Performing Indigenous Well-Being:

Historical and Political Geographies of Canada's Community Well-Being Index

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Abstract

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Noah Laser Cannon, M.Sc.

Set against the view that development indices provide objective assessments of the human condition, in this research, I demonstrate that indices are deeply political and emerge from specific and embodied histories and geographies. This study traces the emergence and subsequent politics of the "Community Well Being Index," hereafter the CWB, an index designed to measure the conditions of Indigenous communities in Canada that was developed in the early 2000s by researchers at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in collaboration with social scientists at the University of Western Ontario. Drawing theoretical contributions from performativity scholars, as well as postcolonial, settler colonial and critical development literatures, my research explores how the index, as a historically, socially, technologically contingent tool, actually produces the world it sets out to measure. Through analysis of interviews with designers and users of the index, observation of its presentation, and a review of official documents in which the index is elaborated, I trace the multiple and at times contradictory ways in which the CWB has come to matter in shaping development common-sense, constituting Indigenous subjectivities and allocating responsibility surrounding development interventions. I contend that, notwithstanding its use in advocating for the improvement of Indigenous peoples' socio-economic conditions, the index is part of a settler policy and bureaucratic performance that predominantly serves to narrow the development pathways available to Indigenous communities.

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List of Acronyms

AANDC	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada
CCI	Community Capacity Index
CWB	Community Well-Being Index
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
FCPP	Frontier Centre for Public Policy
FNCP	First Nations Cohesion Project
FNFTA	First Nations Financial Transparency Act
FNPOA	First Nations Property Ownership Act
INAC	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
INAC	Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
INM	Idle No More
PRI	Policy Research Initiative
RIHDI	Registered Indian Human Development Index
SRAD	Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
TLE	Treaty Land Entitlements
UWO	University of Western Ontario
UNHDI	United Nations Human Development Index

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In November of 2017, Tom Flanagan, a well-known conservative pundit and former political science professor at the University of Calgary, appeared on the Ontario public broadcast network's prominent current affairs program *The Agenda* to put forth a prescription for First Nations' community development based on his latest social indicator research.[1] Half-way into the half-hour show, organized as a debate between two teams of experts on Indigenous well-being, the host, Steve Paikin, asked Flanagan whether he was willing to "...acknowledge the terrible history they [Indigenous peoples] have endured in this country." Flanagan responds, "Yes, I will. But I also want to look towards the future." He then made his pitch:

> I've been looking at those that are doing better demonstrably according to [the Community Well-Being Index], looking for the common features [of successful communities]. And what I find is traits like taking advantage of the 'off ramps' [from the Indian Act], taking control of local affairs, taking advantage of economic opportunities; for some you could almost call it 'community capitalism', engaging in business through their band government as the owner... I think we can all learn from the progress that is being made on the ground.

Looking to establish common ground between the debaters, Paikin turns to Suzanne Stewart, Director of the Waakebiness-Bryce Institute for Indigenous Health at University of Toronto, to

[1] Throughout this thesis I use the term "Indigenous" to refer to the peoples whose ancestry is that of pre-colonial occupants of the territory that is now known as Canada. Less often, I use the term "Aboriginal", which, like "Indigenous", is an umbrella term. However, Aboriginal is used by the Canadian government to refer collectively to three Indigenous taxonomies established through processes of early colonization and tied to conceptions of race: First Nation (formerly "Indian", a colonial misnomer that is further divided into status/non-status according to whether individuals are registered under the Indian Act), Inuit and Metis. I reserve its use for those circumstances related to the Canadian government including state-led organizations, the research-state nexus, or in reference to research-policy projects, such as "Aboriginal well-being". At times I also use the term "Native", or "Indian" where it has been used in the literature, (e.g. when using a quote from the literature) with an understanding that these terms are also linked to colonial tropes and misnomers and are not self-determined.

ask whether she agrees that "significant demonstrable progress is being made today". Stewart replies,

> Well I guess that depends on how you define progress and who is defining it... The social determinants of health, or these indexes for measuring wellness don't really fit for Indigenous people. Because Indigenous peoples have a different history, have a different culture, have a different identity and have different definitions [of well-being and success]. If we want to really talk about how to measure wellness or success in Indigenous communities, we need to define wellness and success from Indigenous paradigms.

