and be more gentle and loving towards themselves and their community. Healing in this case, aims to transform the "psycho-affective facets of colonial domination" so that individuals can come together and dismantle the remaining structural assemblages of contemporary colonialism (Coulthard, 2007, p. 456).

While individuals commit to healing and participate in land-based programs, the community context often remains unchanged. Efforts in Chisasibi are made to develop both the human capacity and the programming to ensure an effective continuum of care based on culturally relevant and safe approaches. Indeed as Atleo (2008) underlines:

> The decolonization process requires a lifetime of deconstruction of colonized
> habits of mind, attitudes of the heart, and physical behaviors as well as reclaiming
> of Indigenous spirit. It happens moment by moment, emotion by emotion, idea by
> idea, and relationship by relationship. (p. 45)

In fact, the short (30min) documentary on the land-based program, Miyupimaatisiiun in Eeyou Istchee, was intended to deconstruct stereotypical views about healing as a primarily ceremonial practice as well as to reclaim a uniquely Cree model of care based on iiyiyiu pimaatisiiwin. A first version (50min) was finalized during the summer of 2013 and was presented to the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department, and Council of Chishaayiyuu and received positive feedback. The Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and the land-based program participants had editorial control over the final content, although I personally edited the first version and the videographer finalized it. The documentary

therefore constitutes a cocreated product where authority over the concept, production and distribution was shared between the participants, the community institutions, the researcher and the technical staff (videographer). The explicit objective of producing the documentary originated from the community and is primarily directed internally towards the community members and service provider institutions to raise awareness about culture-based services. Specifically, Eddie Pash, the staff, and the land-based program participants actively participated in and had control over the narrative. From this perspective the documentary qualifies as a participatory video project, nevertheless, no interest was shown for technical skills transfer. Indeed, participatory video need not be specifically concerned with transferring technical videography skills as other aspects such as intergenerational bonding, opening up dialog between community members, or empowering individuals through sharing of meaningful experiences, are just as important for the community (Evans & Foster, 2009; High, 2009; Luchs & Miller, 2011).

A second objective of producing the documentary was for participation in boarder national and international processes of service integration in Indigenous contexts. It was designed to serve as an example of best practice of a locally derived culture-based care model. It has since been screened at the *Healing Together with Land and Culture: Gathering of Wisdom Conference* in Whitehorse and at the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation (NNAPF) national conference *Honouring Our Strengths* (HOS, 2014). These two conferences helped the Committee validate the process undertaken in Chisasibi and its relevance for other Indigenous communities in Canada. The workshop conducted at the HOS 2014 was ranked first and is now in the process of being developed as a toolkit in collaboration with NNAPF. In sum, through participatory video based on an approach of sharing authority, communities and individuals can frame narratives in a way that reinforces a sense of belonging, deliver a social message that empowers others to express and find a place in the community, and call on institutions to strengthen policy and service provision (Evans & Foster, 2009; High, 2009; Luchs & Miller, 2011; Miller, 2009).

Participatory media, storytelling and sharing authority

The last component of the research were the individual life story interviews, which remain the 'least' community-based and shared aspect of the present research. I characterized this as 'less' community-based because the individual interviews originated from my own interests in life story interviewing and were conducted to better understand individual experiences of healing and its impact on personal conception of identity, cultural change and empowerment as well as

possible links with decolonization. While the survey provides a portrait of youth healing needs and the video ethnography presents a specific healing activity and model of care, I felt it was important to better understand how healing actually operates in peoples' lives and if, as pointed to in the literature, there are any links between wellness and autonomy on the ground. While much of the research on healing and land/culture-based models of care, as well as development research more broadly, focus on elders' knowledge I wanted to know how community members at large employ healing and wellness strategies in their daily life. Moreover, from a decolonization and Indigenist research perspectives I also wanted to understand how these individuals negotiate, resist, and operationalize relations of power with the State and with collective Cree institutional arrangements. In other words, does a conversation about healing lead to conversations about governance and decolonization? More broadly, what is the connection between the individual and her social context?

On the other hand, I also deem this aspect as 'less' shared in the sense that the analysis and the conclusions derived from the interviews are largely my own. As discussed in the previous chapters, community-based research premised on sharing authority strives to include participants in the interpretative aspects of the research. Oral historians in particular, share authority beyond the interview encounter by co-determining the information shared in publications with the interviewees. For example, interview transcripts are sent to interviewees who decide the final version that will be subsequently made public; interviewees can edit the transcripts, add details, or remove information that they may deem inappropriate for the public (Thompson, 2006). Articles and other text-based publications are also reviewed by the interviewees before publications. Errors in interpretation can therefore be attended to in the spirit of reciprocity and shared editorial control. For example, Katherine Borland (2006) shows how "scholarly interpretations of narratives may constitute an attack on the collaborator`s carefully constructed sense of self and identity" (p. 317). In Borland's case, the feminist interpretation of her grandmother's narrative of an afternoon spent at the racetrack with her father was vigorously rejected; "that's not what I said", charged the grandmother in a letter. Borland cautions against assumed affinity with interviewees in terms of interpretation and argues that by 'giving narratives a physical existence' through writing "we construct a second-level narrative" that is framed by disciplinary conceptions, in her case "feminist conceptions of patriarchy, which my grandmother does not share" (1991, pp. 63 & 69).

Video recordings of interviews can also be 'edited' in a similar fashion. For example, digital stories are usually developed by the narrators themselves using personal media content (photos, audio, animations, etc.) to 'tell their story to the world' (Frisch, 2006; High, 2014, p. 205; Klaebe et al., 2007). The Montreal Life Stories project in collaboration with the National Film Board, in what used to be the participatory websites CITIZENShift/Parole citoyenne, produced thirty-seven digital stories, half of which were developed by the interviewees (High, 2014, p. 205; Levine, 2014). Speaking about the production process for the short films for CITIZENShift, Levine (2014) argues that it is perhaps the divergence of aims for collecting stories – for the historian as preservation of the past, and for the filmmaker to create meaning for future social change – that indicates the convergence or "the common" ground between the two disciplines (p. 138). While filmmakers are much more concerned with the technical aspects of creating a story (camera framing, lighting, and sound) the short films nonetheless 'preserved the integrity of the life story' (p. 139). An online presence also allowed a proper contextualization of the films (curated in separate sections by theme and tagged accordingly) that allowed a deeper collaboration between the oral historians, filmmakers and technical staff, and the narrators. As Levine states (2014), "the project has created a crucial intersection between the work of oral historians, human rights advocates, digital media producers, performance artists, and educators…as contributors to an online culture that aims to promote respect and tolerance" (p. 148).

The digital revolution of the 21st century holds important democratizing potential for knowledge mobilization as it opens new spaces of expression and strengthens the wide dissemination of 'histories from below'. Nevertheless, it can marginalize as much as include and as High (2009b) cautions we have to be careful of the "missionary zeal" of the infinite possibilities 'inherent' in digital technologies. Indeed, the important aspect of any technology is the epistemological and ontological choices that inform its use and the way the message is mediated during the inevitable 'translation' that takes place in the creation of audio, video or photographic content (Couldry, 2009; High, 2009b; Frisch, 2006). Archibald's (2008) work with the Coast Salish elders in British Columbia stressed the difficulty of translating Indigenous oral narratives into text, including the different styles of expression and knowledge transmission. She argues that video and audio content can mediate the rigidity of the text and allow oral narratives to find a 'voice'. Likewise, oral historians argue that much meaning can be lost in the move from

the audio to the text of the transcript, and through a second translation from the transcript to the final publication. Facial expressions, tone of voice, physical demeanor, gestures as well as silences provide a rich context for interpreting stories and transmitting the emotional experience of the memory, a context that is difficult to translate into text and most often disappears with it (High, 2009; Parr, 2008; Portelli, 1999).

Healing narratives: abridged life stories in Chisasibi

The explicit objective of producing a video also helps communities and individuals to reflect on what image of themselves they want to construct as well as how others will come to know them. Nevertheless, one has to always be aware that video products also capture a specific point in time in an individual's life while their personal stories continue to develop. Revisiting the past also brings out difficult memories that can affect individuals. Researchers need to be aware that their work is not meant as a therapeutic intervention but as an exploration in self-expression, therefore the needs of the participants should guide the research process (Luchs & Miller, 2011). I initially intended to conduct eight life-story interviews in Chisasibi nonetheless the informal and flexible methodology gave interviewees control over the narrative. However, the interview was indeed framed by the broader aspects of the research, specifically issues of culture-based services and youth healing, that were discussed with the interviewees. The interview guide (see Appendix C) was more or less followed as the narrators took charge of the interview and in general delivered a specific message. Although oral historians insist on the dialogic space created by the interview, I intervened very little in the narrative, and in essence the encounter cannot be characterized as a dialogue. I asked questions only when the narrators specifically stated that they had said what they needed to. The typical beginning question was: "Maybe we can start by telling me a little about yourself and then explain how healing has helped you in your life". Sometimes, if not already addressed by the narrator, I asked what the difference between culture-based and clinical models was or if they saw a link between healing and governance. But in essence these were almost the only interventions I had to do. Almost all interviewees were already aware of the research conducted, three are members of the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, one participated in the land-based ethnography, and two are community members that I knew either though my participation in local meetings or personally through Larry House. I therefore strived to give the narrative space to the interviewees to bring about and share the message that they believed was important for the community. Gluck (2002) contends that "the best oral history is a

quasi-monologue on the part of the interviewee" where the role of the researcher is to provide a broad framing of the topic and to "tailor" reactions/interruptions to the responses given (p. 13). Adelson (1992) also underlines that a Cree culturally relevant interview style avoids direct questioning, interruptions, or close-ended interviewing (p. 55). Taken together then, these healing narratives function as tactical stories deployed to uncover intergenerational social suffering but, more so, to provide modes of personal and collective actions to undo systemic oppression in Chisasibi.

A second reason for the limited intervention in the narratives was technical in nature. I had considered to eventually include some of the interviews in the short land-based documentary and therefore, from an esthetics point of view, frequent interruptions would have disrupted 'the flow' of the film. Another technical consideration was the storage space available and the time that each one hour of filmed interview took to be transferred onto storage in an appropriate format for playback. I only had 90min available on the camera memory cards to record in HD (high definition) format in addition to both a 1TB[61] external drive and my personal laptop for storage where I kept copies of the footage in duplicate. For these technical reasons the healing narratives depart from typical life-stories in that the maximum length of the interview was 90min and not 120min or longer. Limited storage space also meant that I chose greater diversity of voices rather than more depth of a specific life, thus I did not do multiple interviews with the same individual (Greenspan, 2006; High, 2009 & 2014; Portelli, 1991).

Limited authority and nonlinear storytelling

In all I conducted eight (8) 90min video interviews and two additional ones given on the condition of anonymity that were audio recorded only. I transcribed twelve (12) hours of footage in verbatim, in addition to the initial nine (9) hours of lectures given by Eddie Pash in the bush. It quickly became evident that the healing narratives did not easily fit with the land-based documentary, which was specifically focused on the model of care developed by Eddie and elder Noah Snowboy. I made the decision to not reedit the documentary and instead to use the interviews independently. Contrary to the usual practice in oral history, I also did not send copies of the transcripts to the narrators because some of them were not interested to collaborate on the narrative analysis nor in the development of the final product. Some did not have the time to do

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[61] 1tetrabite (TB) = 1000 gigabytes (GB) = 16 hrs of HD footage

so, others granted me editorial control from the onset[62], and finally some refrained from sustaining a long-term relationship[63]. Nonetheless, three interviewees recommended edits to their short biographies (see next section). Indeed Patai (1991) discusses the difficulty, even in instances of engaged scholarship, to attend to the complexities of firework and the inherent inequality in which the research-collaborator relationship is situated: "But with how many dozens of people can a researcher, however feminist, however sincere, consistently communicate? For how long?" (p. 149). Feminist oral historians insist on political engagement to counter injustice informed by field experiences, nonetheless as Portelli (1997) reminds, "there is always going to be a line" in research across cultures, class, and race and that the "awareness of distance and difference" is what makes poignant the "eloquence and drama of the interview" (pp. 38-39). Perhaps, by limiting collaboration, my research participants exercised their agency and underlined the power differential between researcher and researched. On the other hand, by expecting and insisting on participants' collaboration beyond the interview researchers can inadvertently reproduce the very unequal power relations they are trying to undo (Brown, 2003; de Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012; Ledwon, 1997; Patai, 1991).

I nevertheless wanted to somehow put these individual interviews in a conversation that was as little controlled as possible by the researcher. As previously discussed, a typical linear documentary rests on a variety of factors such as significant production (pre- and post-) budgets, a coherent 'scripted' storyline, and clear overall 'message' (Soar, 2014; Miller, 2009). Having exhausted all my research funds by the time I finished transcription as well as having almost no B-rolls[64] to properly put together an interesting documentary; I chose to instead build several Korsakow films. Korsakow is "an open-source application for creating web docs and other kinds of nonlinear, interactive narratives" developed by Berlin-based filmmaker Florian Thalhofer, Concordia-based intermedia artist Matt Soar, and programmer David Reisch (Korsakow.org, 2014). I first learned about Korsakow at a workshop given by Professor Matt Soar in 2013 at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. In essence a Korsakow film is a web platform that links, though keywords, video clips assembled in a database. These components (video or image) or 'single narrative units' (SNU) are sequenced partly by the filmmaker, through first choosing the original clips to be included and later by the keywords assigned, and partly by the

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[62] They specifically indicated that were not interested in further collaboration
[63] On two occasions I contacted interviewees to coauthor articles but they never replied.
[64] Supplemental footage or fillers

viewer who makes narrative choices by selecting clips during viewing. Depending on the keywords, the overall narrative can be situated anywhere along a continuum from totally random to linear.

> SNUs "are not connected together with fixed paths. Rather, they are contextually articulated to one another using two sets of keywords (tags), what we might think of as metadata: the 'in' keyword(s) describe the SNU itself, while its 'out' keyword(s) define what it will look for while it is playing (matching 'in' keywords from other SNUs)" (Soar, 2014, p. 162).
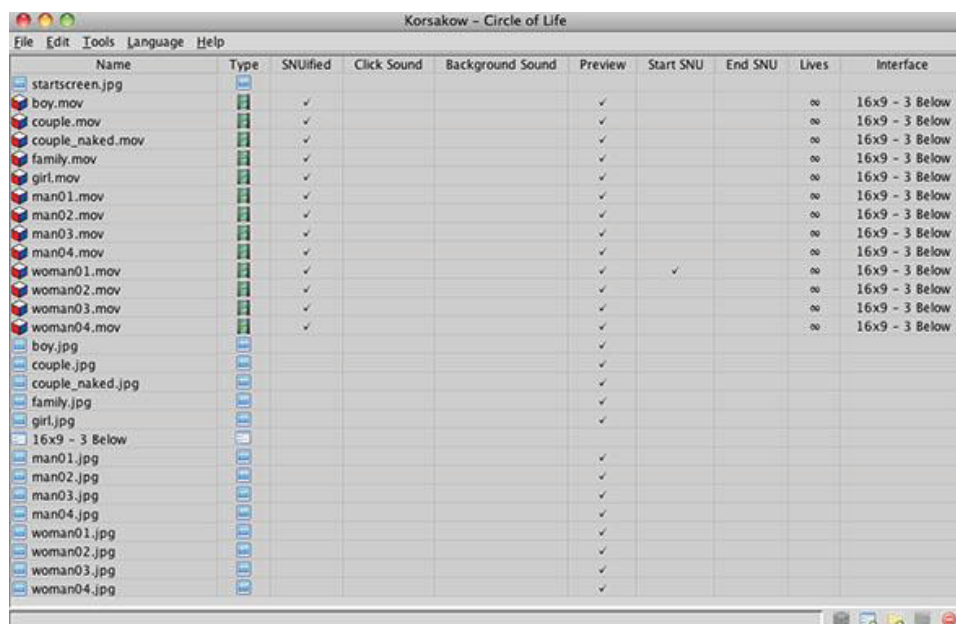
Figure 28 Korsakow application main window

Although Korsakow is somewhat similar to a 'choose your own adventure' gamebook, sequences are triggered by keyword searches of the metadata attached to each SNU and not, as in the former, by the 'master' sequence of a predetermined timeline. The most interesting feature in the context of my research is the fact that a Korsakow film is built around a concept or organizing principle that is explored multivocally, yet it does not provide solutions or closure because connections between the components are built on potentiality. Contrary to a typical editing experience, a Korsakow film is created by successive playbacks because each viewing is unique depending on the choice of keyword, thus the "viewer will quite possibly see some new SNUs with each viewing of the film, and miss others they had previously encountered" (Miles, 2015;

Soar, 2014, p. 163). As Soar underlines, "Korsakow is as much a philosophical intervention into the politics of 'story' as it is a media software application for making database narratives" where the role of the filmmaker is 'to facilitate and reflect' "a set of urgent issues and ideas, rather than providing answers" (p. 168).

In sum, as a self-contained (not depending on Internet connection), open-source (free and user friendly), and un-networked (not depending on online content) platform, Korsakow both limits the filmmaker's control over the narrative and makes possible the viewer's intervention in it. It may be argued that the uniqueness of each interaction with a Korsakow film provides a limitless creative potential for mobilizing knowledge; a continuous co-creation. On the other hand, most web-based open-source platforms have ephemeral lives depending on the dedication of the 'community' of users and developers for updates and resolving bugs, as well as on the exponential rate of software obsolesce and redevelopment. The potential of permanence is therefore low as opposed to more traditional non-web-based media (Soar, 2014). Indeed, as I write this chapter Korsakow has released a newer version that no longer requires Java and Quicktime updates and eliminated other functions (Korsakow.org, 2015).

Exploring multivocal narratives with Korsakow

The Korsakow application has numerous advanced features that allow greater or lesser control over the overall narrative (see Soar, 2014, pp. 165-166 for details), nonetheless I deliberately settled on the following ground-rules:

- keywords are assigned relative to the narrative analysis of the interviews
- keywords are assigned to allow each SNU to relate to at least two other SNUs
- keywords are assigned to minimize links between SNUs of the same interviewee
- each Korsakow film has a 'start' SNU but no 'end' SNU
- each SNU has only one life (it will only appear once during a given viewing)
- the interface design will not change

Initially I intended to create only one Korsakow film but after the narrative analysis and editing interview clips I still ended up with approximately three (3) hours of footage or a total of 65 clips ranging from 2min to 7 min in length. While I was learning the platform, I viewed[65]

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[65] The film is no longer free for viewing as of March 2015 when I last accessed it

Florian Thalhofer's Korsakow film *Money and the Greeks*, a coproduction of the Goethe-Institut Athen and the Korsakow-Institute. The film is now 90 min long, but originally was pre-edited into 203 clips with a duration of 4 1/2 hours in total (out of 30 hours of interviews); the clips that make up the final version were selected through public viewing and audience participation (rating). On repeated viewing I found that navigation was not easy as approximately 12 previews were available to choose from at one time, which deterred me from staying engaged for the 90min duration. I therefore decided that a three hour film will be equally difficult to navigate and may discourage others from viewing it in its entirety. Thus, each of the five (5) Korsakow films created reflects the main themes of the narrative analysis: colonization and social suffering, role of culture in healing, personal healing journeys, youth and community cohesion, and agency and acts of decolonization. In addition to the five broad themes each clip was assigned one or several 'in' and 'out' keywords based on the content of the clip, as well as a text overlay to give an indication to the viewer of the topic discussed by the narrator. The following table illustrates the assigned keywords and text overlay (see integral table in Appendix D):

Table 6 Keywords used in the Decolonization Korsakow

Clip	In keyword	Out keyword	Text overlay
denise13	community, empowerment	solidarity, healing	who better to know
denise1	empowerment	healing, community, culture	it's baby steps
william2	empowerment, solidarity, culture	healing,	stand up
william3	community, healing	culture	connect with our roots
irene5	culture, healing	empowerment, community	bring back our medicine
roy7	empowerment, culture	community, solidarity	believe in each other
larry13	community, healing,	empowerment, solidarity	healthy people leading
larry12	culture, solidarity,	community, healing	making friends
larry11	culture, healing,	community, empowerment	why not integrate?
larry7	culture, empowerment, healing,	community, solidarity	understanding our worldview
larry3	community	empowerment	reconnect to who we are
mike6	solidarity, healing	empowerment, culture	step up and learn
marylouise7	solidarity, healing	culture, empowerment	we are an indigenous culture
marylouise 2[66]		empowerment, culture	
marylouise 1	community, empowerment	solidarity	our traditions go back to the land

[66] A clip without an 'in' keyword is a 'start' SNU

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the thematic interpretation of narratives is mine, although it has been influenced by the many informal and formal conversations with the research partners and participants, as well as by my interactions with local and national institutions for the past six years. In an ideal situation, I would have preferred to collaborate more closely with the narrators in the analysis and interpretation of their healing narratives, sharing transcripts and coediting the interviews, and ultimately building the Korsakow films together. As the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and its partners have understandably focused on the practical application of this research by supporting the development of culture-based programming and service provision, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of outreach and awareness. Specifically, many narrators agreed to the interview with the expressed desire of opening up community dialog about healing, which as has been addressed previously, it is still a contested issue especially in what concerns culture-based treatment. Besides this desire for public outreach, through storytelling and personal narratives, interviewees actively deploy healing as an experiential learning process similar to what Eddie Pash does in the bush. The potential of the Korsakow platform and online environment for participation, networking and advocacy is very promising even at the local level, nevertheless "realistic parameters of participation" vary greatly and I chose to limit the collaboration in this instance partly because a lack of time and resources from my part, and partly because my principal research partner, the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, prioritized service provision (Miller, 2009, p. 72). In trying to balance both my own research interests and those of my community partner, I concur with Lisa Ndejuru (2009) that sharing authority does not have to happen at all steps of the research process, nor does it always have to include all participants:

> I had many preconceived notions: I used to think that sharing authority meant that if I was alone at the conference without Isangano [Montreal-based Rwandan cultural group], there was a problem and I hadn't done everything to invite us all to be concerned. I used to think that if we held events in community and events in academia, then everyone needed to be present and active in both. I do not believe this anymore. Not everyone must do everything together all the time for the whole to be meaningful (p.10).