I begin with this vignette because it illustrates the disparities in systems of knowledge production and highlights the role of development indices in shaping and disseminating Indigenous-specific development discourses in what is commonly considered Canada. On the one hand, Flanagan's expertise draws on a well-being index constructed from Census data and provides generalizable and comparable knowledge to generate lessons about progress through numerically evaluated "success" stories, stories which can ostensibly be replicated across the particular historical and geographical context of the targeted communities (i.e. dissemination of governance "best practices"). In contrast, Stewart rejects a universalizing view of success and instead speaks to the significance of specific histories, cultures and identities in producing relevant definitions of well-being, and most importantly to the necessity that Indigenous perspectives guide these definitions. This exchange reveals part of a much broader struggle in which the stakes are very high indeed: control over what it means to live a fulfilling life, and how this meaning is operationalized through efforts to (re)order the relations and structures of settler and Indigenous societies. This struggle over meaning and material relations can be traced back to early colonial legislation,

such as the 1857 *Gradual Civilization Act*,[2] long before development indicators existed, or even before statistical tools were used to measure and document the gap in socio-economic conditions of Indigenous and settler "populations".[3] With the emergence of Indigenous-specific development indices in the late 1990s—culminating in the Community Well-Being Index (CWB) that Flanagan deploys in the introductory example—and their proliferation in policy and decision making processes, it is critical to examine the role these indices play in this ongoing struggle and to ask how, why and to whom these types of indices have come to matter.

This thesis uses the CWB as a case study to explore the politics and power relations in the knowledge production cultures and practices of quantitative expertise and to consider how such politics play out through development discourse and questions of governance in Indigenous–settler relations. While indicator research emerged as a field of social science to produce knowledge in support of the interests and demands of a Keynesian welfare state, since the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s, these quantitative technologies have become key to the dissemination of audit culture and to the management of civic society and the state (Merry, 2016; Shore & Wright, 2015; Sirgy et al., 2006; Strathern, 2000).[4] Anthropologist Sally Engle-Merry

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[2] The Act's formal title is: *An Act to encourage the gradual civilization of the Indian tribes in this province, and to amend the laws respecting Indians* (1857). It was later consolidated into the Indian Act in 1876 along with various other laws targeting Indigenous peoples. Among other things the *Gradual Civilization Act* created a process termed "enfranchisement", through which Indigenous men over the age of 21 were 'rewarded' with the benefits of citizenship, such as individual parcels of land fractured from the 'lands held in trust for Indians' as outlined in the 1763 Royal Proclamation. Enfranchisement required that potential candidates prove to the colonial administration that they were "civilized" enough to earn the rewards of citizenship. For instance, men capable of writing in either English or French were eligible. However, those unable to write, but who could speak English or French could go through a three-year probation period to earn eligibility by demonstrating that they were "of sober and industrious habits, free from debt and sufficiently intelligent to be capable of managing his own affairs" (p. 2 Clause IV).

[3] Efforts to document the gap in socio-economic conditions between Indigenous and settler "populations" began in the Post-WWII era of "Indian policy" and the Canadian state's "community development" initiative, which was seen as a means to achieve the official objective of Indigenous peoples' integration into settler society and economy (Shewell, 2004). The most well-known of these efforts included the 1966 *Hawthorn Report* (Hawthorn, 1966) and decades later the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP, 1996).

[4] Shore and Wright (2015) define audit culture as "the process by which the principles and techniques of accountancy and financial management are applied to the governance of people and organizations – and, more importantly, the social and cultural consequences of that translation" (p. 24).

(2016) contends that, as categorized numbers arranged to represent complex social phenomena, the seductive power of indicators lies in their ability to "convey an aura of objective truth and authority despite the extensive interpretive work that goes into their construction" (p. 1). They are routinely used to promote self-governance and influence behaviors among the governed (including individuals, organizations and nations) by dictating the standards for improvement and measuring compliance (Merry, 2011). Further, indicators play a critical and often overlooked role in the contest to stabilize particular "common sense" (i.e. hegemonic) visions of development; they serve as a proxy for development and justify expert interventions and the application of technocratic knowledge in the quest for improvement (Uribe, 2015).[5] In this regard, indicators do more than simply reflect the existing or external realities that they seek to represent, instead working to produce them, in part by producing subjectivities, ordering relations, and shaping people's beliefs and actions.