Introducing the narrators

      Before I delve into the analysis, a brief presentation of the narrators is in order. The short biographies are arranged in alphabetical order and have been developed based on the interviews conducted in 2013.

William Bearskin was born in Fort George and lives in Chisasibi with his wife, Linda Bearskin; he has six children and six grandchildren. He is currently member of the Chisasibi Justice Committee, coordinator of the Land-based program, and active support worker for the travelling court. During his teenage years William spent three years at a wilderness camp for troubled youth in Northern Saskatchewan and was later moved to live in a group home in Saskatoon for 18 months. His issues with the law continued in his adulthood when he was detained in Amos and other jails in the province due to his substance abuse. It took William five tries in treatment centers to get sober. His personal struggles with addictions, his healing journey, and his love of his family, have strengthened William's resolve to Indigenize the justice system in Chisasibi and decriminalize substance abuse. Together with the Justice Committee and guided by community elders, William strives to implement culture-based restorative justice measures that are in line with Miyupimaatisiiun.
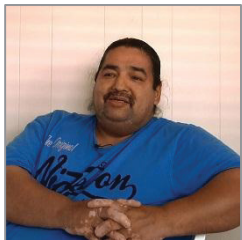
Lawrence (Larry) M. House remains my closest research partner and, as mentioned throughout the thesis, has largely contributed to the theoretical as well as methodological framework of the present research. Larry is a Sundance Chief, father of three and grandfather of eleven. He was born in Moose Factory, Ontario where he lived for the first seven years of his life and moved to Fort George in 1972. Larry received most of his education from the Chisasibi elders on the land and also worked in the field of addictions at Anishnawbe Health Toronto (AHT). Throughout his life, Larry has advocated for the integration of iiyiyiu healing models within the institutions that serve his community. His work has been to bring into the mainstream the knowledge and wisdom that his people hold sacred and to apply it in all facets of community daily life. Like in many Indigenous communities worldwide, he experienced the abuses that his

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people endured during the worst exercises of assimilation in the colonial history of Canada. His resilience is a testament to the healing inherent in his peoples' worldview.

Irene Bearskin House was born and grew up on the land for the first seven years of her life after which she was forced to attend residential school in Fort George. She is a mother of four, grandmother and great-grandmother. Irene is the first generation of Cree to be trained as social worker and has spent the majority of her professional life working with youth in Chisasibi, first at the group home and later at the Youth Healing Services. Since her youth, she has been actively engaged in bringing back Cree teachings, medicines, and other culture-based wellness models into the health and social service provision. As a mother and grandmother, Irene sees her role as a keeper and teacher of culture at the heart of the family circle. She teaches a healing model that starts with a positive cultural identity nourished by love and trustful relationships and which is informed by personal experiences.

Roy Neacappo was born and grew up on the island of Fort George. He is the father of five and grandfather, and has worked for most of his life with youth, first as community policeman, then as teacher and has been, for the past 9 years, the Coordinator of Sports and Recreation in Chisasibi. Although Roy has witnessed family violence as a child and struggled with substance abuse as a teen, he has maintained a strong and trustful relationship with his grandparents who taught him Cree family and social values based on respect and love. Roy also found inspiration and a positive cultural identity through his involvement with drumming and powwow singing that he continues to practice and expand in the community to this day. Roy is most involved in developing the social capacity in Chisasibi, especially among the youth. His approach is strength-centered and grassroots, focusing on creating trustful spaces and nourishing the potential of young people in Chisasibi by challenging them to be the best they can in everything they do. The fitness program developed in Chisasibi, one of the best in the Cree Nation, is a testament to Roy's respect for and trust in youth's strengths.

Denise Perusse grew up in Montreal and moved to Chisasibi, her mother's community, twenty years ago. She is passionate about mental health and joined the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee in addition to taking the position of Cree Health Representative at the James Bay Eeyou School. Denise is a strong advocate for personal and collective healing, of living a balanced and healthy life, as well as integrating culture-based services within local and regional institutions. Her approach rests on building harmonious relationships through self-awareness, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and embodying positive role models. As a mother, Denise strives to create a safe and supporting community environment that will guide her children and those of others in making positive life choices. She believes that hard work, determination, commitment, imagination and compassion are necessary ingredients to building confidence and positive cultural identity. For Denise, decolonization and autonomy are achieved one step at a time, though conscious and sustained effort in everyday life.

Mike Polson was born and grew up in Kawawachikamach, his mother's community; his father is from Temiskaming First Nation. Mike now lives in Chisasibi and is the proud father of a two-year old daughter. Mike has lived in North Bay where he was first introduced to the Sundance by the Friendship Center staff and his friends. The Sundance and other culture-based programs have helped Mike to lead a sober and positive life. He has always been fascinated with other Indigenous nations and has taken every opportunity to connect with Indigenous peoples across Canada. Having spent much of his youth in the city, Mike is now learning Cree cultural traditions and language. His sense of solidarity with Indigenous struggles was most reflected in his participation in the Nishiiyuu Walk, which left a strong impression on him and strengthened his bonds with his Naskapi and Cree ancestry. He is dedicated to continuing his journey on the Red Road and remains an avid student of the Cree way of life.
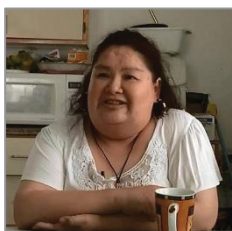
Mary Louise Snowboy was born in Moose Factory and lived most of her life in Fort George and Chisasibi. She studied nursing in Montreal and completed a BA at University of Ottawa; she is for now the only Cree mental health nurse in the Nation. In her nursing career, which spans over twenty years,

Mary Louise has worked as a clinician, liaison nurse, and cultural resource with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. Although she has clinical training, Mary Louise was taught iiyiyiu care-giving practices by her grandparents in the bush. Her brother, Harry Snowboy is an accomplished healer and medicine man. She is currently the Chair of the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and the interim coordinator of the Mental Health Department. Mary Louise promotes a holistic and multicultural model of care that has its roots in Cree land-based practices while also being open to integrate other culture-based approaches, be they traditional or clinical, Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Her own healing path is based on faith and spirituality that promotes self-awareness and respect for all Creation. Mary Louise strives to develop a culturally safe mental health model that is first and foremost patient-centered.

From individual health to social wellness

While the specific practices and approaches to healing are highly localized, they point towards "a lifetime of communal process in which Aboriginal individuals should help one another to cope with the harmful effects of both structural and personal violence" caused by colonization and neo-liberal policies (Schouls, 2004, p. 95; Martin-Hill, 2003; NAHO, 2008; Waldram, 2008). Kirmayer (2004) shows how material circumstances, as well as the symbolic effects of healing, reflect social and political institutions and ideologies, and as an integrated system, they are "part of local worlds of meaning and power" (p. 46).

Indeed, by exploring Cree healing practices embodied in local annual gatherings and other community-wide cultural activities, Tanner (2008) and Adelson (2001) found that healing functions as a social movement in response to social suffering caused by colonization and land loss, which aims to strengthen and renew social relations as well as reconstitute and reaffirm contemporary Cree identity. For the Whapmagoostui iiyiyiu "this ongoing, conscious, and imaginative process begins with the summer Gatherings but resonates within the community the rest of the year, as people continue to reimagine and renegotiate their cultural and political worlds" (Adelson, 2001, p. 97). Thus, the movement from the "private world of individual health and wellness to the political domain of social wellness" (Conradi, 2006, p. 47), or community healing, is part of the broader projects of decolonization that aim to resolve communal tensions and create a sense of belonging and empowerment (Kirmayer, 2004; Schouls, 2004). Healing is therefore a relational process that fosters spaces in which social and familial bonds are strengthened and make possible community conversations about what is needed to mend local

relationships that is in line with Indigenous life-worlds. For the Chisasibi iiyiyiu a healthy community is,

> …a place where people feel at ease with one another, where visitors are welcome in our streets and our homes.…It is made up of healthy individuals, confident of who we are in the world – where we came from and where we are headed. Healthy communities do not just happen. They require concerted efforts on the part of all members of the community, community organizations and the leadership. The process of healing requires a balance between education and support services. Healing can only take place one step at a time, at a pace that the community can keep up with (CNC, 1998, p. 49).

Healing therefore presents an interesting entry into an examination of decolonization because it reflects subjective and objective power dynamics and cultural ethos at both the individual and communal levels; anchors identity and Indigeneity at specific temporal and physical sites of production; elucidates process of cultural change and continuity; and functions as space and means of political resistance and empowerment. But how does the movement of individual health and healing become a communal process of decolonization? Practically and in everyday life, how do individuals apply and embody a healing model that creates the necessary strength to confront colonial domination? What are the challenges that individuals and communities encounter in this process and at what level do they intervene in shifting the Indigenous-state relationship?

In the next chapter I follow the narratives of the interviewees to uncover the links between personal and community healing and how these intersect with broader aspects of decolonization. The chapter is organized in sections that roughly correspond with the companion website. Although the thesis and the website are designed as 'stand alone' research products I did not include all relevant narratives in the thesis and instead they are available online. Prompts to follow in depth interviews on the website have been included in the various section of the next chapter, which explores the following questions: If healing is but one aspect of decolonization, how does it help individuals understand and undo "structured patterns of colonial misrecognition" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 132)? And further, what are the alternatives to these unequal power relations that individuals and communities create?

Chapter 6

Decolonizing the healthcare model: transforming Indigenous-State relationships though care and compassion

Indigenous healing is neither monolithic nor static but a contemporary expression of knowledge systems and values reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities (NAHO, 2008). It is a concept that is both diverse and multiple, reflecting particular conceptions of identity, place, culture, empowerment and responsibility (Adelson, 2001, 2009; Waldram, 2008). Indeed, each practitioner makes use of various treatment methods that best respond to his or her client's needs (herbal remedies, sweats, ceremonies, bush retreats, etc.) and operates within specialized fields of practice (involving spiritualists, midwives, healers, hunters/tallymen, medicine women/men, or herbalists) (Martin-Hill 2003; NAHO 2008).

Healing is invariably described as a transformative and continuous process (Waldram, 2013). It is transformative in the sense that the objective is not necessarily to 'cure' the individual in the biomedical sense, but to empower them to make the right choices in life (Adelson & Lipinski, 2008). In other words, healing is a "developmental process in which the patient undergoes changes in physical, behavioral, cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and/or existential functioning" (Waldram, 2013, p. 193). The cognitive emphasis of healing helps the individual understand his/her past actions and behaviors, to accept the difficult realities of life and tackle them 'head-on', and ultimately to take responsibility and commit to a healthy social life (Fiske, 2008; Gone, 2008; Waldram, 2014). It constitutes a process of learning, the development of life-skills and the ability to apply them "in a conscious manner in all that life brings normally and abnormally" (Fiske, 2008, p. 48).

Sometimes described as 'work', and because its goal is not curative, healing is understood as a continuous process. On one hand, personal transformation and commitment take individualized time and conscious effort. Change doesn't happen overnight and as a learning process, new knowledge is internalized in a gradual, cumulative and incremental way (Fiske, 2008; Gone, 2008; Waldram, 2014). Symbolically, healing is described as a journey (the "Red Road," the "Sweetgrass Trail," the "Way of the Pipe") that is fraught with challenges, as individuals need to remain vigilant throughout their lives (Waldram, 2008). On the other hand, as much as it is centered on personal responsibility, healing is also a community and collective process. What individuals are healing from (addictions, violence, depression, loss, etc.) is

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understood as a manifestation of social suffering caused by colonization and contemporary systemic oppression (Adelson, 2000, 2001; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; Waldram, 2014). Adelson (2009) defines social suffering as "the embodied expression of damaging and often long-term and systemic asymmetrical social and political relations" (p. 273). Or as Irlbacher-Fox (2009) states, "the various social pathologies afflicting Indigenous communities in Canada, a complex of disease and unwellness, poverty and social issues, often referred to as 'Third World conditions' common in Indigenous communities" characterize the collective expression of social suffering (p. 29).

In the context of healing, then, the 'work' of individuals consists in understanding the historical as well as the contemporary trauma implicit in social suffering. From a historical perspective, colonial policy and especially the residential school system, "wrought complex and contradictory understandings of the world that distorted traditional teachings and undermined social foundations from which family structures and child-rearing practices took meaning" (Fiske, 2008). From a contemporary perspective, ongoing injustice prevalent in all spheres of Indigenous life (from government negotiations to policy, as well as neoliberal capitalism) creates cycles of oppression – an interplay between biased information that leads to stereotyping, discrimination, and prejudice. Thus, systems of advantage, privilege, and disadvantage, created and maintained by social injustice, place Indigenous peoples in a considerably disadvantaged position, evidenced in poorer health outcomes compared to the rest of Canada (Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; McGibbon, 2012). The 'work' that healing implies from this perspective calls for concerted community and collective action to acknowledge the history of abuse and to create supportive and safe conditions for individual healing by challenging the systemic oppression present in institutions (both local and governmental) and reflected in contemporary policy (Fletcher & Denham, 2008). Healing is therefore a collective political and self-empowering intervention. In other words, healing fosters decolonization though individual and community commitment to engage in transforming the Indigenous-State relationship by politicizing care-giving practices and reorienting health policy for critical social justice. Yet decolonization, as understood by the research partners and participants, starts with personal and community transformation first; a transformation generated though culturally-based and locally embedded models of care. Taken together, these healing narratives function as tactical stories deployed to uncover intergenerational social suffering and to provide modes of personal and collective

actions to undo systemic oppression in Chisasibi. The following section corresponds to the Korsakow film found on the Colonization webpage where the reader can find in-depth interviews.

Colonization and psychosocial distress

In early 1980s, clinically trained Lakota social worker Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart conceptualized the cumulation of suffering caused by historically traumatic events experienced by a group as Historical Trauma (HT). Contrary to other psychological illnesses and mental distress which are usually a result of individual experience of trauma, HT calls attention to the collective experience and intergenerational transmission of trauma (Brave Heart 1998, 2003, & 2011; Gone, 2009 & 2014; Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014; Waldram, 2014). Inspired by clinical evidence of psychological trauma experienced by first and second generation Holocaust survivors, HT is defined as the "collective, cumulative, and intergenerational transmission of risk for adverse mental health outcomes that stem from the historical unresolved grief or "soul wound" inflicted by experiences of colonization" (Gone, 2009, p. 752). HT is associated with six phases of colonization in North America, and more specifically in the USA beginning with first contacts and early colonization and subsequent population decline due to disease and warfare; followed by loss of land and subsidence resources resulting from territorial invasion and encroachment; forced dependency and confinement in reservations compounded by institutionalized language and culture loss from residential (boarding) school system, which finally culminated, in the USA, in forced relocation and the Indian Termination Policy (Brave Heart, 2003 & 2011; Duran et al., 1998).

Taken together, these historical injustices are seen as the root of contemporary Indigenous risk for poor mental health status. Empirical evidence suggests that HT experiences are prevalent and correlate with adverse mental health outcomes as individuals develop pathological reactions of bereavement and complex posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). More importantly, the concept of Historical Trauma culturally contextualizes psychological experiences, which has led to the development of relevant evidence- and culture-based practices and treatment (Gone, 2009; Prussing, 2014; Waldram, 2014).

'Missions, medicine, and education'[67]: historical trauma in the James Bay

For the Cree of eastern James Bay the fur trade was in many ways less damaging to social relations and the animistic ethos that developed out of the hunting lifestyle society than Christianisation (Pachano, 2011). Although little is known about the type of relationships between the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employees and Cree homeguards in the 18th Century, Foster (1987) concludes that these were primarily based on interdependence rather than economic dependence from the part of the Cree. In fact, Morantz's (2002) study of HBC post records shows that the Cree, by and large, framed the fur trade according to their own survival practices, which maintained the English traders and the posts. Even in the first half of the 20th Century, as the expansion of transportation infrastructure brought white prospectors and trappers inland whose disregard towards Cree harvesting practices caused a collapse of beaver, the sanctuaries established in the 1930s and subsequent land regime changes are based on traditional family hunting territories (Morantz, 2002).

While Cree land tenure and management was maintained beyond the fur trade era, Christianization, coupled with bureaucratic control made possible by the Indian Act, had a more lasting and significant impact on Cree ways of life, displacing and weakening local healing traditions. Exacerbated by a scarcity of caribou, between 1884 and 1902, many Cree died at Fort George and elsewhere in the James Bay area due to a combination of epidemic diseases such as whooping cough, scrofula, chicken pox and tuberculosis. It is reported that in 1902 at least 100 people died at Fort George and Great Whale River. "By 1906 people had to be buried outside the cemetery at Fort George; it was too full" (Morantz, 2002, p. 44; Torrie et al., 2005). As missionaries were the only health providers that could combat new and deadly diseases, they used coercion, prohibition and persuasion to convert the Cree not only to Christianity but also to biomedicine (Niezen, 1997).

Denigration of Cree care-giving practices

Best known in Fort George was Anglican missionary W.G. Walton, who remained in the region from 1892 to 1924. Because he learned the language and took great care of visiting camps and tending to the sick, he had the most success in converting the Cree and made Fort George the most important center of conversion in James Bay (Morantz, 2002; Pachano, 2011). He

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[67] Niezen, 1997

prohibited dances and drumming as well as other Cree ceremonies and beliefs, especially conjuring, an important rite for most Cree hunters. The central role of spirituality and life in the bush in Cree wellbeing were thus slowly displaced by missionaries who took aim at local shamans and healers:

> …probably [the shamans] could help anything, help anybody…They could cure any disease…they could [even] raise anybody from the dead. [But] the native people here in Chisasibi lost their own power….because they were not allowed to perform any rituals of traditional ceremonies. They lost it because the church itself, the minister, [was] telling them, 'This is evil, this is wrong, what you're doing' (Chisasibi individual, interviewed 1992, quoted in Niezen, 1997, p. 467).