While there is a burgeoning interdisciplinary body of literature critically investigating the work of indicators, little attention has been paid to the roles and effects of indicators used in the context of Indigenous development within a settler society, for example Salée (2006) and Walter and Andersen (2013). My research examines the making and subsequent politics of the CWB produced in the name of improving Indigenous peoples' well-being in Canada. Cast loosely in

[5] Davis, Kingsbury, & Merry (2012) define an indicator as: "... a named collection of rank-ordered data that purports to represent the past or projected performance of different units. The data are generated through a process that simplifies raw data about a complex social phenomenon. The data, in this simplified and processed form, are capable of being used to compare particular units of analysis (such as countries, institutions, or corporations), synchronically or over time, and to evaluate their performance by reference to one or more standards" (p. 73–74). I am drawn to this definition for its attention not only to an indicator's structure, but also to the processes of its creation and the work that an indicator sets out to accomplish—rather than merely presenting indicators as tools to produce a statistical reflection of existing phenomena. While I have come across other compelling definitions in the social indicator literature, I feel a particular affinity with the Davis et al. (2012) definition as it shares a focus on investigating the role of indicators as an emerging technology of governance. As a final note on terminology, the focus of my study is a "composite index" (the CWB), meaning the index merges and weights multiple pre-established indicators to form a new statistical assemblage. That said, I generally use the term indicator, rather than index, as a descriptor of the CWB's broader network—for example, I refer to "indicator research" rather than "index research" with the understanding that indices fall within the purview of indicator research.

the image of the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI), the CWB is a composite index that was developed through a collaboration between a group of social scientists at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) and experts in a research unit at the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) who came together under the banner of First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP) to produce, among other projects, a series of development indices. The stated aim of the research was "to advance the state of knowledge" about the conditions of Indigenous communities so that "...policymakers are better equipped to make meaningful improvements to the matrix of policies and programs that affect Aboriginal well-being" (Beavon & Jetté, 2009, p. 3). The CWB uses census data from 1981 forward, combining 4 indicators—education, labour force activity, income per capita, and housing—to produce "scores" ranging between 0 to 100 that are assigned to nearly all communities across the country, Indigenous and settler alike. These scores provide a basis for comparison between First Nations and Inuit communities as well as between settler communities,[6] and are used to track changes over time. CWB data can be combined with an array of other community level data and is made publicly available for any interested parties to access and deploy (e.g. to conduct statistical studies) to make new meanings about Indigenous well-being. In short, the CWB has become an important tool through which policy-makers, social scientists, politicians, pundits and the general public frame and understand Indigenous development. Despite an apparently simple structure and output, the construction of the index required the amassing of extensive resources, the formations of academic–government institutional collaborations, years of preliminary research, massive data sets, computers and software capable of processing the data, and so on. In contrast to the view put forward by its authors that the CWB provides an objective assessment of

[6] The community scores can also be aggregated and used to represent averages of provincial or national "populations".

development, my research demonstrates that the CWB is deeply political and is grounded in the particular and embodied histories and geographies of Canadian settler colonialism and that it constitutes the world it sets out to measure. Specifically, I examine the discursive and material work of experts involved in the production and proliferation of the index. I trace the multiple and at times contradictory ways in which the CWB has come to matter in shaping development common-sense, constituting Indigenous subjectivities and allocating responsibility surrounding development interventions. I argue that notwithstanding the metric's use in advocating for Indigenous peoples' rights, it narrows development pathways in ways that predominantly prioritize the interests of the state and settler society.

This project is, in no small part, motivated by my skepticism about some of the premises advanced by the Indigenous-specific development indicator network, for example, claims that highlighting the relative disadvantage of Indigenous peoples, including "intra-Aboriginal difference", will help to improve Indigenous peoples' lives and maintain Canadians' high standard of living and social cohesion more generally; or that meaningful improvements in the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous communities have been hindered by a lack of empirical information in policy debates; or the assumption that the knowledge produced through development indices is good in-itself and is for everyone's benefit; or that objective and accurate tools are necessary to ascertain and predict if a community is sustainable and has the capacity to develop, or if "history has passed some communities by" (Beavon & White, 2007, p. 19). Given the scope of injustices produced through processes of settler colonialism, including the established history dating back to post-WWI, of using social scientific research to influence policy to help solve the so-called "Indian Problem" (Shewell, 2001), these hypotheses seem misguided not only in their faith in policy and research to address issues of Indigenous poverty

but also in the way that they frame these issues and solutions as technical rather than political. This is especially the case given that the body of research generated by the CWB and its related indices tends to leave unquestioned the underlying structures that perpetuate Indigenous dispossession, and omit the role of settler society in the impoverishment and dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples across Canada have long insisted that poverty is inseparable from land dispossession, historical and ongoing. As the late Secwépemc freedom fighter, activist and leader Arthur Manuel, and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson assert, "… It is the loss of our land that has been the precise cause of our impoverishment" (2015, p. 7).