The two Cristian missions in Fort George, the Anglican and the Catholic, provided most of the health care required that traditional medicines and healers could not deal with. The Cree understood that the new epidemics that took hold were western diseases that required western medicines and therefore were able to combine both systems of healing depending on the circumstances. Despite the fact that many missionaries had questionable approaches to conversion, this medical pluralism enabled the Cree to maintain a strong spirituality, at least in the bush. Many used to practice traditional ceremonies and spirituality on the land, and, once arrived at the posts, reverted to more 'Christian' behavior (Tanner, 2008).

> Listening to the knowledge and wisdom of the elders, native people understood, [and] adapted the new religious teachings, because they interwove their own spiritual beliefs deriving from the Cree cultural background. In fact the Cree people were already practicing values such as respect, sharing love, kinship, etc….which are also promoted in the bible. The missionaries did not practice what they were preaching…Instead they preached against the native social practices ceremonies and spiritual beliefs, as remembered by many elders (Herodier et al., quoted in Niezen, 1997, p. 474).

Morantz (2002) argues that even though the Cree converted to Christianity, similar to their attitude towards the fur trade, they nevertheless only took "what they needed to survive in a changing society" (p. 74). For example, Preston (2002) recorded shaking tent ceremonies in

Waskaganish in late 1960s, and indeed, even today one can take part in a Pentecostal service or a sweat lodge ceremony in many Cree communities. Nonetheless, openly participating in ceremonies continues to be a contested issue that has roots in the negative impacts of missionisation in James Bay. As Roy explains, his taking up of powwow drumming and singing was sometimes met with ridicule, "people made fun of us" or outright contempt, "they said that we were worshiping the devil". Others, such as the young person I interviewed at the Youth Center, have encountered similar experiences:

> Recently, I know that many Crees are scared to talk about traditional ceremonies. I don't know why they are like that. I guess is because the missionaries that came here and took their children, all their relatives and stuff. Forcing that religion onto the Native People, you know it wasn't right. It wasn't right.

In 1930, the first hospital, that also housed the Catholic residential school, was established at Fort George. The Cree nevertheless had to contend on walking a tight line of brewing competition between the two Cristian orders. In some cases they were coerced to only seek care at the Catholic hospital by threat that the traveling doctor will not be allowed to see them if they choose to also seek services from the Anglicans. The latter, also built a residential school with a hospital attached in 1940, most probably as competition to the Catholics, since the physical welfare of the Cree had not been a priority during their 77 years presence in the region (Morantz, 2002). After the creation of the federal Department of National Health and Welfare in 1946, a nursing station was established at Fort George and later in 1950, a bigger hospital, the Saint Therese de l'Enfant-Jesus, was completed (Torrie et al., 2005). Combining compulsory education with health care provision ensured that Cree children were physically removed from the land, and therefore separated from the healing powers and knowledge of the bush. Even the students that were from Fort George or had immediate family there were only allowed to visit three hours on Sundays and two months in the summer (Morantz, 2002; Niezen, 1997). The oppressive colonial approach and methods carried out in the residential schools had two distinctive and interrelated impacts on Cree concepts of wellbeing. On one hand, relational and experiential learning in the bush which underlines the moral relationships and ethics of care were replaced by paternalistic attitudes and denigration of bush skills and cultural ethos. On the other hand, the negative feelings toward life in the bush that students developed weakened intergenerational bonds and

familial relationships, so much so that even today some former residential school students continue to fear and scorn Cree healing traditions (Niezen, 1997; Richardson, 2002).

As exemplified in the first Korsakow film, the fear and scorn towards Cree healing traditions does indeed reverberate through the generations. Irene tells the story when she had to defend the sweat lodge practice before community elders:

> We used to do these women circles, way back in the 80s, 90s. We helped a young man, at that time, bringing in the sweat lodge which we had to speak for, at that time, because there was so much fear when we brought it in. But I didn't, you know, fight hard, I just told them the truth. I stood in front of the elders one day, cause they used to call us in, have meetings with us. [They told us that] what we were bringing in was not good, or you are not supposed to do this or that. I only told the elders one thing, I told them that I believe these practices because I heard about them out there. I met elders that did those lodges and what they saw out there, their grandfathers or their ancestors. So I told those elders that I believed in this so much, and that they put fear on us. See that fear comes like that again, through the generations.

Psycho-affective impacts of residential school

While much has been written about the experience of former residential school system[68], much less evidence exists among the Cree of Eeyou Istchee. George Blacksmith (2010), himself a survivor, has explored the impact of the legacy of the residential school system on three generations of Cree from Mistissini, Oujé-Bougoumou and Waswanipi. Writing about his own experience, Blacksmith states:

> Through a process of emotional intimidation and physical beatings.…Under threats of severe physical punishment…children were taught to renounce all aspects of their way of life and learned to fear and despise their Cree identity and heritage.…Certainly the messages being reinforced to us continually about who and what Indians represented made it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain pride in our culture and heritage[…]Constantly drilled into my psyche at school, racist

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[68] See Fisher & Lee, 2009 a selected bibliography; Niezen R. 2013. *Truth and indignation : Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

attitudes towards my own people were starting to take shape through my own actions and speech.…My attitude reflected my contempt and disgust for who I was, where I came from, my people and our cultural traditions. (pp. 20, 47, 48)

The intergenerational impact of the residential schools looms large in the narratives shared by the participants in this research. Larry speaks of the shame and silence of the first generation of survivors who attended the school in late 1930s and 1940s, who, unable to cope turned to substance abuse as a self-medicating option:

I grew up in a time when Native people were finally allowed to buy alcohol. I was born in 1965, my older siblings grew up, I would say, in a different environment than what the youngest four experienced in our family. My perception of it now is this suppression that my parents went through came out during the time when alcohol was rampant and was projected either onto us or within their peers. That is my perception of the time when I grew up.…My dad never talked about what happened in the residential school. And then I asked what happened to my grandparents? And to their parents? It kind of framed my perception today…like how colonization has affected us. Attempting to undo that has become my passion.

Irene explains that "all those different illnesses that are happening with the people. But some don't believe it, don't believe is something else that has caused it. But a lot of it is with our history and our loss of our connection to our medicines". The young person who confronted me at the Youth Center is a fourth generation survivor that, similar to Larry, has never set foot in a residential school yet experienced emotional intimidation and physical beatings

My parents always used to put me down. I started thinking why were they like that? Why were they like that towards me?….I was thinking about what my grandfather used to say. He used to say stuff about when he was in residential school. He used to say, they went through a lot when they were in the residential school. And he used to hit me a lot when we were in the bush. When I didn't do things right. He used to slap me in my face and stuff. I kept wondering if it was not from the residential school. Why my grandfather treats me like that, my mother, my grandmother?

The second individual, who accorded an interview on condition of anonymity is a second generation survivor of the Catholic day-school in Fort George, explains the psychological impacts:

Before you would never hear anything from me, I was quiet and shy, and fearful, and shy to make friends, especially white people. 'Cause growing up too we had to respect the white people. I always felt like they were so superior. I always put myself down and I was scared too. I always felt I was stupid because I never spoke up.

Until recently, the individual was employed as a residential school worker with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services (CBHSSJB). Reflecting on that experience, the individual observed:

A lot of times, I went to the eight communities…there were elders who were in their 70s that opened up to me. Like they never opened up to anybody for 70 years.…I felt good being able to help them. But it's draining.…And there is *a lot* of them. I think in Chisasibi there's about 600. Just for Chisasibi. It's hard. But see now I understand why the people are the way they are, where all that is coming from. And it's passed down from generation to generation because it is not dealt with, it's not talked about.

Indeed, as George Blacksmith (2011) observes:

Second generation participants, many of whose own parents had been abducted and forced to attend these institutions, expressed bewilderment and a sense of betrayal that their parents had remained silent about their own terrible experiences and then allowed their children to experience the same thing. Both first and second generations described their confusion and inability to connect and communicate with their people when they returned from these institutions.…They frequently related stories of growing up in emotionally disconnected and dysfunctional households that were often places of substance abuse and domestic violence. (pp. 102-103)

He notes elsewhere that "it was shocking to learn that those who did the abusing were not only employees of the schools but also close members of their families. Sometimes they were even assaulted by fellow students" (p.32). Unfortunately, as confirmed by Blacksmith's interviewees, my own narrators spoke at length of the ongoing abuse that is still being perpetrated in the community. At least three of the interviewees disclosed prior sexual abuse perpetrated by family members or other community members. The young individual told of witnessing a family member molesting his young niece, the subsequent disclosure to the authorities, followed by attempts at involuntary antidepressant treatment (with the support of a local doctor) that was imposed on the individual in order to undermine the testimony. Decades earlier Larry went through a similar experience:

> There was a pedophile that got arrested, who had been my abuser. And I hadn't really gone into that part of my life, but when he got arrested I started having these flashbacks. And these pictures kept flashing through my mind and I was having sort of anxiety attacks, as I understand them now. So I went to social services and I told them….like I put everything on the table. I said "this is what I am remembering" and they just sat there…I told them I need to go somewhere, this is what I am remembering. And they just sat there and told me that I had to come back five times for them to assess me. I thought it was bullshit. I basically was in crisis, my breathing was affected and my mind.

In terms of health and social services, neither the federal nor the provincial governments considered the welfare of the eastern James Bay Cree a priority. Without a treaty and therefore any recognized rights, the Cree were mostly ignored until the late 1960s. The inadequate quality of services with which Larry was confronted can be linked, in part, to the dependency created by the federal welfare legislation in Eeyou Istchee prior to the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975.

Dependency through federal welfare legislation

With very few exceptions of government assistance, Indigenous welfare, including medical services, was administered by missionaries and northern traders until 1880 when the federal Department of Indian Affairs had to react to the widespread epidemics of measles and smallpox as well as high incidence of tuberculosis by instituting the first social welfare

legislation - a "draconian work-or-starve relief" system similar to the British Poor Law (Torrie et al., 2005, p. 179; Battiste & Henderson, 2012). Between 1670 and 1903 the administration of welfare for the Cree population was carried out by the Hudson Bay Company (HBC) which managed a series of temporary and permanent posts inland and along the east coast of the James Bay. Federal legislation and administration had little impact in the remote Cree territory and was limited to the occasional tours by two physicians that generally reported on the wellbeing of the Cree population, treated illnesses, extracted teeth, brought supplies of medication left in charge of the missionaries and HBC managers, and ordered seriously ill individuals for evacuation to southern hospitals (Morantz, 2002; Torrie et al., 2005).

Major improvement in health and social service provision for Indigenous peoples began in 1945 when Indian medical relief was transferred from the Indian Department to the newly established Department of National Health and Welfare (DNHW). The DNHW assigned Indigenous health responsibilities to the new Medical Services Branch (MSB) in 1947, which in 1990 became the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch that still operates today. The Indian Health Policy (1978) was the first attempt to meaningfully involve Indigenous communities in the provision of health and social services by creating local health committees as a measure to incorporate community interests and needs. By the end of the 1960s, apart from basic health services provided at the federal clinics, the Cree had very limited access to federal environmental health programs and local community infrastructure was extremely poor. Quebec's involvement in social and health service delivery was inexistent in the Cree territory before the 1950s. Since the province had not signed treaties with any of the eleven Indigenous nations present in its territory, the Quebec government considered its northern territory "Indian domain" under federal responsibility. Indeed, the province had successfully sued Canada in 1939 over costs incurred in the provision of services to its Inuit population. A limited provincial health infrastructure was established beginning in the 1950s as mining and forestry operations extended in the southern limits of the Cree territory (for a detailed historical account see Torrie et al., 2005).

The shifting social roles of many Cree from accomplished fur traders and competent providers in the bush to legislated deviant 'wards of the state' forced through bureaucratisation and imposed dependency of the welfare system exacerbated further the impacts of Christianisation and residential school system. Speaking about the negative impact of political policing carried out by the federal government, Morantz (2002), concludes:

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Concomitant with its policies, the Department of Indian Affairs in James Bay neutered the leadership. Away from their life associated with subsidence pursuits the other important issues of modern life, such as education, health, welfare, housing, economic development, were settled by the bureaucrats. As a consequence of needing to cajole the bureaucracy, the Crees modified their requirements for leadership and leaders came to be elected who had the skills to deal with the government: the ability to speak English and understand southern ways. (p. 249)

Damaged Crees coming out of the residential schools therefore found themselves at the helm of their communities with which they had little to no contact. Emotionally crippled yet without any support, these leaders did the best they could with the help of elders as the fight for the La Grande shows. Nonetheless, institutionalised racism and internalized oppression became collateral effects of the colonial complex of assimilation:

Our old people, they took pride in what they did. I have seen this. My grandfather left us when he was 92, but he was still, my grandmother too, they took pride in whatever they did.…So I grew up that way, but nowadays people have a hard time working, and I think the problem is, we are in a state of...you know, dependency. And I think that is what happened with our people. They do not take pride in their work because they know someone else would do it. (Roy)

Indeed, the federal government's "schizophrenic approach to the Indian economy" caused much confusion and hardship for the Cree, especially at Fort George, where no resource extraction industry was yet established (Morantz, 2002, p. 206). On one hand Indian Affairs was pushing the Cree to find employment yet realized that by taking more time away from hunting, they were also becoming more dependent on government welfare programs. On the other hand, in Quebec as in Ontario, First Nations that were considered 'gainfully employed' (who worked more than 3.5 months a year) were prohibited from hunting ducks and geese. Moreover, while Canadian mothers received family allowance in the form of cheques, the James Bay Cree as well as the Inuit, received credit at the HBC post to be used "against a list of approved food and clothing drawn up by Indian Affairs" (p. 209). With little employment opportunities coupled with dwindling animal resources, by the early 1970s, 50 to 60% of Crees at Fort George were dependent on welfare assistance. Not only were they coerced to reduce or give up hunting and

fishing activities, in addition, 'successful' hunters were penalized by having their rations reduced by half or less depending on their harvesting performance. It took the death by mercury poisoning of two individuals for this incredibly unjust practice to be eventually abandoned (Morantz, 2002).

Lingering attitudes developed over more than half century of interaction and submission to the will of the Indian Agent are still present. Describing Hervé Larivière, an Indian Agent with over 40 years career in the James Bay and Abitibi region, Reverend Scallon of Mistissini notes that Larivière "would have been very much at home in the seventeenth century…his was an age of paternalism…" (Morantz, 2002, p.224). Another Mistissini reverend wrote of Larivière in 1945 as a "demoralizing influence on the Indians. He is a simple case of unethically disposed inflated ego, and his tendencies will become a nuisance to us all concerned unless active steps are taken to check the trouble now" (Scallon and HBCA RG7 quoted in Morantz, 2002, p. 224). Indeed, similar attitudes were recorded by Richradson (2002) in the 1970s during the court deliberation following the Malouf decision. Anthropologist Tom Shiveley's evidence on the quality and type of 'improvements' in housing at Fort George was summed up as following:

> "…it seems that in general the people who come here to work with the government are misfits who can't get jobs doing anything else, incredibly stupid people who come up and perpetuate their stupidity on the Indians, and so this is what white men are for Indians. Stupid." (p. 133)

In sum, a complex interplay of forced displacement, family breakdown, cultural loss and economic dependency made possible by both policy and settler attitudes have had important negative and destabilizing impacts on Cree relationality and care-giving practices. Although Historical Trauma has served to unpack individual distress as a function of collective historical process and not principally as personal failure some have argued that HT can function as an overgeneralized view of historical experiences, overemphasize victimization, and 'unduly' pathologize Indigenous mental health (Prussing, 2014). In addition, recent decolonizing scholarship argues that a focus on historical roots of contemporary distress can serve contemporary State policy to "prioritize symbolic rather than substantive restitution for injustice" and further perpetuate systemic injustice in the present and the future (Coultard, 2014; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009 & 2013). Indeed, speaking about the work done with the residential school survivors,

the second anonymous interviewee explained the complex interplay between historical trauma and contemporary suffering with the following story:

> There was one lady that I was working with. I was starting to get angry with her. But I told her, because I didn't want this anger to build up towards her. So I told her: "look, how come you don't help? I am starting to feel anger towards you. What is it? Why won't you help? You tell people you have a lot of work to do with the residential school file, yet you don't help at all. It makes me angry that you are not doing anything." That's what she told me, she told me what it was like being a child in the residential school. She was always told to do this, this, and that, and if she didn't do it right she would get punished. That's what she was afraid of. She was afraid to follow through, was afraid to make a mistake. She said that even to this day when doing dishes, "I just don't do it just any other way", cause at school they were always told they did them wrong and "I am always scared to do [things differently]". And I told her "I am sorry that I was angry at you that I have judged you and you went through this." I didn't even know she went through this and I was getting angry at her. And I think that what needs to be done, mutual constructive criticism.

Pushing beyond history: contemporary systemic oppression in Chisasibi

Irlbacher-Fox (2013) has analyzed the "discursive uses of temporal characterization of injustice" in federal policy, specifically the White Paper (1969) and *Gathering Strength* (2000), and concludes that while couched within a rhetoric of restitution and renewal they instead "conflate injustice with history" thereby absolving government responsibility and shifting the burden of contemporary injustice to Indigenous peoples themselves or as being "inherent to being Indigenous" (pp. 374, 375 & 378). For example, studies on the condition of Indigenous peoples' health in Canada continue to underline the disparities between them and the Canadian population in terms of mortality and life expectancy, morbidity and chronic disease, or mental health. These disparities are often conceived as a consequence of personal life style choice or self-induced and in some instances 'on the capacity of individuals to create their own condition of wellbeing' (Adelson, 2000; de Leeuw et al, 2010; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; McGibbon, 2012; RCAP, vol.3, 1996; Salée, 2006, p. 7). Indeed, the White Paper was put forward as the solution to the poor

socioeconomic status of Indigenous people as assessed by the Hawthorn-Tremblay Report in 1967. Until recently and similar to youth studies in the latter 20th century, the higher incidence of substance abuse or mental health distress was conceptualized within a vocabulary of deviance and was used, as in the 1960s Scoop, to remove children from their families and communities, when by the end of 1960s 30% to 40% of children in foster care were Indigenous (Kirmayer, 2000). In other words, "[T]he use of suffering as a rationale for ongoing state intervention underscores how institutions and bureaucratic practices of the state are reaffirmed and re-entrenched within Indigenous communities in a way that consolidates state authority and dominant cultures over Indigenous ones" (Irlbacher-Fox , 2009, p. 111; Kurtness, 2014).

While wellness is indeed partly dependent on the social capital or feelings of belonging and social connectedness, recent scholarship has shown that health status and health behaviors are largely dependent on socioeconomic and cultural determinants such as employment, housing, education, language or race (NWAC, 2007; Place, 2012; Reading & Wien, 2009; Reading & Halseth, 2013). The unequal distribution of these determinants is first a contemporary injustice and, second, a result of policy and its implementation. McGibbon (2012), in line with decolonization scholars, argues that systemic oppression made possible by policy leads to unequal health outcomes as stereotyped information about a group created and maintained over time is embedded and reinforced in the present through prejudice which makes possible discrimination. Thus unequal and oppressive power relations 'create systems of advantage, privilege and disadvantage' (McGibbon, 2012). The United Nations even argues that "our persistent failure to grasp the true impact of colonization may explain why existing health and social programs have done so little to narrow the health gap" (UN, 2009). For example, as Lalonde (2009) shows, by overpathologizing and universalizing distress (eg. all Indigenous youth are at risk of suicide) population level prevention efforts often ignore uneven distributions resulting in blanket policy and procedures which can either waste resources or under-resource Indigenous communities depending on local needs. In the context of governance negotiations, Irlbacher-Fox (2009) shows how government policy orientation mandates maintain systemic oppression by bracketing Indigenous experiences of colonization and puts the Indigenous parties in a position of disadvantage by denying, for example, jurisdiction over language and culture (pp. 133-157). Indeed, Mary Louise tells of a similar experience during a provincial meeting with

First Nations health representatives. In response to a request from the government bureaucrat to explain her community's socioeconomic status she replies:

> The stories that you have heard [from other First Nations representative at the meeting], is the same that is going on in my community. I cannot tell you any different. I mean we have been telling you, over and over, what has been happening in our communities. You have a report this thick from the Royal Commission telling you what is been happening in our communities.' I said, 'I have had enough research, reports telling you [the government] what is happening. Now I need services to fix what is happening in the communities. Not just sending out people just for the sake of saying 'oh, we sent these people there'. I need funding for services for healing programs. And I am thinking 'oh, what did I just do?'[Laughs] And then, one of them says to me, "Oh, do you need money for campaigns?" I am like, 'campaigns???' "Oh," he says, "campaigns on addictions, and"...And I said, no I don't need money for campaigns, I need money for services, to actually *deliver* services. I don't need another poster on my wall telling me 'Stop drinking', 'Stop doing drugs'. I actually need money to provide physical services. And of course they never answered back. Twenty years later I am still waiting for an answer from the government, actually providing money for different services of healing.

Mary Louise's story reflects debates within the SDH discourse which argue that their unequal distribution is a result of public policy and institutional implementation decisions. For example, in the report *First Peoples, second class treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples in Canada* (2015), Allan and Smylie show how, while status and non-status First Nations face the same SDH, state-imposed race-based legislation such as the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) results in unequitable access to services and resources for non-status First Nations. In addition, even for status First Nations, residency influences accessibility to some benefits where on-reserve residency is conditional to receive certain services or accessing specific resources such as transportation or medication (p. 26). In line with McGibbons (2012), Allan and Smylie show how a complex intersectionality of SDH, geography and identity create health disparities.

In Chisasibi, grassroots institutions not only have to contend with "policies and practices emerging from imperialistic and colonial ideologies [that] have been extremely destructive to the health and well-being of Indigenous peoples, cutting across the broad spectrum of social determinants of health", but also must attend to internalized oppression as a very real challenge to achieving effective self-governance at home (Allan & Smylie, 2015, p. 1; Coultard, 2014; Pyke, 2010; Taiaike Alfred, 2005). Deeply rooted oppression, expressed through action or inaction, influence decision-making and resource allocation, as for example comparatively fewer specialist referrals and less follow-up for Indigenous peoples (Etowa & McGibbons, 2012). As Roy explains:

> That's what I was telling them [Band administrators], at a general meeting, 'we have to believe in each other. Believe in us. We can actually do the work for you, and whatever you guys want to learn come and see us first. Find somebody here first.' With the housing problem, I came up with a solution. Not a solution, but an idea and they told me 'it's not going to work'. But as soon as our director of finance who is white came up with almost the same idea, they said 'we gotta think outside the box like him, that's what we need to do'. And the year before they were telling me it's not going to work. It was the same exact idea I had. I think that is the problem now. I think we need to start believing in each other.

From a collective perspective then, the challenge of institutionalized racism and internalized oppression for autonomy often results in decontextualized, ineffective and marginalizing measures which in turn undermine local social capital, and thus wellness. Denise makes this explicit when she discusses the quality of services in Chisasibi:

> And I think that is the biggest issue we have right now. We don't have many people to help, or we have very few, or we don't have a consistent amount of people. There is always a high turnover of resources, we never sure who we are going to get and for somebody who is going through something difficult, we need that consistency, it is part of our security, and safety, and also for the trust. How can you talk about your problems if the next month you are not going to be talking to the same exact person? You have to tell them your whole life story again, you have to tell them about your problems all over again, when you should be moving

forward and trying to understand where you are without being stuck at the same story.

For Irene the link between past injustice and contemporary internalized colonization is clear not only for herself as a Cree individual but also for non-Cree service providers:

Even some of the psychologists that I work with they started to pick up, they started to learn that the culture is the key to people's healing…this psychologist that visits some of the communities, he says "But you know, is like I have to sell your culture to your people" and I know what that meant. [It] is because some of the generations of people that were told, you know, is bad, your practices. Some of the tools were burned, you know. That is why some people went underground with their medicines and they picked up the, all of those new things that were given to them, the flour, the klik[69]. The churches making them believe, even the medical, even the first medicines that were given to them….like everything comes [back], like the history comes like this [hand gestures to show that it repeats] that's what the elders said. You are supposed to know that we are connected to at least seven generations back, you know, we are supposed to know that even seven generations [in the future].

Or as Larry explains:

In terms of governance, speaking with the director general one time, I brought up the issue of institutionalized racism, because a comment was made where we were talking about the old dances, the round dances, which is something modern that the youth has taken an affinity to.…And the comment was made where our own director says that we don't want to fund these kinds of projects. And I said, what did he mean 'those kinds' of projects? And they never elaborate on it. But if you were to look at your culture, or say something like that about your culture, as something that is not needed within the institutions then there is a problem.

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[69] Brand of precooked meat product similar to Spam

'Everything that we need is already here': cultural continuity as protective factor[70]

       Autonomy and decolonization then, require practices that aim to mend local relationships that are in line with Indigenous life-worlds; practices which were once criminalized and, in some instances, continue to be discouraged (Martin-Hill, 2003; NAHO, 2008; Waldram, 2008). In this context, Indigenous-based approaches to health and wellness have received increased recognition and acceptance by the mainstream Canadian health community. According to Chandler and Lalonde (2004 & 2008) cultural continuity functions as a protective factor against health risks. Specifically, the authors found that Indigenous suicide rates were a function of cultural continuity, or of the collective capacity of preserving cultural practices *and* securing local control. They subsequently developed community-level indicators that assess the "sense of ownership of the past and commitment to the future, not at the psychological level but epidemiologically with whole communities as the unit of analysis" (Lalonde, 2009, p. 36). These protective factors include: secured aboriginal title to lands; self-governance rights; some measure of control over education, police and fire protection services, and health and social services; established cultural facilities and institutions; participation of women in decision making; and the provision of child and family services. They found that the cumulative effect of these factors reduce suicide to almost zero when all of them were present as illustrated in the following figure (reproduced from Chandler & Lalonde, 2008, p. 240).

Figure 29 Suicide rates by Cultural Continuity factor (1993-2000)

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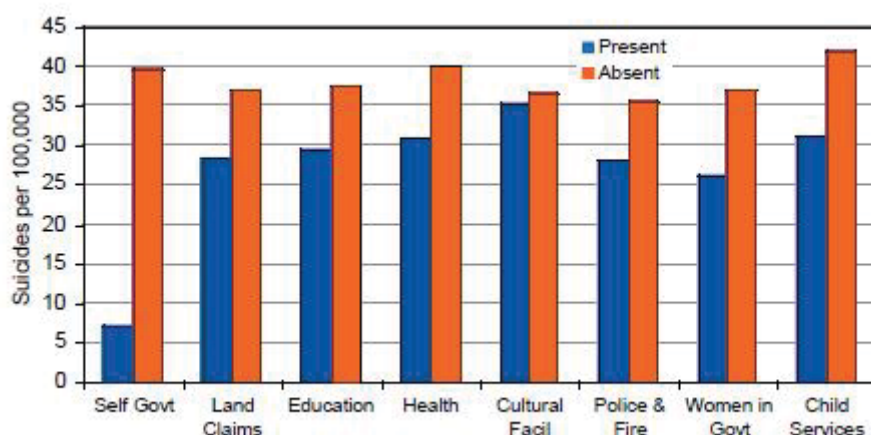
[70] Please see the Korsakow film on the Culture webpage for in-depth interviews that accompany this section of the thesis.

The authors conclude that "individual health and well-being, at least within First Nations communities, is tied to cultural and collective health. But any grandmother might have told us that" (Lalonde, 2009, p. 37). In sum, studies have shown that culture and language are among the most important health determinants because they influence accessibility to the health care system and health information; increase compliance with treatment; strengthen the delivery of preventative programs and services; and can improve lifestyle choices (NAHO, 2008; Martin-Hill, 2003; Panzironi, 2010; Waldram, 2008). Culture-based services, programs and activities thus function to combat social pathology by renewing and reformulating Indigeneity that is in line with local ethos and changing circumstances (Adelson, 2001; Kirmayer, 2004; Gone, 2008; Tanner, 2008). Or as Irene and Denise explain,

> When you discover, well the world discovers, that the first key to your healing, personal healing, family healing, it's your culture. Is your culture, your identity. When people say 'I am going to find myself', they are actually saying to go within and you know find their...connect with their families and with their culture. (Irene)
>
> And as Crees of the land, I think that people are starting to realize that we have to return to our roots. And mental health I think plays a role in that. To rediscover our identity. It comes back to what I said at the beginning, you know who you are, you know where you are, and you know what you need to do to get better. (Denise)

At the individual level then, linking with an Indigenous past restores pride and positive identity, which in turn, as Roy explains, strengthens self-confidence and improves familial relationships:

> When I went to college and came back I thought I was better than this person because I went to college. I always thought that white people were better...better than we [the Cree]. 'Cause when I was growing up I always wanted to be John Wayne instead of the Indian, you know. But once I started singing with the drum something happened to me. Like I started felling proud of who I was...not me, being Roy, but me as a Cree person. I started being proud of where I came from, where my ancestors came from. ..from the land[…]That's when things started changing for me, when I decided that hey, I don't care what you are saying about it.

It's my life, not yours....So that is what I try to do with my kids. And that is what I say to people when they ask me, how do you do it? How do you get your kids to stay in school? Well, I always told them of how proud I was of whatever they accomplish, especially in school. I always, wow, I make a big deal about it. And that's what we need to do. All the positive things we need to make a big deal out of them, instead of dwelling on the negative all the time. That is how I try to be with my children, and I am proud, they all finished school and they are getting ready to leave for college. They seem to get their priorities straight.

If the legacy of residential schools has had a negative intergenerational impact on Cree families, culture-based healing functions in a similar way by mending relations within families. As Larry explains, there is much hope for the coming generations if children grow up with a positive cultural identity:

Going back to...starting to do the sweat lodges and the ceremonies, the change from being an alcoholic and drug addict made a difference to my siblings. They started quitting too...Then within my family I can see the changes where they are growing up stronger and more assertive in who they are. All my grandchildren have Cree names. Not because I asked them to, is just that the influence of doing what I do is starting to show in them [Larry's children] raising their families. And I can only imagine, like my grandchildren who have Cree names, how they are going to be with their families. Where we started basically we were just taking baby steps in turning to our ways. But for them, like my grandchildren, being around the Sundance and in the presence of shake tents, it is normal for them. For us it was almost like a novelty, almost like a wow, while for them is normal. So I do see the changes there. And it gives them a stronger and more positive cultural identity. In doing that, you know, once you have that you can go anywhere in the world and not feel less than anybody else as was programed into our own people.

Speaking about his participation in the Nishiiyuu Walk, Mike underlines how even though the journey was an act of solidarity with the Idle No More movement, the experience was deeply personal in that it reconnected him with his family and his culture:

I was all emotional because I was seeing my mom right in front of the crowd to my left. That is was really got to me. Knowing my mom was here. My family. Even a couple of members of my family from Temiskaming, my dad's reserve. I see my mom, my auntie. Knowing that I had family members supporting me it was all getting to me at the same time. Mixed emotions. I couldn't go on. I had stuff to say.…I wanted to share my dream and I wanted to share that the reason why I walked was because I wanted to experience what our ancestors experienced way back then before we were put into reserves. Before we were staying put we always travelled, walking on snow. That is one of the reasons I wanted to experience the walk. I wanted to walk because I wanted to experience the culture. I was glad I experienced that.

For Denise, renewing cultural ethos legitimizes and affirms Indigenous knowledge and restores relationship with ancestral territories:

So, coming back to your roots is an absolutely important task and activity. And we are losing that already with really important elders who are passing away. And it's heart-breaking to know that all that knowledge that they had, which was simple, but very knowledgeable, very wise, very potent...that knowledge is very important for us. And I think that it's great to have that education, and that diploma to say you are knowledgeable in this. But we have to acknowledge those elders who have that knowledge, even though they may not have that paper but they are wise in their own way and they are very knowledgeable. So it's important to make that connection. Connection to your elders, connection to the land, connection with each other as people.

In sum, culture based activities and services build positive identity and strengthen relationality by creating a sense of belonging and responsibility for the collective. Empowerment and agency are understood as a "confident place from which is possible to take action" that rests upon "negotiating trust in others" (Allen, 2000, pp. 66 & 68). In many ways, empowerment is contingent on compassion or understanding individual life-histories as they intersect with broader social processes

And I think that we need to stop looking down on these people who are struggling and start looking at them with compassion. Which is one of the things that the Crees used to do back in the day. If someone was failing at something they didn't go 'ah, you are not a good hunter, you are lame or something'. No, they shared their food until they could get better. And it's the same for mental health. We shouldn't say 'ah, this person is addicted to drugs and alcohol'. No, no. We should go help them. We should say 'you need help? you want to talk about it?' and help them get better. So that's why I think that now days, reconnecting in the most simplest ways, is the most effective manner. (Denise)

Today, I look at what happened to me as…as a tool. It helps me empathise with people who have gone through similar events. It has given me the experience in dealing with it to help individuals and others to go through…to have the ability to listen, you know without…like every individual has their own choices, journeys and is just letting them know that they are not alone. It can be overcome. That cultural aspect, it made me realize that everything that we need is already here. So, it is going back to that that is important and realizing that whatever has been brought disrupted our ability to take responsibility and being accountable for our own issues within the community, over the years, the centuries of colonization. (Larry)

I find that being on this earth, you have to be aware of the other people, of the other cultures around you. And you cannot just say, 'oh that is not good, that is bad'. You have to find out what makes people the way they are.…And I find that is really healing, cause you have to be open. You cannot be closed to other cultures and I think that is what is really the source of conflict in today's society, because people dictate to other people the way that they should live, the way they should conduct their lives. Look what is happening today. Even the government of Quebec is trying to dictate to people in Quebec, different cultures, different religions, the way that they should live.[71] Culture belongs to everybody, and it is in the hearts and minds of people. It is how you practice your daily life. It shouldn't

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[71] Mary Louise is referring to the debates surrounding the Quebec Charter of Values proposed by the Parti Québécois in 2013

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be something that is dictated by the Quebec government, cause I don't see Cree people going to Quebec and dictating to them our own way, our own culture to them. (Mary Louise)

Indeed the 'problem' for healing, and by extension for autonomy, does not solely reside with individual attitudes but in the way in which the State and settler society at large undertake political, cultural, and socioeconomic practices. Thus, how culture is understood is important to the ways in which local meanings and relationality are conceptualized and deployed within the health care delivery system and other institutions more broadly.

Addressing injustice through cultural safety

The Women's Memorial March held every February 14th brings awareness to and denounces contemporary colonial systemic oppression that led to the murder and disappearance of approximately 1200 Indigenous women and girls (Amnesty International, 2009; NWAC, 2010; UN, 2014). So far, calls for a national inquiry have been categorically refused by the federal government despite nation-wide mobilization. Contrary to the message of reconciliation espoused in the Statement of Apology for the Indian Residential Schools, Prime Minister Stephen Harper reneged Canada's responsibility for social justice when he stated that "We should not view…[Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women (MMAW)] as a sociological phenomenon. We should view it as crime" (CBC, 2014). Embracing its colonial epistemology, the Canadian state continues to historicize systemic oppression and ignore the social suffering of Indigenous everyday life. In the case of MMAW, a RCMP report focused on prevention of family violence in Indigenous communities despite the fact that only 29% of the perpetrators were identified as spouses, compared to 41% for non-Indigenous women victims (RCMP, 2014). Ongoing racialization of Indigenous peoples frames discourses both about their conditions and the ideas about those conditions in terms of deficits, deviance, and vulnerability as inherit cultural traits (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Battiste & Henderson, 2012; de Leeuw et al, 2010). Since the Bagot Report (1845), interference in Indigenous life has been predicated on simplistic representations of culture that "reinforce negative stereotypical conceptualizations of the "Other" and divert attention from the structural inequities that disadvantage certain groups of people based upon their culture" (Battiste & Henderson, 2012; Smye, Josewski & Kendall, 2010, p. 6). As Adelson (2001) rightly asserts,

Modern native identities are forged in the heat of colonial and neocolonial realities. For this reason, too, we cannot simply speak of any sort of decontextualized 'Cree culture'. Yet the Cree themselves can readily point to what they consider essential to what it means to be a Cree person. These are issues of identity, issues that are rooted in a sense of culture but are not defined as culture per se. People in Whapmagoostui are trying to pay their bills, keep food on the table, and maintain important and consequential links to their cultural past, present and future. It is the very banality of this sense of being Cree that makes these things all the more potent. (p. 13)

To unpack contemporary racialization in health discourses and develop a responsive, effective and relevant healthcare for Indigenous peoples the concept of cultural safety (Kawa Whakaruruhau) was developed by Maori nurse Irihapeti Merenia Ramsden in the 1980s. Initially "developed to extend the notion of culture to include intersections of gender, class, race, age and other social relations", "cultural safety became concerned with social justice and quickly came to be about nurses, power, prejudice and attitude rather than the ethnicity or cultures of Maori or other patients" (Smye et al., 2010, p. 8; Ramsden, 2002, p. 5). Specifically, cultural safety uses a person-centered model of care that situates overall health within the cultural, historical, economic, and political (the social determinants of health) context of the service users. In addition, cultural safety calls for a critical analysis of institutional discrimination and colonial relationships by challenging the power imbalances inherent in the relationship between the health care provider and the Indigenous health care recipient. Cultural safety aims to shift this imbalance by empowering the care recipient to actively participate in decisions regarding his or her health (including the type of treatment and care used) while also building the health care providers' cultural competencies that foster a respectful bicultural encounter (Baba, 2013; Brascoupé & Waters, 2009; Smye et al., 2010; Ramsden, 2002).

In the Canadian context cultural safety necessitates first an understanding of the colonization and neocolonial forces on the lives of Indigenous peoples; second a focus on relationality and cooperation conducive to inclusive support structures; third the use of respectful (culturally safe) communication and language; and forth the recognition of Indigenous care-giving knowledges and practices (Baba, 2013; HCC, 2012; NAHO, 2007; Smye et al., 2010). As

underlined by the Cree Board of Health and Social Services (CBHSSJB), culture-based models of care are key to providing locally-relevant and effective services:

> Traditional values and healing deals with an important part of the process of providing appropriate and effective health and social services to the population of Eeyouch in northern Quebec. Such services will include a holistic approach to treatment and prevention, a focus on families and values, pursuit of balance and moderation and a strong community role in supporting individuals. (Torrie et al., 2003, p. i)

In the context of the clinical interaction, cultural safety aims to build a "workforce that is self-reflective, open-minded and non-judgmental" by strengthening the providers' competencies that go beyond awareness and sensibility to revolve around taking action to empower clients and adapt service delivery (NCCAH, 2013; Smye et al., 2010). The attitudinal change is achieved through the provider's continual self-reflection and intersubjective dialogue with the service user, which lead the provider to become aware of her own positionality and bias, thus working to dismantle prejudice and take action based on the new skills and knowledge gained from the interaction (Ramsden, 2010). Speaking about the place of spirituality in service provision Mary Louise explains[72],

> This concept has to be integrated into the services. It cannot be something that we ignore cause it's what our youth are going through. And to ignore it and not to validate what a person is going through is doing that person injustice. And this is what is stopping their healing. Healing is not the service provider's point of view. It's the person that is going through this trauma. Trying to bring everything out in the open. And the service provider has to have an open mind to hear what this person has to say. Whether or not is your belief, religious or spiritual, traditional belief. That has no part when you are trying to heal a person. That person has to verbalize, what he or she is going through. And to force your own views on that person, you are just impeding their healing. As I said, when it comes to healing, each individual has his own path. This is not about what you think is right for that

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[72] See the Korsakow film on the Healing webpage for in-depth interviews that accompany this section

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person. Is what they think is right for themselves, because everybody has to go through their own paths. Everybody should have that individual right to find their own path to healing. I am not just talking about traditional, spiritual, religious. I am talking about all forms of healing.