As a white settler who has lived most of my life on occupied Indigenous territory, I felt that a master's project in geography could be an opportunity to work in solidarity with Indigenous self-determination struggles by disrupting some of the taken for granted power relations surrounding knowledge production and development that Indigenous peoples in settler society are often required to contend with. In this regard, my political orientations have guided me to critically interrogate the work of experts, rather than examining the perspectives of Indigenous communities who are subject to an array of development interventions. While there is a long history of geographic research that positions Indigenous peoples as its objects and subjects, by taking the work of experts as my object of study, I hope to destabilize this deeply entrenched dynamic.

From the outset I write with an understanding that settler colonialism is an ongoing process. As Adam Barker (2012) describes it, settler colonialism is "a distinct method of colonizing involving the creation and consumption of a whole array of spaces by settler collectives that claim and transform places through the exercise of their sovereign capacity" (para. 1). This is distinguished from forms of colonialism primarily oriented towards resource

extraction and labour exploitation (Veracini, 2010), as settlers seek to eliminate Indigenous populations and replace them with their own (Wolfe, 2006). As Patrick Wolfe's (2006) much-quoted passage elaborates, "Settler colonizers come to stay; invasion is a structure not an event" (p. 388). The history of the Canadian state making practices demonstrates that the shift from resource extraction at imperial outposts to the establishment of permanent settlements entailed, as Cameron (2015) puts it, "the development of more complex structures of settler legitimation" (p. 176). With resource extraction remaining a paramount state interest, layered justifications, including those built on the foundations of "evidence-based" policy knowledge, are required to naturalize and deny the violence, implicit and explicit in the perpetual dispossession of Indigenous peoples as a result of the occupation of their lands and denial of their rights and self-determination.

The remaining sections of this introductory chapter are meant to offer context for my research. The initial three sections examine the postcolonial, settler colonial and critical development literatures starting with an examination of the history of colonial claims to jurisdiction and questions of Indigenous peoples' well-being in Canada. I then highlight some of the specific techniques and technologies that generate, propel and at times subvert colonial processes, and explore the politics of 'expert' knowledge in Indigenous–state relations. In the forth and final section I explore scholarship relating to the history of social indicator research and examine the relationship between this field of knowledge production and governance.

Literature Review

Settler colonialism and Indigenous–state relations in Canada

Domination and assumed European superiority tie together a history of Canadian "Indian" policy with otherwise varying underpinning rationales and objectives.[7] Tobias' (1991) analysis of the history of Indian policy details the emergence and entanglement of paradoxical principles that continue to undergird Indigenous–state relations today—protection, civilization and assimilation. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 on the one hand recognized Indigenous groups as sovereign treaty partners with entitlements to the land—acknowledging a nation-to-nation relationship in accordance with the existing treaties. On the other hand, it laid claim to Indigenous lands and lives, establishing a fiduciary obligation of the imperial government to Indigenous peoples, later transferred to the Canadian government; for example, 'protecting' Indigenous landholdings by making their transfer illegal unless first being surrendered to the 'Crown' by way of treaty, for example. As geographer Shiri Pasternak (2013) points out, this is a "double move of jurisdictional recognition and subordination [... which] relocated Indigenous society into the common law of the colonizing nation" (p. 22). It marks the beginning of a long-standing European claim to jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples and lands—much different from treaties, the Royal Proclamation did not seek, or give the pretence of seeking consent. Starting in the early eighteenth century, as the settler population mushroomed, Indian policy set new objectives to 'civilize' and assimilate Indigenous peoples with the underlying rationale of 'developing' their capacities (Milloy, 1991). The reserve system was introduced as a keystone of Indian policy that paradoxically set out lands in isolated locales where Indigenous peoples were to be both protected from settler society and conditioned to join it. During this time, colonial administrators also introduced the initially voluntary "enfranchisement" process as laid out in the

[7] While acknowledging that relations of domination are a pillar of settler colonialism, it is also crucial to understand that the stories that the colonial project tell about itself—of a successful invasion and dispossession of Indigenous peoples—disregard the fact of Indigenous peoples' survival of genocidal processes and refusal to be subsumed into settler society (Alfred 2009; Brown 2014; Simpson 2014).

1857 *Gradual Civilization Act* (discussed in more detail in footnote #2 of this introduction). Citizenship was the "reward" for First Nations men who met certain standards that proved to settler commissioners that they were "civilized", such as reading and writing English or French. One of the "rewards" was an individual parcels of land split from the 'lands held in trust for Indians', as outlined in the Royal Proclamation. When met with resistance from Indigenous leadership, enfranchisement became compulsory and coercive strategies were deployed to accelerate the process. As Milloy (1991) argues, among other things, this policy was significant because:

> It represented a direct colonial intervention in Indian affairs. Furthermore, the act gave development a higher priority than traditional constitutional relations anchored to the Proclamation of 1763, for it removed exclusive tribal control over reserves for the sake of enfranchisement (p. 148).