In the context of the "ecology of patient care", culturally safe care requires a systemic transformation of not only the encounter between the professional and service user, but also of institutional power imbalances with the goal of decolonizing the health care system and strengthening local autonomy (Bell, 2009, p. 6; Baba, 2013; Brascoupe & Waters, 2009; Smye et al., 2010; Ramsden, 2002). This systemic shift should include adapted curricula and pedagogical approaches that enable clinicians and practitioners to deliver services based on client-defined health priorities and which take into account clients' social determinants of health. Finally, a systemic transformation of the health system is ultimately dependent on policy that promotes social justice and health equity, which is informed by participatory, community-based collaborative research practices (Ball, 2009; Smye et al., 2010). As Larry, Mary Louise and Denise suggest, cultural safety is a process of decolonization that involves personal transformation though compassion and care for the collective which should lead to a significant shift in State practices that are conducive to social justice. Indeed, as Allan & Smylie (2015) assert,

> This work demands a foundational shift in how matters of racism and racialization are taken up by Canadian social institutions beyond the health care system, including education, child protection and justice, as well as how these issues are accounted for and addressed by public policies and formal legislation. It requires a departure from the cherished image of Canada as the well-meaning, international peacekeeper and the imagined harmony of the multicultural mosaic, and a long walk towards truth and reconciliation in a country that our current Prime Minister Stephen Harper claims has "no history of colonialism". (p. 43)

Cree control over the health and social services

The Chisasibi land-based healing program was developed within a broader community and regional self-determination context that began in late 1960s. The political mobilization of the Cree Nation was a direct response to the provincial push to build the La Grande hydroelectric

complex. In 1972, the court-ordered injunction led to negotiations between the Cree and the Inuit and the provincial and federal governments that resulted in the first northern comprehensive land claim to be settled in Canada, the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) signed in 1975. Among the many provisions of the JBNQA, Section 14, Chapter S-5 legislated Cree control over the management and delivery of health and social services. More specifically, Section 14 included:

- the creation of a Cree Board operating under provincial jurisdiction
- transfer of fiscal responsibility to the province
- transfer of federal health infrastructure to the province and later to the Cree
- continuation of access to certain federal services of national application

In 1978, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) was created to manage and administer health and social services for the Cree and non-Cree populations in Eeyou Istchee. Section 14, Chapter S-5 of the JBNQA also formally recognized Cree values and traditions in regard to the development and delivery of services (Torrie et al., 2005). This recognition was renewed in 2002, when Bill 108– *An act respecting health services and social services for Cree Native persons* (R.S.Q., c. S-5) – reiterated the province's responsibility of encouraging the Cree population "to participate in the founding, administration and development of institutions" and of providing appropriate services taking into account linguistic and sociocultural characteristics of the region (Government of Quebec, 2012).

Despite the legislative authority recognized by Section 14, community-responsive service development and delivery reflective of Cree ethos has only recently been implemented following the signing of the CBHSSJB Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) in 2004 (Torrie et al., 2005). This implementation gap was due to numerous fiscal and administrative difficulties resulting from the failure of both governments to properly and fully implement Section 14.[73] The more recent agreements, the Paix de Braves (2002) and the Agreement Concerning a New Relationship Between The Government of Canada and the Cree of Eeyou Istchee (2007), resolved, in part, Cree grievances with respect to non-implementation of the JBNQA, including health and social services as well as other provisions relative to economic development, resource exploitation and environmental protection (Feit, 2005; Salée & Lévesque, 2010).

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[73] See Torrie et al. (2005) for details on the administrative evolution of the CBHSSJB.

The SRP states that "all services should be provided in accordance with the cultural values and realities of the Crees" and calls for the "integration for traditional approaches to medicine and social services" (CBHSSJB, 2004, pp.8&9). Among the measures outlined in the SRP, the CBHSSJB has initiated a process to determine the future directions and integration of culturally-based 'Cree Helping Methods' within the current health system (CBHSSJB 2004, p. 29). The local community Miyupimaatisiun committees have been mandated to assist the local Band Councils and act as liaison between community members and the CBHSSJB (CNC, 2009, p. 3). Within this broad regional process the Cree Nation of Chisasibi has taken a leadership role in implementing Cree approaches to health and wellness by actively engaging community members in the development of programming as well as assessment of needs and vision with respect to incorporating Indigenous healing into the delivery and management of health and social services.

The Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee: local engagement in service delivery

Community health committees were initially envisioned in the federal Indian Health Policy (1978) but they were never constituted in the Cree territory except on an ad-hoc basis and never as permanent functioning organizations (Torrie et al., 2005, p. 222). At the time of writing this chapter only two communities have established local wellness committees. Chisasibi has passed a by-law to establish a local health committee in 2009, which has been active ever since. The Cree Nation of Nemaska by-law was finalized in 2012 and the committee has been recently established. A more recent regional planning process, Iiyuu Athaawin, initiated in 2013, aims to decentralize operational decision-making and adapt the SRP to the reality of each community. The process aims to support local institutions implement "Cree identity, culture and traditional value-based approaches to social wellness services" as well as improve and facilitate communications among entities with mandates dealing with social issues. The Miyupimaatisiiun committees are expected to be established in each Cree community to serve as local steering team for the Iiyuu Athaawin planning process (CBHSSJB, 2013).

The Miyupimaatisiun Committees are composed of local institutional representatives, at least an Elder and a youth member depending on the size of the community (for example Chisasibi has two Elders and two youth representatives), and other community members appointed by the local Band Council. They are responsible for reviewing matters related to community wellness and to assist "the Council in implementing effective policies and strategies

to promote the health and social welfare of the residents" (CNC, 2009, p. 3). In essence the Committees act as mediator between community members, the local Band Council and the CBHSSJB. Their mandate can nevertheless vary depending on the community context.

Integrating community visions of care and wellbeing continues to be a priority for the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, a priority that mobilizes and expands contemporary self-government policy and institutions. This process was initiated by Larry House, who, as a Community health representative, felt that the CBHSSJB did not meet its responsibility to engage community members in defining a vision of wellness and care that responded to local needs and priorities. As detailed in previous chapters the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee focused on mobilizing community participation by organizing two symposiums on health and social services and two round tables on iiyiyiu healing. These initiatives helped determine local needs and priorities in terms of health and wellness, as well as identifying culture-based programs (both on the land as well as community-based) that were in line with local ethos of care and wellbeing. The aim was to create spaces in which community conversations can take place to negotiate understandings of "relationships to land, cosmos, and spiritual traditions embodied in their healing and ceremonial practices" (Iseke, 2013, p. 36).

In line with the cultural safety perspective, they have recently focused on addressing local and regional institutional power imbalances by increasing local autonomy in service provision and integrating Indigenous approaches to care. The development of a manual for the land-based program is one aspect of this work. The present research also serves to mobilize theory to support the Committee's work and choice of programs and services. We continue to collaborate with the Chief and Council, as well as the CBHSSJB through the Nishiiyiyiu Department to validate the healing model developed by Eddie Pash and integrate it in the health and social service provision, as well as in the justice system. In addition, we have initiated training for Community Addictions Workers in collaboration with the Nechi Institute (an Aboriginal organization that teaches culturally safe intervention methods). We believe that developing the local capacity is key to effective service provision and to strengthen local autonomy that is grounded in iiyiyiu knowledge and way of life.

"Build it from the ground up"

In 1980, as a result of the damming of La Grande River, the Fort George iiyiyiwich were unceremoniously moved across the bay to the present-day Chisasibi - a place not of their

choosing. The impact of a cumulative range of stressors from residential school abuses, mercury poisoning and land loss from hydroelectric development, as well as overt paternalism from both governments and settlers working within Cree institutions, have disrupted family structures and undermined individual and community wellbeing. Having experienced it themselves, undoing this suffering has become a priority for many community members, yet, how each chooses to engage in this communal process of decolonization is dependent on their own life story and 'gifts'- knowledge, skills, and competencies.[74]

> And going back to where I almost killed myself. It took me a while to bring it out. The first time I talked about it was with my kids. I started shaking and had a big lump in my throat. The more I talked about it the easier it was. So all this stuff I went through, the more I talk about it the easier it was. And I use it, I use this to talk to young people. Especially to talk to my family and my kids. And I always tell them that "I tell you guys these things to learn the easy way, not the hard way to experienced it yourselves." (Roy)

> So, all these values I have learned overtime, with my own struggles, with my own trials. I am trying to teach my children so they are in a good place themselves, so they are happy. That is the whole point to me, being part of all of this.…You know, I had my troubles and my anger towards my family and my parents, but at one point I let go. And I understood that they did the best they could with what they have. And they did pretty good by me because I turned out well. So I love them. And that's it that's all. I am not going to point the finger at them anymore, because I need to own up and take responsibility of my own feelings and my own actions. (Denise)

Practically and in everyday life, they embody a personalized healing model that is rooted in both Cree ethos of relationality while also being informed by an emergent Indigenous solidarity that is place-based and temporally bound.

> And I learned that a lot of those traumas, if you can't, if you don't go back to see them, or work with them, it builds an illness in the body. That is what I learned

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[74] Please see the Decolonization Korsakow film for in-depth interviews

with our elders. I [also] learned with the modern world, you know. So that is how I started to heal my life, and meeting and listening to that knowledge, that medicine of the people and also meeting other society that have medicine people. Just taking what you need for yourself, to help yourself. (Irene)

I think that the days of suppression are gone. We don't need to hide anymore, it's not about…it's not a pride thing. For me, I try to be as humble as possible, but still stand up for the beliefs and ways of our people. They are not less than anybody else's' in the world. I think that our people need to come to understand that no matter who you are…I think is too narrow minded of us to think that we have the solution to humanity's problems. I think we need to make friends and allies out there too to help us achieve that in whatever way we can. So it's about making friends, real friends and making alliances. (Larry)

Once I left the community that is when everything started to matter. I wanted to know more about the language. I wanted to learn more about the ways. I felt like I have left something behind that I had to take with me. So when I was in North Bay I started meeting other Natives and some of them were younger than me and were showing good leadership skills. So I started to join these events, I started listening to them, and went to their school. There is this one school that really helped me change my way, and the Friendship Center too. If I hadn't gone there I would have probably not be sober right now. I would have probably be out there drinking, I would probably not be here in Chisasibi. Probably would not know anything about the Sundance if it wasn't for those two places and the people I met through there. There is a big thank you that I want to say. (Mike)

The resurgence taking place in Chisasibi calls for a flourishing creative potential that is guided by cultural revitalization and aims to achieve social justice for all. Indeed, as Newhouse (2004) states,

A modern Aboriginal society is defined by its post-colonial consciousness. It is a society that is aware that it has been colonized in many ways. It is a society that is aware of the implications of its colonization and is choosing deliberately, consciously, and systematically to deal with that colonization. It is a society that is

coming to terms with what has happened to it. It is a society that is determined to overcome its colonial legacy. It is a society that is starting to possess the ways and means to achieve its own goals. (p. 141)

In Chisasibi transforming the Indigenous-State relationship by politicizing care-giving practices and reorienting health policy for critical social justice takes many forms, from creating a Facebook discussion page to insisting for pay equity for traditional counsellors.

One of the things that I have been trying to be active in is along these lines of mental wellness. So when I hear that the committee were looking for people I actually wrote a letter to be part of it. I have been slowly integrating myself in little projects in the community to help improve our environment here. Because I believe that...I am tired of hearing parents complain that the lack of services and resources in terms of health and education and I figure why leave our community, why aren't we here working and taking part and improve these things. I started with, just a small, a Facebook page called "Pac's page" for communication between school and parents, because I felt it was really lacking. I was working in the school. So that was my first step towards doing my little part. I think is baby steps. You know if everybody did a little bit here and there, we can help improve our community so much more. (Denise)

We have to have individuals who are strong and are able to communicate that vision and that practice so that they can address any question any individual may have concerning what we are doing. In terms of the rates of pay, there are a lot of questions why these individuals [traditional counsellors] are getting [paid] so much. I never see the psychologists getting asked why they are charging so much. It always seems the traditional healers get asked that. These are some of the challenges that we have in implementing traditional healing within our institutions…personally I don't think that we can work in isolation of the institutions that we have to address the state of our communities. (Larry)

Social justice includes decriminalizing addictions and 'unmedicalizing' oppression by reconnecting with the land, engaging with the youth, building trust and sharing responsibility.

I never went to school like really go to school. I went there to socialize and I, yeah, I ended up what they call a delinquent youth. I ended up in a juvenile detention center in Montreal. From there I thought I negotiated my way out. I was one of the first actual cases of what they call bush placement. And I thought I did that just to avoid the system but what I got out of there was more than just….what I got out of there was a deeper understanding of who I am. Our stories, our creation stories, our heroes and our culture. It gave me a deeper understanding of our world view. (Larry)

When you are contemplating suicide [is] because you are at a point where you do not have any more coping skills to deal with what you are dealing with. And that is when you have to go for help. The thing that stopped me form even acting on it was my children. I chose to have these children, I chose to be a parent. And kind of parent would I be if I went off and ended my own life? What kind of lesson would I be telling them? That is ok to give up? That is ok to just let everything, all the things that you value the most just drop it? And I said no. So I went to get counselling. I also went to family and friends for support and help. And if I had had the means, although I had moments here and there, and one of the moments that I really enjoyed was going to Fort George Island with my sister. (Denise)

Above all it means taking responsibility to build places and spaces where compassionate and safe interpersonal relationships can be nurtured.

I think the resources are there and is just a matter of creating that collaboration. For the amount of resources that the Crees have we shouldn't be lacking anything in terms of programming or addressing the issues that affect our communities. We just have to create the safety and the opportunity, and the places for this things to happen....And it is true, connecting with the elders and gaining a deeper understanding of our cosmology, our world view, has helped me do the work I choose to do, which is addressing or attempting to change the perceptions in the community about why things are the way they are[…]And is always been the case where external authorities determine what is good for us. And what we are doing

today is trying to build it from the ground up and have some sort of engagement where we take ownership of any programs or any initiatives that we do. Because it would work better that way because we know what the realities are in our communities. (Larry)

It is a long process, but if we can have our Cree doctor and if we can have our own Cree nurses, I think we can have a bunch of people that can be in these positions because we need more local resources that need to be here and to stop relying so much on further down south. I find that we lose momentum when we are trying to rely on outside sources. We need to maintain consistent services to help support our community and I think that the [Miyupimaatisiiun] Committee can help create that. They can definitely help create a simple environment where we can have support groups, where we can have places where people can…where is safe to talk, is safe to be. I think we need to encourage that passion with our youth too. (Denise)

As evidenced in the [Youth Korsakow film](), for parents in Chisasibi, intergenerational solidarity is self-evident having themselves lived through the devastating impacts of the residential school fallout. Progressively, Cree parents have worked hard to both provide safe and stable living environments for their children while also trying to mobilize community resources to build the necessary institutional supports needed. As Roy and Denise explain,

So I have been involved with the youth since…I was always involved. Because I felt like, when I was growing up there was nothing for me, you know. I didn't have anybody to...there was hardly anything organized for me, so I started to get involved...When I went to college, when I came back I started to get involved with the kids…Even to this day, some youth come over to see me and ask to go for a ride. I take them for a ride and they tell me what is going on. I'll be driving with them for about a couple of hours, just letting them vent, you know. Vent whatever they are feeling. (Roy)

You now, for me as a parent, I already have strong values and morals that I pass down to my kids. Not every kid has that with their parents but they develop their own. One of the things that I want the youth to know is that if they have not

been able to learn it from their parents, learn it form a mentor, learn it form a role model, learn it for anybody and used it. Use it to break the cycle of whatever you have been living. That is what I did. I worked really hard to break the cycle of what I lived to provide a better life for my family. And find the support, find the help. Find somebody who is going to be with you and say 'yeah I am struggling too, you know, but let's find ways to get better. If we had more services, if we had more resources to focus on these youth, they can grow up to be good role models, good parents, good workers in our community and ensure our future. (Denise)

At the core, these processes are inspired and flourish from compassionate relations that speak to the 'truth' in each individual and provide the necessary emotional support for living a healthy and fulfilling life. As Irene explains, when invited 'into the youth's world' she always begins by telling them 'her own truth', her upbringing and 'how she lived her life' because "some of the stories you tell them, they feel some connection". Speaking about his own relationship with his children Roy explains that

There is not a single day that went by and I didn't hug them. I'd give them a kiss. I always did that every day because I wanted them to feel normal. Like, this is normal, being loved is normal. Getting a hug from your parents, getting a kiss from your parents, is normal. That is why I did that. And now two of them are having their own children and hopefully they will do the same thing for my grandchildren.

Denise goes beyond providing emotional support to acknowledging and celebrating youth agency as new forms of engagement and participation continue to emanate from communities

So, for our youth today, we need to constantly be there and show them that we care, that they are being heard because their voice is just as important. And sometimes, a lot more insightful then us, because adults go through the daily grind of work or responsibilities or whatever, they forget that kids are around. These kids are around and see, they know, they understand things, and maybe they see a better solution to some of these things. And the youth gave us that beautiful example, they gave us that demonstration. And it was so simple. It was a long walk to the capital [the Nishiiyuu Journey]. And it was a hard walk, and they did it to show us

that they still capable, they still know what to do, and they have a voice. They are here.

Indeed, in exploring the meaning of miyupimaatisiiun, Adelson (2000) shows how Cree culture is part of the reorganization of the present through a recuperation of history and identity in order to respond to external threats and to create new power structures. The Whapmagoostui annual gatherings link the community "not just to a precolonial past but to a present and future that include a growing range of what will constitute Indigenous beliefs and practices" (Adelson, 2001, p. 96).

The teachings that I received working with the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, through my personal relationship with Larry House, Eddie Pash and William Bearskin, as well as the infinitely compassionate and resilient life stories that the narrators shared, have confirmed that autonomy and wellness start with individuals first and diffuse in multiple, multivocal, and sometimes unexpected ways within families, communities and nations. Healing becomes a way of life that is informed by place-based, culturally relevant, and temporally bound discourses and practices. Healing is what keeps individuals engaged with the world and gives purpose to their life. It is about learning to be gentle and loving towards oneself and others by understanding that everyone has 'their own story', their own experience, and their own choices in living a good life. Indeed, "there is no such thing as universal pain. For each person, pain manifests uniquely" (Weissman, 2014, p. 46). Healing then, becomes the vehicle through which the community is building spaces in which decolonization can flourish. For Chisasibi this means rebuilding family and community relationships based on positive cultural identity that honors iiyiyiu knowledge and solidarity across generations. It also means taking responsibility for oneself and for each other and reconnecting with the land and spiritual practices.

Conclusion

The present exploration of decolonization began with a concern for the land and more specifically for land loss. It began with a personal experience of suffering, one in which frustration with state systems gave way to a period of hopelessness, but ultimately it informed a renewed engagement with agency and empowerment at the local level. It is a journey inspired by countless Indigenous youth who struggle at home and yet continue to embody and exemplify Indigenous resurgence, resistance and resilience by calling for communal relational responsibility. Through new forms of expression and action, young Indigenous people reconnect with cultural traditions while also renegotiate identity in light of contemporary realities in their communities. By reconstructing healing as political resistance and as a site of identity and cultural renegotiation, they have pointed to ways in which we can better situate and contextualize particular decolonizing practices; practices which are embedded and dependent on the community as a whole and not on one particular group within communities. Indeed, Cree youth consistently bring attention to the social problem burden placed squarely on their shoulders without considering the intersection of broader historical and contemporary processes that continue to affect their lives. Since at least the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, successive generations of Indigenous youth have called for individual and collective healing at home as a way of securing culturally relevant autonomy in view of living a good life. In essence, Indigenous youth, and, as this research has shown, other community members as well, continue to use healing as a metaphor for decolonization. As such, they do not express their political resistance in normative terms, but symbolically by constructing and operating conceptual spaces both at the individual and communal levels, in this case negotiating the meaning of miyupimaatisiiun, as well as deploying culturally specific healing practices, in this case the land-based healing program (Kirmayer, 2004, p. 39).

In Chisasibi, healing is deployed as political resistance and Cree ethos are the foundation to achieve decolonization. Concerns about the land, identity, belonging and empowerment that call for individual and collective responsibility in communities may not at first seem concerned with decolonization, as they do not necessarily engage with explicit normative Indigenous-State relations. Yet, the normative and institutional frames that healing often operates within are at best strained and at worse still inscribed within the State's neocolonial paradigm (Alfred Taiaike, 2005; Coulthard, 2014; Ladner, 2003). To assume that formal agreements, such as the James Bay

and Northern Quebec Agreement, guarantee full autonomy to local communities is to negate the contemporary systemic oppression that is alive and well within local institutions as well as in policy (Adelson, 2001; Irlbacher-Fox, 2009; McGibbon, 2012). Thus, constructing a decolonization model that meets normative benchmarks is both nonsensical and impossible. Instead, this research's claim is that locally, "multiple levels of interpretation" and diverse healing practices "go on in parallel and may reinforce each other, giving experience profound depth and resonance, or contradict each other creating complex experiences of irony, ambivalence and ambiguity" (Kirmayer, 2004, p. 38). In other words, healing is both a symbolic political act and a concrete exercise in decolonization. Symbolically, it calls for a collective negotiation of what miyupimaatisiiun can mean in the context of interjusrisdictional management of health and social services as well as in the intimate encounter between the service provider and the patient. Concretely, miyupimaatisiiun insists on locally derived and culturally informed service provision that enables individuals, families and communities to exercise autonomy.

The Land-based healing model developed by Eddie Pash was one aspect of this process that aimed to clarify how land and culture contribute to individual wellness. Grounded on the premise of cultural revitalization the land-based model employs experiential leaning using Cree language and spirituality that are mobilized intergenerationally. The program functions primarily at the individual level, which, in a clinical sense, operates at the brainstem and limbic system by regulating habituation, motivation and emotions (Kirmayer, 2004, p. 39). Eddie intervenes tacitly at these levels by deploying culturally specific approaches such as storytelling and rigorous physical bush activities. His interventions aim to 'train the mind' by using culturally relevant imagery and Cree language to enable individuals to "achieve better emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and adaptability to social roles" (Kirmayer, 2004, p. 40). On the other hand, by insisting on delivering the program in the bush, Eddie physically occupies his ancestral territory, while at the same time symbolically challenging imposed land tenure, and more specifically jurisdictional governing regimes. At the sociocultural level, the land-based program builds a positive cultural identity through storytelling that conveys shared meanings of miyupimaatisiiun, enabling families and communities to exercise culturally relevant autonomy over their lives and ultimately their institutions. The elders with whom we have spent time in the bush have never mentioned decolonization as an ultimate goal, but through their inclusiveness, love and compassion they have indeed embodied it.

On the other hand, Chisasibi is by no means homogenous. To speak about healing in Chisasibi reflects a political agency in which uncertainties, conflicts, apprehensions, and compromises are continually renegotiated in Indigenous communities more broadly. Even though it can sometimes feel like "a fight all around", empowerment and agency are often expressed and understood as confident inner and communal places from which action is taken. These are built by negotiating trust in oneself and in others that is expressed through speaking one's truth or life story. In other words, building consensus is a deeply personal experience enacted through displays of public relational vulnerability. Citizenship is not understood as a range of rights bestowed by the State, but as a web of relationships that are based on intimacy and responsibility to each other. These emotive political acts aim to undo generations of hurt and loss by mobilizing experiential knowledge and envisioning ways of being alive well.

The benefits that flow from the political mobilization of the Cree Nation and the resultant agreements that have secured extensive rights and provided resources for self-government institutions are key to successful local mobilization, yet, community members need to negotiate the ways in which these are framed and operationalized locally to address their own realities and achieve miyupimaatisiiun as they understand it. Respecting diversity while building consensus on a community vision of wellness and care is a difficult task, nonetheless, because it invokes imminent and immediate social needs it calls for compassion, respect, and responsibility. While community members recognize the structural and institutional dimensions of healing they nevertheless deem these negotiations of power and resources as potentially creative[75] spaces in which local intervention is possible. The Miyupimaatisiiun Committee for example has functioned as a mediating institution between local leadership, regional health and social service providers, and community members at large.

By connecting historical and contemporary sociocultural factors with present health outcomes in Chisasibi, the Committee has put forward a model for integrating iiyiyiu culture in service provision that is informed by a holistic approach to care as well as being community-based and relational in nature. From the beginning, the work of the Committee has been grounded in the needs and priorities of community members, as evidenced in the four community meetings held over the span of two years. The Committee has made efforts to attend to local

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[75] Concept of creative potential has been inspired by a keynote address given by Dr. Charles Royal, a Maori scholar at the 5th *Indigenous Development Conference*, Auckland, New Zealand, June 27-30, 2012.

tensions around issues of cultural integration by both using the present research to present a national snapshot of Indigenous healing as well as building evidence-based profile of local healing practices. As a mediating institution, the Committee has also focused on strengthening collaboration with regional and local service providers such as the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department and the Mental Health Department (Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay – CBHSSJB), the Justice Committee and the Chief and Council. For example, the short documentary on the Land-based healing program was aimed to increase awareness of locally derived culture-based services at both the local and regional level. The documentary was developed in consultation with the Elders Council (JBHSSJB), with the Chisasibi elders that advised Eddie, and the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department. The program manual was developed in consultation with the Justice Committee, the executive director of the CBHSSJB, the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department, as well as with other program staff such as William Bearskin and Larry House who have extensive experience in counselling and restorative justice.

Although these activities may seem apolitical, they are intended to increase autonomy and frame existing institutions and agreements in a way that is reflective of miyupimaatisiiun. For example, the Land-based healing program manual was specifically developed as a formal document that institutionalized the program at the level of the justice system; at least in Chisasibi the program functions as a diversion measure. In line with miyupimaatisiiun, it links justice, health, and culture in an integrated whole, aiming to decriminalize addictions and 'unmedicalize' oppression and suffering. Thus, in this case, decolonization cultivates personal and community transformation, and, while it does not overtly aim to build a just Indigenous-State relationship broadly, efforts in Chisasibi seek to operationalize existing agreements and having an impact on national policy. For example, the Committee has insisted on pay equity for elders, community cultural resources and traditional counsellors that provide services in the community. Recent provincial legislation (Bill 21- an *Act to amend the Professional Code and other legislative provisions in the mental health and human relations field*) has called for standardized professional practice, accreditation, and association that places administrative burden on and complicates the status of culture-based professionals (such as traditional counsellors, elders, etc.) working within existing service provision institutions such as the CBHSSJB. As a result, the Committee has submitted and secured funding for a Mental Wellness Team under the Health Canada mental health funding umbrella (which includes other programs such as Brighter Futures,

Community Wellness, NNADAP, etc.). Within this new jurisdictional arrangement the Chisasibi Mental Wellness Team (CMWT) has undertaken Community Addictions Training with the Nechi Institute to both ensure professional conduct and client safety as well as institutionalizing Indigenous caregiving practices. The Nechi Institute provides culturally safe training founded on "Aboriginal way of knowing, healing and learning" (Nechi, 2010). In addition, the CMWT has developed and supported culture-based services and programs in the community, including the Land-based healing program, elders' lodges, Roundances and the annual Sundance. It has insisted that such programming is in line with the National Native Addictions Partnership Foundation framework *Honouring our Strengths* and applied Health Canada funding for maintaining such programming and vision of care in the community.

Ultimately, the integration model developed in Chisasibi aims to achieve social justice though meaningfully engaging community members in the spirit of respect in developing safe spaces and places in which healing can be achieved. This includes not only individual healing but radiates outward to families and the community. In line with cultural safety, it has, through local actions, slowly decentered institutional practices and realigned some of them with culturally relevant meanings and practices. Achieving decolonization in Chisasibi is an incremental and slow process that, as has been mentioned previously, has to attend not only to exogenous forces but also to internalized oppression and lateral violence. As such, transforming the Indigenous-State relationship is a secondary goal; decolonization is, first and foremost, about building loving and nurturing relationships at home, relationships that provide a positive cultural identity, which in turn will create a critical mass of young leaders who will continue and perpetuate decolonization in the long-term.

Figure 30 Chisasibi model of Miyupimaatisiiun

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The individuals that shared their healing journeys with me have shown that everyday acts of resistance don't have to be violent upheavals. In many Indigenous communities, as in Chisasibi, these acts translate into daily life. Eating traditional food, putting up a sweat lodge behind one's house or coaching a football team are all acts of resistance because each relationship that they create is another potential space in which individuals can voice their needs and empower each other. This research experience, this 'conversation-in-relation'[76], a foundational concept in both oral history and indigenous studies, has validated doing research with and for communities by taking a strength based approach in which these everyday acts of resistance are celebrated. My own settler decolonizing research practice has enabled me to honor my relationships with the community as a valid academic and political endeavor. By taking sides one also takes responsibility to maintain and nourish relationships in the long-term. For me, as a settler ally, this means doing research that honors indigenous ontologies and epistemologies. Ten years ago, when I first begun to do research in Eeyou Istchee, I did not really understand Cree worldviews. I did not understand why, a good friend of mine, a mother of six, and an educational consultant, could crash her car on a snow bank because she was driving under the influence. She was well educated, had a good paying job with benefits, a spacious well maintained house, and good relationships with her children. Theoretically, she had excellent social determinants of health as well as strong mental health protective factors (Chandler & Lalonde, 2004 & 2009).

In the past six years since I have started this project, the people that have guided me and walked along with me on this journey have prepared me to better understand miyupimaatisiiun and also to mobilize it in my own research. More than anything else, in their own ways, they each have taught me how to listen and act with compassion. As Shawn Wilson (2008) insists, research is a space for building relationships, and together with the community, to cocreate the tools necessary to ensure that these relationships are sustainable in the future. For settler-allies, doing research in Indigenous contexts calls for an epistemology based on sharing authority and critical theory that maximizes and mobilizes local knowledge for local social justice. It means listening to Indigenous critiques in view to create a truly decolonizing solidarity that foregrounds place-based culturally informed priorities.

Practically, for me, this has meant that this research endeavor was an experiment in knowledge mobilization. Often, academic texts rarely pay conscious attention to how a research

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[76] Cole & Knowles, 2001.

agenda is developed, how field experiences change methodologies and epistemologies, how local dynamics evolve within a given research process, or how researcher positionality is undermined and reinforced at the same time. In other words, I attempted to make evident how knowledge was created and circulated in the course of the research process. In doing so I attempted to explore some of the challenges inherent in mobilizing knowledge: interdisciplinary tensions; the particular context of social science research in Indigenous contexts; the difficulty of understanding 'other' epistemologies; and most importantly to discern appropriate ways of acting in a good way (Lévesque, 2009a). Even though my initial intention was to only conduct life-story interviews, my methodology was flexible and inclusive; open and receptive to, sometimes unvoiced needs and emergent realities on the ground.

Specifically, my methodology was co-developed with the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee in a way that responded to their research needs as well as mine, while also attempting to frame the research within the broader regional institutional processes such as those of the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department. In a first instance, even though this research was initially aimed at understanding youth engagement in resource development, by listening to their critiques of community dynamics as well as those aimed at my own research intervention, the overall research agenda was shifted towards the needs and priorities identified by them, in this case the need for healing supports in the community. Second, in line with the goal of closing the research gap between academia and communities, I attempted as much as possible to provide research support to the main stakeholders (the Miyupimaatisiiun Committee and the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department) by developing and delivering the youth survey and producing the short documentary. These two research activities, as well as the accompanying website, have provided examples of differential collaboration and levels of engagement form the part of community research partners.

In the first instance, the survey was a need identified primarily by the Nishiiyuu Miyupimaatisiiun Department who took a leading role in co-identifying the survey variables. For example, the Kessler-6 psychological distress is a clinical mental wellness assessment tool that may seem at odds with the broader claims for culture-based models of care made in this research. Nonetheless, the department required an 'accepted' evidence-based assessment for regional and provincial health and social service institutional negotiations that would support the need for culture-based programming. In the case of the short documentary, the Nishiiyuu

Miyupimaatisiiun Department only provided financial and logistical support, while the land-based healing program team co-developed the narrative and made editorial decisions over the final content, although I personally edited the first version and the videographer finalized it. In this instance, authority over the concept, production and distribution was shared between the participants, the community institutions, the researcher and the technical staff (videographer); nevertheless, no interest was shown from the part of community partners for technical skills transfer. Finally, the individual healing narratives and the accompanying website are a limited exercise in sharing authority. Except for the content of the interviews that were largely at the purview of the interviewees, the analysis and interpretation of their healing narratives as well as the resulting Korsakow films and the website are mine. I chose to limit the collaboration in this instance partly because a lack of time and resources from my part, partly because my principal research partner, the Chisasibi Miyupimaatisiiun Committee, prioritized service provision, and partly because interviewees chose not to develop a more engaged relationship with the project. Indeed, sharing authority does not have to happen at all steps of the research process, nor does it always have to include all participants.

Undeniably, community-based collaborative research is always evolving and unpredictable requiring, what psychologist Henry Greenspan (2015) calls 'creative improvisation' to make possible the "hard work of working hard together" (p, 156). As evidenced in the edited collection *Beyond Testimony and Trauma: Oral History in the Aftermath of Mass Violence* (High, 2015), suffering is indeed transformed when we, as researchers and often friends, truly engage with and mobilize the "in the bones knowledge" shared in the context of our projects and deploy it for social change. Even when on the ground change is not possible or desirable, these 'field' improvisations should at least help us reflect on the theory, ethics and relationality of our practice. As Greenspan (2015) so eloquently and succinctly states, "if it is too late to redo, it is not too late to rethink" (p. 162).

In the same way, I had the great fortune to learn that despite the oppression of the past and in spite of the injustice of the present, Indigenous individuals learn to move beyond the trauma, to harness the knowledge gained in the contexts of their loss and suffering to develop processes and institutions that respond to their collective needs. By living and working in Chisasibi I finally got my Indigenous education (Reilly, 2011). I came to understand that my friend's behavior and habits were intricately linked with the sexual abuse she experienced in residential school. I also

understood that being well, or healing, is a lifelong journey that needs the loving support of family and friends, as well as local institutional supports that are person-centered and culturally safe. It means to have safe and thriving communities in which children can sleep peacefully at night. Or for that young man to stand up to his abusive stepfather and protect his siblings. Or for that young mother to let go of the pain and take responsibility for her family. And better yet, it means that community institutions have the capacity to respond to the needs of their members in a way that is in line with locally derived and culturally informed caregiving practices.

In sum, healing in Chisasibi is part and parcel of local decolonizing processes. It requires both an individual as well as a communal shift in understanding how imposed and culturally irrelevant systems impact everyday life but also, and especially, building from the ground up the means for political action needed to confront powerful political institutions. The movement of individual health and healing becomes a communal process of decolonization when locally-based and culturally relevant actions are mobilized to better frame and operationalize the existing institutions and policies at home. Confronting colonial domination is not reserved for leadership in the traditional sense (chief and councils) nor exclusively in the normative domain of self-governance, it actually operates in everyday acts of resistance and resurgence that at their core address the need of individuals to survive on a daily basis. As such, decolonization is neither a disembodied and abstract concept nor an indulgence of an Indigenous elite, it is a daily engagement with a culturally based creative intelligence that aims to go beyond the mere survival to create loving, nurturing and compassionate relationships that realign individuals and communities with miyupimaatisiiun. Indeed, as Simpson (2011) states, "living in a good way is an incredible disruption to the colonial narrative in and of itself" (p. 41). For the Chisasibi research partners, "reconnecting in the most simplest ways, is the most effective manner - making that connection to your elders, connection to the land, connection with each other as people" (Denise).

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Appendix A – Research Agreement

Uschiniichuu Futures: Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

Research Agreement

between

IOANA RADU
2172 Gervais
Lasalle, Qc, H8N 1K1
514-366-6483 / 514-831-8796
(Hereafter referred to as the Researcher)

and

CHISASIBI MIYUPMAATISSIIUN COMMITTEE
Represented by Larry House
Box 250
Chisasibi, QC J0M 1E0
(Cell) 819-855-7736
(Hereafter referred to as the Committee)

The Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee and Ioana Radu agree to conduct the named research project with the following understandings:

1. The purpose of this research project, as discussed with and understood by the Committee, is:
- Improve the understanding of Chisasibi youth perspectives about Eeyou healing methods
- Establish baseline profile of Eeyou healing methods used by Chisasibi youth
- Identify Eeyou healing benefits and concerns among this population

2. The scope of this research project (that is, what issue, events, or activities are to be involved, and the degree of participation by community residents), as discussed with and understood by the Committee, is:
- The Researcher respects and understands the community's jurisdiction over the conduct of research.
- The Researcher acknowledges and respects the inherent rights to any cultural knowledge, sacred knowledge, and cultural practices and traditions, which are shared with the researcher. The Researcher supports mechanisms for the protection of such knowledge, practices and traditions.
- Issues related to the project will be addressed through organizational meetings with the Committee and other relevant community entities.

- An ethnographic study of a land-based healing program, which includes video recording of activities and semi-directed interviews.
- A Health and Wellness survey to be administered to youth between the ages of 16 and 35.
- Video recorded life story interviews with community members (8) that have participated and/or initiated Eeyou healing activities.
- Community members who will participate as respondents will volunteer approximately one hour to participate in the interviews/survey.

3. Methods to be used, as agreed by the researchers and the Committee, are:
- The researcher will be responsible for conducting interviews and the survey. If deemed feasible, a member of the community will be employed by the project to conduct a portion of the survey. The Committee and/or other community entities will cover the fees for this individual.
- The interview and the survey take approximately one hour to administer, are conduced based on specific Informed Consent terms as per the Form and are voluntary. Questions are asked about the role of Eeyou healing methods, benefits and challenges as perceived by the participants and a series of questions on the health and wellness status of the participants.

4. Community training and participation, as agreed, is to include:
- The development of this project is based on sincere communication between community members and researchers. All efforts will be made to incorporate and address local concerns and recommendations at each step of the project.
- At the end of the project, the Researcher will participate in community meetings to discuss the results of the analysis with community members and interested entities.

5. Information collected is to be shared, distributed, and stored in these agreed ways:
- The data collected is confidential and no name is attached to a record, unless participants agree to be named. Copies will be kept by the Researcher where the data will be converted to an electronic form. The researcher and the Committee will be available to answer questions and assist community members should community members decide to use these data for different purposes, beyond the objectives of this particular project.
- A final report will be distributed to community members.
- The Researcher will not share data with any agency or organization, without prior authorization of the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee & the Nishiiyuu.

6. Informed consent of individual participants is to be obtained in these agreed ways:
- An information sheet on the specific research activity will be given to each participant.
- An individual consent form will be read by the interviewer to the respondent. A copy of the consent form will be left with the respondent where the addresses of each researcher can be used at any time, should the respondent wish to contact the researchers for additional information.
- If oral consent is given, the researcher will make a note in writing or will record the consent.

7. The names of participants and the community are to be protected in these agreed ways:
- As mentioned on the consent form, the consent for <u>interviews</u> depends on the choice of the participant. In no instance will the name of a respondent be attached to a record, unless participants agree to be named.

- As mentioned on the consent form, the <u>surveys</u> are confidential. In no instance will the name of a respondent be attached to a record.
- Before distribution of the final report, or any publication, or contact with the media, the community will be consulted once again as to whether the community agrees to share this data in that particular way.

8. Project progress will be communicated to the community in these agreed ways:
- In the fall 2013, the results of the project conducted during the preceding Spring/Summer will be presented to the community. The Researcher will travel to the community and hold public community meetings to this effect. Similarly, public community meetings will be held in the Winter 2013/14, in the community to report on the overall project results.
- The Researcher will also be available during the course of the project to address particular questions that may arise.

9. Communication with the media and other parties (including funding agencies) outside the named researchers and the community will be handled in these agreed ways:
- During any public communication on project progress and findings, the Researcher will be aware of their responsibilities and commitments to the welfare of the community involved.

BENEFITS AND COMMITMENTS

The Researcher wishes to use this research project for benefit in these ways (for instance, by publishing the report and articles about it):
- The Researchers will publish a final report to the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee, Nishiiyuu Department, and the Chisasibi Youth Council. A final PhD Thesis will be deposited on the Concordia website. Scientific presentations in peer-reviewed conferences and publications will be made. The final report will be reviewed by the research partners prior to publication. Scientific presentations and articles will be published after discussion with the research partners.

Benefits likely to be gained by the community through this research project are:

- Educational
  The video record can be used to produce either a fool length educational documentary of short public announcement/digital stories to be used in the local and regional schools.

- Informational
  The community at large will learn about the health and cultural attributes of Eeyou healing methods. The information generated by this project will assist individuals in making informed decisions as to their choice of health and social services. The data generated by this project will be kept in the community, should it be used in the future to address new questions or compare changes in Eeyou healing practices.

- Institutional
  The data gathered will form the basis for a strategic approach to supporting Community Based Healing in Chisasibi and contribute to design a Nishiiyuu Traditional Healing and helping models based on cultural approaches that will be implemented on the territory of the Cree Nation.

Commitments

The community's commitment to the researcher is to:
- Recommend capable and reliable community members to collaborate/be employed in this project.
- Keep informed on the project progress, and help in leading the project toward meaningful results.

The researcher's main commitment to the community is to:
- Inform the community as to the project progress in a clear, specific, and timely manner.
- Act as resource to the community for institutional process of Eeyou healing-related questions.
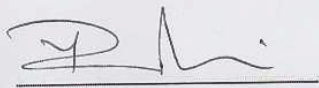
The Researcher agrees to stop the research project under the following conditions:
- If community leaders, for example the Chief and Council, decide to withdraw participation.
- If the researchers believe that the project will no-longer benefit the community
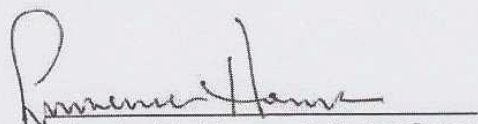
Signed by:

Date: June 27, 2013   Date: June 27, 2013
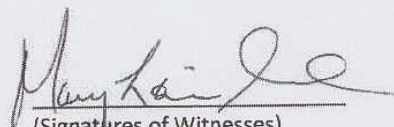
_____   _____
(Signature of Main Researcher)   (Signature(s) of Community Contact Person (s))

Name: Name: Lawrence House
Position: Position: Committee Member

_____   _____
(Signatures Witnesses)   (Signatures of Witnesses)
                                       Vice President of
                                       Miiyupmaatissiiun
                                              Committee

Appendix B – Wellness Survey

Uschiniichuu Futures:

Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

Interviewer: _____   Self administered

Date: _____

Study identifier: _____ .

Introduction

This survey is being conducted as part of a study by Ioana Radu that looks at the role of traditional healing methods in the lives of young people in Chisasibi. It has the support of the Chisasibi Miyupimaatissiiun Committee and the Nishiiyuu Department (CBHSSJB). Your participation in this survey is <u>voluntary</u>. You can choose to answer all or some of these questions. *All* project participants are being asked to fill out this form so that we can learn from your experience. Some questions are very sensitive and personal, if you feel uncomfortable about any issue related to this questionnaire you can choose not to respond. You can choose not to continue even after you have started answering questions. All information will be kept <u>confidential</u>. No one will be able to identify your comments in any reports. The information will help improve health and social services in your community. **There are no right or wrong answers, only answers that are** *true for you*.

SECTION 1 – DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age?   _____

2. Gender

Male   Female   Other:

3. Have you always lived in Chisasibi?

☐ Yes   ☐ Don't know   ☐ Refused   (go to question 5)

☐ No (Go to question 4)

4. Where else have you lived besides Chisasibi? (fill in all that apply)

    a. *Other Cree community*

Eastmain	Nemaska	Ouje
Mistissini	Waskaganish	Washaw Sibi
Waswanipi	Wemindji	Whapmagoostui

    b. *Other city or town (please list it/them):*

5. As an aboriginal person, do you identify yourself as....

Status   Non-status   Inuit   Métis   Don't know

Other (please specify) _____

6. Do you speak Cree (or other Aboriginal language) well enough to carry a conversation?

Yes   No   Only understand   Trying to learn

Other Aboriginal language (please specify): _____

7. What is the highest grade you have completed?

Elementary   1   2   3   4   5   6

Secondary: 1   2   3   4   5

8. Other than elementary or secondary, what education have you completed?

☐ Some trade, technical or vocational

☐ Some community college or CEGEP

☐ Some University

☐ Diploma or certificate from trade, technical or vocational school

☐ Diploma or certificate from community college, CEGEP, or university

☐ University degree (BA)

☐ Masters

☐ Doctorate (PhD)

☐ Other : _____

☐ Don't know

9. What is your present marital status?

Single   Married   Common-law   Separated   Divorced

Widowed   Other: _____

10. How many children do you have?

	Number	Age
Boys		
Girls		

I don't have children

11. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?
Include all people that reside in your household <u>at least half of the time</u>

Number of children under 18**:** [|]

Number of adults 18 -64: [|]

Number of adults 65 + : [|]

Total number of adults: [|]

SECTION 2 - WELLNESS

The next few questions are about your community and your social network.

1. In the past year, how many days have you spent outside of the community on the land?

_____days

Do not know

No response

2. In the past year, what sorts of activities have you carried out on the land? Circle all that apply.

Hunting on land	Working around the camp
Walking long distances	Bringing water/chopping wood
Hunting on water	Cleaning game/Cooking
Hiking	Gathering medicine
Snowshoe walking	Tool making (snowshoes, knifes, etc)
Building a cabin	Sewing/beading
Berry picking	
Fishing	
Dog team	
Recreational snowmobiling/ATV	
Skiing	
Other, specify_____	
Do not know	
No response	

3. How important/necessary is it for you to be able to go out on the land?

Very important

Somewhat important

Neither important or unimportant

Unimportant

Do not know

No response

4. In your opinion, is this community generally peaceful or affected by violence?

Very peaceful

Moderately peaceful

Neither peaceful nor violent

Very violent

Do not know

No response

5. In the last month, how often have you participated in any activities where people came together to work for the benefit of the community? Examples: Coaching, foster parent, community boards, food sharing etc.

Very often   →Continue

Often   →Continue

Sometimes   →Continue

Rarely   →Continue

Never   →Go to Q7

Do not know   →Continue

No response   →Continue

6. In which season are you most active with participating in community activities such as we just discussed? Circle all that apply.

Spring

Summer

Fall

Winter

All of the above

Don't know

7. In the past month, how often have you gotten together with people to play games, sports, or recreational activities?

Very often

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Do not know

No response

8. If you have a job, are you happy with your present job situation (including any seasonal work)?

Yes   No   Neutral   Not applicable-don't have a job

Do not know   No response

9. How often in the past month did you:

	Never	Rarely 1-3 days	Sometimes 4-14 days	Often 15-21 days	Always 22-31 days
Have trouble falling asleep?					
Wake up several times per night?					
Have trouble staying asleep (including waking far too early)?					
Wake up after your usual amount of sleep feeling tired and worn out?					

10. What is the reason(s) that you cannot sleep? Circle all that apply.

Stress

Pain

Children

Overcrowding

TV/Music

Sleeping in shifts (working night shifts)

Uncomfortable mattress/floor/couch

Other, specify_____

Do not know

No response

11. How often do you find you spend time with someone you like to be with?

All of the time

Most of the time

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Do not know

No response

12. How often do you find that you have someone to talk to if you feel troubled or for some reason need emotional support?

All of the time

Most of the time

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Do not know

No response

13. How often does someone make you feel worried or demands too much from you in everyday life?

All of the time

Most of the time

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

Do not know

No response

14. Are you ever alone when you would in fact prefer to be with others?

No

Yes, but rarely

Yes, once in a while

Yes, often

Do not know

No response

15. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel anxious?

All the time

Most of the time

Some of the time

A little of the time

Never

Do not know

No response

16. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel hopeless?

    All the time

    Most of the time

    Some of the time

    A little of the time

    Never

    Do not know

    No response

17. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel restless or fidgety?

    All the time

    Most of the time

    Some of the time

    A little of the time

    Never

    Do not know

    No response

18. During the past 30 days, how often did you feel so depressed that nothing could cheer you up?

    All the time

    Most of the time

    Some of the time

    A little of the time

    Never

    Do not know

    No response

19. During the past 30 days, how often did you feel that everything was an effort?

    All the time

    Most of the time

    Some of the time

    A little of the time

    Never

    Do not know

    No response

20. During the past 30 days, about how often did you feel worthless?

    All the time

    Most of the time

    Some of the time

A little of the time

Never

Do not know

No response

21. Have you sought help to address the issues discussed in questions 15 to 20?

Yes

Didn't know who to ask

I was embarrassed to talk about it

No

No response

22. Where did you go for help? (Circle all that apply)

Parents

Brother/sister

Grandparents

Other family member

Friends

NAADAP worker

Social worker

Counsellor

Traditional healer

Preacher

Police

Teacher

Other resource person in the community (please specify title/relation): _____

23. In your opinion what are your best qualities?

Write here: _____

24. What are the best qualities of the person you admire the most in your community?

Write here: _____

25. What would help people thrive in your community?

Write here: _____

SECTION 3 - COMMUNITY SERVICES

The next few questions are about the health and social services in your community.

1. Was there ever a time when you needed health care or advice and did not receive it?

Yes → Go to question 2

No → Go to question 4

2. What was the reason for which you did not received services?

There was no staff available

They were booked

They did not provide the service I was seeking

The care provider did not want to help me

No reason was given

Don't know

3. What was the type of care you were seeking? (Circle all that apply)

Assessment and/or treatment of physical health problem including care of an injury or substance abuse

Assessment and/or treatment of an emotional or health problem

Assessment and/or treatment and/or referral for a spiritual concern

Assistance with mental health

Assistance with family issue

Assistance with violence issue

A regular checkup

Follow up care, general

Rehabilitation of an injury or chronic condition

Other (Specify): _____

Refused

4. Do you think the current services available in the community address your needs?

Yes

It could be improved

No

Don't know

No response

5. What type of services do you think are missing in the community? (Circle all that apply)

Mental health counselling

Substance abuse services

Pre & post natal services

Sexuality and sexual health services

Violence related services (eg. Safe house)

Traditional knowledge and skills

Stress management

Empowerment (eg. Talking circles, leadership, etc)

Depression or suicide

Nutrition and diet

Land-based programs

Others (please specify) _____

Don't know

No response

7. Would you be interested in participating in community consultations regarding health and social services?

Yes

No

Maybe

Don't know

Doesn't make a difference

No response

8. Who do you think should be responsible for improving health and social services in the community? (circle all that apply)

CBHSSJB

The Chief and Council

The Youth Council

The Miyupimaatisiun Committee

The community (people should be more involved)

Don't know

Other (please specify): _____

No response

9. Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements

I would like to use only Cree-based programs and services to meet my needs

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

I will use any combination of Cree and non-Aboriginal services to meet my needs

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

I will use only non-Aboriginal services to meet my needs

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

10. Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statements

Traditional Cree cultural events are important to my life

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

Traditional Aboriginal events (not Cree) are important to my life

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

I would like to learn more about my culture

Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

Don't know   No response

I would like to know more about other Aboriginal cultures

    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

    Don't know   No response

I would like to incorporate more Cree culture into my life

    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

    Don't know   No response

I would like to incorporate more Cree culture into the life of my family

    Strongly disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly agree

    Don't know   No response

SECTION 4 – TRADITIONAL HEALING

The next few questions are about traditional healing methods.

1. In your own words, how do you define wellness/wellbeing from a traditional perspective in your community?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. In your own words, how would you describe your models of 'traditional practices and medicines'?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Would you seek traditional healing methods to address your physical, mental, emotional or spiritual health? (circle all that apply)

    Physical

    Mental

    Emotional

    Spiritual

    All of the above

Don't know

Other (please specify): _____

Personal experience with traditional healing activities/services

4. Have you ever used traditional healing services?

Yes   → Go to question 4

No   → Go to question 38

Wanted to but did not know who to ask and/or where to go   → Go to question 38

Don't know   → Go to question 38

No response   → Go to question 38

5. What type of healing methods/service have you used? (Circle all that apply)

Land-based program

Traditional counselling

Sweats

Sundance

Giveaway ceremony

Other ceremonies

Traditional medicine

Sharing circles / group counselling

Traditional arts & Crafts

Hunting/Fishing/Being on the land with family or friends

Other (please specify): _____

6. What attracted you to participate in traditional healing (please circle one)?

recommended by a friend

recommended by a counsellor

recommended by a family member

part of my care plan (young offenders, court ordered, etc)

interested because of my own experience

to meet needs not addressed by regular health and social services available

other:_____

_____

7. Once you decided to use traditional healing methods, were you looking for assistance with? (Circle all that apply)

Mental health counselling

Substance abuse services

Pre & post natal services

Sexuality and sexual health services

Violence related services

Traditional knowledge and skills

Stress management

Empowerment (eg. Talking circles, leadership, etc)

Depression or suicide

Nutrition and diet

Land-based programs

Others (please specify) _____

Don't know

No response

8. In total how long have you been using traditional healing methods?

Less than 2 months

2 – 6 months

7 – 12 months

Over 1 year

Over 2 years

Over 3 years

Other (specify):

Don't know

Refused

9 . General assessment of healing activities

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	N/A
1. General assessment of the healing activities						
2. Activities met my expectations						
3. Staff & elder were helpful (they provided support and were understanding)						
4. Treatment Plan (the tasks help me to address my issues)						
5. Instructions/introduction was clear (I knew what I had to do)						
6. Dialogue between participants (was dialogue well facilitated)						
7. Facilities						

10. Were the healing activities helpful to you (did it help you address the issues you initially mentioned)?

Yes

How was it helpful?

_____

_____

_____

No

How was it not helpful?

_____
_____
_____

11. Did they do enough to motivate you and provide you with enough support to feel comfortable and confident?

Yes   No

Comments: -

_____
_____

12. Did they help you find or develop your strengths?

not at all   minimally   somewhat   good   very good   extremely well

13. Did they help you move beyond the trauma of your past?

not at all   minimally   somewhat   good   very good   extremely well

14. Did they help you to feel good about yourself?

not at all   minimally   somewhat   good   very good   extremely well

15. Would you say that participating in healing activities has made a difference in your life?

    Yes   → Go to question 16

    No   → Go to question 19

    Don't know   → Go to question 19

    No response   → Go to question 19

16. Overall, would you classify these differences as:

    Positive   → Go to question 17

    Negative   → Go to question 18

    Don't know   → Go to question 19

    No reply   → Go to question 19

17. What would best describe the positive impacts? (Circle all that apply)

    I am working at improving my family relationships

    I have left an abusive relationship

    I have began to eat healthier foods

    I have increased my physical activity

    I interact more with other people

    I have moved to a healthier home

    I have taken more responsibility for my own health

I have taken more responsibility for my own lifestyle

I participate more in cultural activities

I participate more in decision-making/self-governance related to community life

I have made other positive changes (please specify):
_____

18. What would best describe the negative changes? (circle all that apply)

The health of my family relationships has deteriorated

I continue in an abuse relationship

I continue with my unhealthy eating habits

There has been an increase in my physical activity

I interact less with others

I remain in an unhealthy home

I have taken less responsibility for my own health

I have taken less responsibility for my own lifestyle

I participate less (than before) in cultural activities

I participate less in decision-making related to community life

I have made other negative changes in my life (please specify):

_____

19. Would you say that healing activities have (check all that apply):

	Not at all	A little	A lot	A great deal	Don't Know
Increased your access to a doctor					
Increased your access to other health care services					
Increased your access to traditional health providers or supports					
Provided support in making healthy lifestyle choices					
Assisted and supported you in assuming responsibility for your own healing					
Assisted you in changing your behaviour					
Assisted and supported your family in the healing process					
Assisted and supported your community in the healing process					
Assisted and supported you connecting to your identity as a Cree/Aboriginal person					
Assisted and supported you in participating in decision-making/self-governance in the community					

20. How motivated were you to heal before joining in healing activities?

Not motivated				Very motivated
1	2	3	4	5

21. How motivated are you to heal after participating in healing activities or a specific program?

Not motivated				Very motivated
1	2	3	4	5

22. Did it motivate you to continue your healing journey?

Yes   No

Comments:

_____
_____

23. Have you used what you learned in your everyday life?

Yes

No

Don't know

No reply

24. If yes, please explain how you have used what have you learned in your everyday life:

_____
_____
_____
_____

25. As a result of your involvement in healing activities have you noticed any improvement in the following areas?

	Improved	Not improved
Stress levels		
Social supports (eg. family, friends, co-workers)		
Sleep habits		
Levels of happiness, contentment		
Balance in your life (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual)		
Participation in self-governance		
Connection with Cree/Aboriginal culture		
Understanding of Cree/Aboriginal culture		

26. Would you recommend healing activities to others?

Yes   No   Maybe

27. Were there any negative aspects that you encountered?

_____
_____

_____

_____

28. What improvements would you recommend?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Impact on others

29. Did your experience with traditional healing activities/services impact other family members?

   Yes → Go to question 30

   No   → Go to question 34

30. Approximately how many family members do you think have been influenced by your experience?

_____

31. Do you think these impacts will be temporary or long-lasting?

   Temporary

   Long-lasting

   Don't know

   No reply

32. Do you think these impacts will result in a stronger, healthier family?

   Yes

   No

   Don't know

   No reply

33. Do any of these impacts relate to a reduction of family violence?

   Yes

   No

   Don't know

   No reply

34. Do you think that your experiences can, or already has impacted on other community members

Yes   → Go to question 35

No   → Go to question 36

Don't know   → Go to question 35

No reply   → Go to question 35

35. What would best describe the nature of the impacts on community members? (circle all that apply)

More awareness of traditional healing methods/activities/services

More people know more about how to live a healthier life

Increased awareness of how to develop stronger, healthier family lives

Increased opportunities to access Elders

Renewed relationship with the land

Use of Cree language

More individuals are committed to healing

Reduction in violence issues

Increased access to holistic health care

Increased community dialog on pressing health and social issues

Creation of more safe spaces to share experiences and solutions of pressing issues facing the community

Increased participation of community members in decision-making/ self-governance

Increased understanding of impacts of history on individuals and community

Increased understanding of personal and collective trauma

Don't know

No reply

Other (please specify):

_____

36. Thinking beyond your family and the community, do you feel that your experiences with traditional healing can, or already have impacted your nation?

Yes

No

Don't know

No reply

37. How would you best describe the impacts, or potential impacts on your nation? (circle all that apply)

As improvements or progress in:

Traditional approaches to healing

Renewal of Cree/Aboriginal spirituality

Traditional ceremonial activity

Stronger, healthier individuals

Stronger, healthier families and communities

Renewed relationship with the land

Use of Cree language

Reduction in alcohol and drug use

Reduction in violence issues

Availability of Aboriginal health professionals

Assuming responsibility for personal healing

Assuming responsibility for family and community healing

Increased ability to participate in community decision-making/self-governance

Increased understanding of impacts of history on individuals and community

Increased understanding of personal and collective trauma

Don't know

No reply

Other (please specify): _____

Thank you for participating in this study. We appreciate the time you have spent answering these questions. Is there anything that you would like to add, that we might have missed?

-

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MEEGWETCH!

38. Are you aware of traditional healing activities/services available in Chisasibi?

Yes → Go to question 39

No → Go to question 40

Don't know → Go to question 41

No reply → Go to question 41

39. If yes, how did you learn about them? (Circle all that apply)

Youth programs

Sessions in School

Community events/workshops

Health programs

Healing gatherings/workshops

From family members

From friends

From other community members

From radio

Advertising in the community

Other (please specify): _____

40. If no, what do you think are the reasons? (Circle all that apply)

I am not interested

Knowledge is kept within families

Knowledge is too sensitive to share with the public

There is no advertising or information available

My family will object to my participation in traditional healing

My friends will object to my participation in traditional healing

Don't know

No reply

41. What way would be most effective to raise awareness about traditional healing in the community? (Circle all that apply)

Radio

Newsletter

Local TV channel

Community consultations/workshops

Youth specific consultations/workshops

Pamphlets and brochures at:

The Clinic

The Band Office

Youth Center

Restaurant

Arena

Store

Elsewhere (please specify):_____

Activities/workshops at school

Local community AGA

Dedicated Facebook page

Dedicated website

Others (please specify): _____

Don't know

No reply

42. What type of healing methods/service would you want to know more about? (circle all that apply)

Land-based program

Traditional counselling

Sweats

Sundance

Giveaway ceremony

Other ceremonies

Traditional medicine

Sharing circles / group counselling

Traditional arts & Crafts

Hunting/Fishing/Being on the land with family or friends

Other (please specify): _____

All of the above

43. If you were to use traditional healing, would you be looking for assistance with? (circle all that apply)

Mental health counselling

Substance abuse services

Pre & post natal services

Sexuality and sexual health services

Violence related services (eg. Safe house)

Traditional knowledge and skills

Stress management

Empowerment (eg. Talking circles, leadership, etc)

Depression or suicide

Nutrition and diet

Land-based programs

Others (please specify) _____

Don't know

No response

44. In your opinion, do you think traditional healing will help address health and social priorities ? (circle all that apply)

> For yourself
>
> For your family members
>
> For the community
>
> For the nation
>
> Don't know
>
> No reply

45. In your opinion, do you think traditional healing should be included as part of your health and social program delivery?

> Yes
>
> No
>
> Don't know
>
> No reply

46. In your opinion, do you think traditional healing would:

	Not at all	A little	A lot	A great deal	Don't Know
Provide support in making healthy lifestyle choices					
Assist and supported you in assuming responsibility for your own healing					
Assist you in changing your behaviour					
Assist and support your family in the healing process					
Assist and support your community in the healing process					
Assist and support you connecting to your identity as a Cree/Aboriginal person					
Assist and support you in participating in decision-making/self-governance in the community					

If you are interested to receive information on traditional healing activities and services in the community please leave your contact information:

_____

Thank you for participating in this study. We appreciate the time you have spent answering these questions. Is there anything that you would like to add, that we might have missed?
-
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

MEEGWETCH!

Appendix C – Consent forms and supporting documentation

Concordia
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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN

Uschiniichuu Futures: Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ioana Radu of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture at Concordia University, under the supervision of Daniel Salee (see contact below). Questions or concerns should be directed to Ioana Radu at 514.366.6483/514.831.8796 or oanarw@gmail.com

A.   PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purpose of the survey is develop a profile of health and wellness for the Chisasibi youth population as described in the information sheet. I understand that the information gathered will contribute to Ioana Radu's PhD research that centers on the concept of healing as a means through which youth negotiate identity and strengthen agency. I understand that community approval was received for this research.

B.   PROCEDURES
I understand that the survey will take approximately 45 minutes and that I can withdraw at any time during the survey. Completed questionnaires will be analysed and submitted in a report to the community. A final PhD Thesis will be deposited on the Concordia website and academic articles will be published based on the data gathered. No individual will be identified as this will use collated data only. The information collected will remain confidential.

C.   RISKS AND BENEFITS
I understand that this study involves minimal risk. If I need psychological support I can refer to the attached information. Lastly, I understand that I will be provided with a copy of the final report and any resulting works free of charge.

D.   CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

☐   I understand that my participation in this study is confidential (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)

☐   I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

☐   I understand that I have the right to stop the administering of the questionnaire, should I wish to, or to not answer some of the questions.

☐   I understand that the data from this study may be published.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

Interviewer Name _____

Interviewer Signature _____

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca or Faculty advisor Daniel Salée, daniel.salee@concordia.ca, 514.848.2424 ex.2578

Uschiniichuu Futures:
Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

Background

The CBHSSJB 2005 Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) aimed to first respond to the needs of the Cree population regarding health and social services. Second, the SRP is viewed as an "opportunity for the Cree Health Board to begin a process to integrate traditional approaches to health and wellness."

In 2009, the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee was instituted with the mandate 'to review all matters relating to community health and social issues' and 'to assist the Council in implementing effective policies and strategies to promote the health and social welfare of the residents of Chisasibi'. During the two Symposiums on health and social services (2009 & 2010), the community of Chisasibi expressed interest and recommended the implementation of projects and programs that integrate traditional approaches to health and social services, <u>including the assessment of needs for such services for the youth population.</u>

The assessment of needs has also been identified as responding to the Nishiiyuu Department objectives:

- Undertake community needs assessments to identify community needs, priorities and specific programming aspiration for healing;
- Indentify healing program activities and approaches that best matches needs of different age groups/life stages, gender, geographic location, community norms/priorities, etc.

Ioana Radu, a PhD student at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (Concordia University), is conducting research that centers on the concept of healing as a means through which youth negotiate identity and strengthen agency in collaboration with the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee and the Nishiiyuu Department. Below you will find the details of the research and how the information will be used.

Project objective

The project consists of administering a Healing and Wellness survey among the Chisasibi youth Specifically the objectives are to identify:

- what healing means to the youth,
- whether there is a broader interest in healing services among this population,
- if and how existing healing services have been used and
- what types of needs and gaps in health and social services can healing programs and activities fill.

Health and Wellness Survey background information sheet

Ethics and consent

Completed questionnaires will be analysed and submitted in a report to the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee, the Chisasibi Youth Council, and the Nishiiyuu Department. Results / findings will be disseminated back to communities. A final PhD Thesis will be deposited on the Concordia website and academic articles will be published based on the data gathered. No individual having completed a questionnaire will be identified in any publication or dissemination activities. The information collected will remain confidential. These will form the basis for a strategic approach to supporting Community Based Healing in Chisasibi and contribute to design a Nishiiyuu Traditional Healing and helping models based on Cultural approaches that will be implemented on the territory of the Cree Nation.

Copies of completed forms will be held by Ioana Radu in secure state as evidence to support the report of findings. If any community member would like to retain a copy of their completed survey please ask Ioana Radu to arrange this for you at the time of completion.

For any information regarding the project please contact Ioana Radu at 514-831-8796 or
oanarw@gmail.com

Emotional and Psychological Support

If you are feeling stressed, afraid, sad or anxious, there are services available in Chisasibi to listen and help you. The service is free and confidential. For an appointment, ask the clinic for a referral or call the number below:

Daisy Ratt, 819-855-9001 ext. 4018

For **Mental health**, please consult the following schedule:

CHISASIBI

Dennis Windego, Therapist	May 13 to May 17, 2013 July 22 to July 26, 2013 September 16 to September 20, 2013 November 4 to November 8, 2013 January 6 to January 10, 2014 March 24 to March 28, 2014
Nicki Garwood, Therapist	June 10 to June 14, 2013 July 8 to July 12, 2013 August 5 to August 9, 2013 September 9 to September 13, 2013 September 30 to October 4, 2013 November 4 to November 8, 2013 December 2 to December 6, 2013 January 6 to January 10, 2014 February 3 to February 7, 2014 March 3 to March 7, 2014 March 24 to March 28, 2014

For an appointment please call:
Mina House, Beneficiary Attendant
819.855.9001 ext: 4423

Chisasibi, Baie James, Nouveau-Québec – J0M 1E0   Tél.: (819) 855-2844

For **CMC services**, please contact:

Uschiniichisuu (youth health clinic) Tel: 819-855-9001 / Fax: 819-855-9034

Social Services Tel: 819-855-3150 / Fax: 819-855-3157 / Confidential Fax: 819-855-3177

Emergency Workers: 819-855-7566/7567

Hours of Service: Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

If you prefer a more **culturally adapted service** (such as talking to an Elder or a traditional counsellor) please contact:

Larry House Tel: 819-855-7736

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN

Uschiniichuu Futures: Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

I understand that I have been asked to participate in a program of research being conducted by Ioana Radu of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture at Concordia University, under the supervision of Daniel Salee (see contact below). Questions or concerns should be directed to Ioana Radu at 514.366.6483/514.831.8796 or oanarw@gmail.com

### A.	PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to present my motivations for and experiences of taking part in healing activities, how I assess my overall experience, and how the healing has addressed my needs. I understand that the information gathered will contribute to her PhD research that centers on the concept of healing as a means through which youth negotiate identity and strengthen agency. This project also seeks to make available my interview to raise awareness about the experiences of those who participate in healing activities. Oral history interviews will be combined with archival and textual research to produce a "research creation" project that includes a video (and an accompanying website if the time permits). I understand that community approval was received for this research.

### B.	PROCEDURES

I understand the interview will take one to two hours in total and that I can withdraw at any time during the interview. The interview will be videotaped or digitally recorded. In the resulting PhD thesis, I may be identified by name, subject to my consent. If I choose to remain confidential, the interview will be identified using a pseudonym, my identity will not be disclosed in publications. The video and/or audio interview or portions thereof will NOT be made public. Should I agree, video and/or audio recording(s) of this interview may be included in a 90 min documentary that will be made public. I understand that the time during which the interview is being transcribed and prepared for archiving (i.e. stored in secured site, for electronic files they will be password protected) will function as a grace period in which I may choose to alter the interview. I understand that after archiving I can no longer make changes. I understand that I will receive a copy of their interview (DVD or CD) and the transcript as soon as it has been processed, as well as a copy of the final video product once it has been completed.

### C.	RISKS AND BENEFITS

I understand that this study involves minimal risk. I understand that if I confide personal information to the researcher, the researcher has a duty not to share the information with others without my free and informed consent. If I need psychological support I can refer to the attached information. Lastly, I understand that I will be provided with a copy of my interview and any resulting works free of charge.

### D.	CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

☐ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

☐ I understand that the data from this study may be published.

☐   I agree to be quoted directly (i.e**., my identity will be revealed** in study results) **And**

☐   I agree to have my full video or audio interview or portions of it disseminated publicly and included in a final "research creation" production.
	Or

☐ I agree to be quoted confidentially (i.e., the researcher will know, but will **not disclose my identity** either in publications or have my full interview or portions of it disseminated online or included in a final "research creation" production)

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 ethics@alcor.concordia.ca or Faculty advisor Daniel Salée, daniel.salee@concordia.ca, 514.848.2424 ex.2578

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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN

Uschiniichuu Futures: Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY
CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

Interviewer Name _____

Interviewer Signature _____

Uschiniichuu Futures:
Healing, empowerment and agency among the Chisasibi Cree youth

Background

The CBHSSJB 2005 Strategic Regional Plan (SRP) aimed to respond to the needs of the Cree population regarding health and social services and "to begin a process to integrate traditional approaches to health and wellness." Overall, the SRP is framed within the broad effort to establish control over the health and social needs of the Cree communities.

In 2009, the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee was instituted with the mandate 'to review all matters relating to community health and social issues' and 'to assist the Council in implementing effective policies and strategies to promote the health and social welfare of the residents of Chisasibi'. During the two community Symposia on health and social services (2009 & 2010), Chisasibi members recommended the implementation of projects and programs that integrate traditional approaches to health and social services.

The focus on land-based programs has also been identified as responding to the following Nishiiyuu Department objectives:

- "To research, document, design, develop and implement Land Base Healing Program" and
- "To develop Nishiiyuu Land Base Healing Program and Pilot activities built on Cree experience, knowledge and best practices of traditional healing programs conducted on Cree territory delivered by Crees."

Ioana Radu, a PhD student at the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Society and Culture (Concordia University), is conducting research that centers on the concept of healing as a means through which youth negotiate identity and strengthen agency by undertaking an ethnographic study of a healing program in the community. The research project has been designed in collaboration with the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee and the Nishiiyuu Department. She will document the land-based program through participant observation and semi-directed interviews will be undertaken. Both daily activities and the interviews will be video recorded.

Project objective

The aim is to explore the motivations of the youth for taking part in the land-based program, what their expectations were prior to going in the bush, how they assess their overall experience, and how the program helped them address their needs.

Land Based background information sheet

The project consists of producing a documentary on the Chisasibi healing process. Specifically the objectives are:

- Video Document a land based program
- Video interview organizers and participants of past healing programs about their experience, lessons learned and best practices
- Produce a documentary for public viewing and future reference

Ethics and consent

The information collected will remain confidential according to the type of consent given by participants. The data will be analyzed and submitted in a report to the Chisasibi Miyupmaatissiiun Committee, the Chisasibi Youth Council, and the Nishiiyuu Department. A summary will also be presented to the community at a public meeting to be decided in consultation with the relevant departments/entities.

Copies of data and footage will be kept in a secure place by Ioana Radu as evidence to support the report of findings. Participants of the project will receive their integral interview on DVD format upon completion of editing process.

For any information regarding the project please contact Ioana Radu at 514-831-8796 or oanarw@gmail.com

Semi-directed interview guide – Land-based group

Age _____   Gender_____

Personal

Can you tell me about yourself? Where you grew up? How was it to grow up in the community? Did/do you spend time in the bush? Can you tell me your favourite memory of life in the bush?

On the land program

Prior to departure - Where did you hear about the program? Can you tell me why you decided to participate in this program? What type of care are you seeking? Is this your first time participating in a healing program? If not, can you tell me about your previous experiences? What are your expectations regarding the program? What do you think you will achieve by participating?

During (middle of the week) – What are your first impressions about the program? Is it what you expected?

After – How would you describe your experiences during the program? Has it helped you address the needs identified at the beginning? Can you explain why or why not? What have you learned from this experience? Where there any problems or gaps? Based on your experience would you participate in a similar program? Would you recommend the program to others (friends, family)? Do you have any recommendations about improving the program? Based on your experience would you consider using other healing services?

On healing

What do you understand healing to be? How important is healing to you? Has healing made a difference in your life? In the life of others (family, friends)? What kind of care does healing provide that is not available elsewhere? Apart from health considerations, does healing provide you with other benefits? Can you expand on that? What are the positive impacts of healing on your life? What are the negative impacts? Are you aware of the healing process in Chisasibi? Within the CBHSSJB? What are your thoughts about the healing process in Chisasibi?

Is there anything that you would like to add? Anything that I have missed?

Semi-directed interview guide – Life-story

Age _____   Gender_____

Personal

Tell me about yourself… Where did you grow up? What was your childhood like? Can you tell me your favourite childhood memory? What was it like growing up in your community? How did it change for your own children/grandchildren? Did/do you spend time in the bush? Can you tell me your favourite memory of life in the bush? How has it changed? Why did it change? What has been lost? Did you always live in Cree territory? When did you start traveling outside Cree territory? What was your first impression? Have you travelled much since? Why/why not? Can you tell me about your experiences outside Cree territory?

On healing

What do you understand healing to be? When did you first hear about healing? When did you first participate in a healing activity? Where was it? How did you know about it? What was your first impression? Why did you decide to participate in healing activities? Have you participated much in healing activities since? Why/why not? What types of healing activities have you participated in?

What kind of care does healing provide that is not available elsewhere? Apart from health considerations, does healing provide you with other benefits? Can you expand on that? What are the positive impacts of healing on your life? What are the negative impacts? How has healing changed the way you relate to others (family, friends)? To the community in general (participation in community life)?

How important is healing to you? Has healing made a difference in your life? In the life of others (family, friends)? Are you aware of the healing process in Chisasibi? Within the CBHSSJB? What are your thoughts about the healing process in Chisasibi? Within the CBHSSJB? Are you actively involved in these processes? Why/why not? How are you involved? What are the impacts of implementing healing for: individuals? Community? Nation?

Is there anything that you would like to add? Anything that I have missed?

Appendix D – Korsakow keywords

Korsakow Film	Clip ID	In Keyword	Out Keyword	Text overlay
colonization	larry 1 - start	colonization	culture, healing	
	irene 9	culture, healing	colonization,	culture is key
	roy 6	culture, colonization	decolonization, healing	pride in what you do
	larry 14	decolonization, culture	colonization, healing	institutionalized racism
	denise 4	healing, colonization	decolonization, culture	safety and security
	irene 7	colonization, healing	culture, decolonization	loss and illness
	larry 15	decolonization,	healing, colonization	whose agenda?
youth	denise2	agency	teaching	I've worked really hard
	denise9	teaching	love, connection, agency	takes a lot of courage
	denise11	connection, love	teaching	be involved
	denise12		connection, teaching	break the cycle
	irene2	teaching, love	connection, agency	tell your truth
	irene3	love, teaching	agency, connection	unconditional love
	mike1	agency	love, teaching	good people out there
	mike7	connection	teaching, love	the bush helps too
	roy5	love, connection	agency, teaching	love is normal
	roy8	teaching, love	agency, teaching	believe in them
	roy1	agency	love, teaching	the kids first
decolonization	denise13	community, empowerment	solidarity, healing	who better to know
	denise1	empowerment	healing, community, culture	it's baby steps
	william2	empowerment, solidarity, culture	healing,	stand up
	william3	community, healing	culture	connect with our roots
	irene5	culture, healing	empowerment, community	bring back our medicine
	roy7	empowerment, culture	community, solidarity	believe in each other
	larry13	community, healing,	empowerment, solidarity	healthy people leading
	larry12	culture, solidarity,	community, healing	making friends

	larry11	culture, healing,	community, empowerment	why not integrate?
	larry7	culture, empowerment, healing,	community, solidarity	understand our worldview
	larry3	community	empowerment	reconnect to who we are
	mike6	solidarity, healing	empowerment, culture	step up and learn
	ml7	solidarity, healing	culture, empowerment	we are an indigenous culture
	ml2		empowerment, culture	
	ml1	community, empowerment	solidarity	our traditions go back to the land
culture	ml6	connection	identity, family,	life is beautiful
	ml9		spirituality, identity, family	
	ml5	respect, connection	connection, identity, teachings	you have be open
	ml3	land, teachings	family, spirituality	it's an act of love
	mike8	connection	identity, respect, land	a big thank you
	mike4	spirituality	respect, teachings	it really changed me
	mike3	family,	connection, teachings	I am glad I experienced it
	larry10	identity, spirituality	land, connection	that's the foundation
	larry2	family, teachings,	respect, land,	gaining a deeper understanding
	irene10	family, connection	teachings, identity	everything is connected
	irene1	land, spirituality, respect	connection, teachings	that's what kept me sane
	denise8	identity, teachings, respect, land	family, spirituality	we all want to be happy
healing	denise3	justice	ceremony, justice, identity	a good environment
	denise5	peace	ceremony, identity	teach my children
	denise6	responsibility	ceremony, identity	just let go
	denise7	land, responsibility,	ceremony, identity	learning to be
	denise10	family,	ceremony, identity	I'm the hero OF MY STORY
	irene4	responsibility, identity	ceremony, justice, family	live in a good way
	irene6	peace	ceremony, justice, family	it starts with the mind
	irene8	land	ceremony, justice, family	trust and safety
	larry4	justice, identity	responsibility, land, family	he told me a story

	larry5		responsibility, land, family	
	larry8	ceremony	responsibility, land, family	discipline the mind
	larry9	peace	responsibility, land, family	positive cultural identity
	mike2	family, land	justice, identity, peace, responsibility	she was proud
	mike5	responsibility, ceremony	peace, justice, identity	flushing out something
	ml4	identity, land, peace,	ceremony, responsibility	have faith in higher power
	ml8	justice, peace, responsibility,	ceremony, family, land	each has their own path
	roy2	family, responsibility	peace, justice, land	teachings come back
	roy3	identity, ceremony	peace, justice, land	the drum helped me
	roy4	family	peace, justice, land	love your children
	william1	ceremony, identity, land, peace,	responsibility, justice, family	know yourself