Social engineering—to shape 'civilized' citizen subjects—became the paramount work of Indian policy, a task enacted in the name of Indigenous peoples' well-being. As Tobias (1991) explains, through this work "... Indian identity and culture would be eradicated, and the Indian would be assimilable and no longer in need of special status" (p. 127). Moreover, the central purpose of Indian policy, along with 'civilizing', was to eventually eradicate such jurisdiction by eliminating "... those persons and lands that fell within the category of Indians and Indian lands" (p. 133).

In the decades following WWI, the then-Department of Indian Affairs, frustrated by persistent failure of policy to engender assimilation, increasingly embraced the apparently rational approach of the social sciences to guide the department in achieving its objectives (Shewell, 2004). In his carefully researched history of Indian welfare policy in Canada, Hugh

Shewell argues that under the social sciences lens (i.e. economics, political science, psychology, public health, sociology, social work and so on), the so-called "Indian problem" gradually shifted from a moral and political quandary about assimilation to a more secular, scientific question directed at informing policy. Inflected by the biases of modern liberalism, this also marked the department's departure from an overtly repressive administration of Indigenous lives in favour of an outwardly more humanist approach, while steadfastly aiming for assimilation. Social scientists now led the charge to lift Indigenous peoples to full and equal citizens. This manifested in the federal government adopting Community Development as an official objective for spurring Indigenous peoples' integration into modern society. Personal choice was seen as a primary vehicle to inspire such transformation, persuading—through education campaigns, restructuring family, using social workers—Indigenous individuals to depart from traditional, collective society and adopt the "natural forces" of modern society, through engagement in the liberal state and market society. By the late 1950s, a number of large-scale studies set out to assess Indigenous peoples' capacity to adapt to modernity. These focused on ways to motivate change within individuals to reduce their dependency on government funds and encourage their engagement in markets.

Until the early 1970s, the colonial rationales of civilization and assimilation operated in plain view, with the end goal of terminating Indigenous peoples' "special status" by absorbing them into the settler body politic and opening 'lands reserved for Indians' to settler development (see Tobias, 1991). Pierre Trudeau's infamous 1969 White Paper Act is widely regarded as marking the closing of this overtly assimilationist policy agenda (Coulthard, 2014; RCAP, 1996). The White Paper proposed to, once-and-for-all, do away with all legal mechanisms that held Indian status distinct from that of the settler population. However, instead of expediting

assimilation, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard points out, "... the White Paper inaugurated an unprecedented degree of pan-Indian assertiveness and political mobilization" (p. 5). Indigenous peoples' fierce opposition forced the government to shelve the White Paper. It also catalyzed what Coulthard (2013) theorizes as successive waves of contemporary Indigenous resistance that further forced the state to adopt strategies rooted in "transitional justice" to usher in what he terms the "politics of recognition". This is meant to "'reconcile' Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims in some form of renewed legal and political relationship with the Canadian state" (p. 3). However, drawing insights from anti-colonial philosopher and psychiatrist Franz Fanon, Coulthard urges that while present-day Indigenous–state relations are characterize by recognition and accommodation, these amendments are a strategic reproduction of colonial power and serve to bolster foundational asymmetric power relations. Therefore, colonial power, operating for centuries towards exclusion and assimilation through openly violent and coercive means, now depends on its ability to "... entice Indigenous peoples to come to identify, either implicitly or explicitly, with the profoundly asymmetrical and non-reciprocal forms of recognition either imposed on or granted to them by the colonial-state and society" (Coulthard, 2007, p. 439). Coulthard's work interrogates sites where colonial power operates through such forms of recognition, such as Prime Minister Stephen Harper's formal apology to survivors of the residential school system, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Today, the state's claims to jurisdiction over Indigenous peoples and lands persist, marking both the incompletion of settler colonialism's agenda to eliminate (Brown, 2014; Veracini, 2010) and the ongoing existence of colonial relations. That is, despite moves over the past five decades signalling greater self-determining powers for Indigenous peoples, such as co-

management agreements or the state's official use of nation-to-nation discourse, Indigenous-state relations continue to be negotiated largely on the state's terms through state-held political and legal mechanisms that frame Indigenous peoples and their lands within Canada's jurisdiction.

This section has sketched some of the contradictory colonial rationales and strategies that Indigenous peoples have been subject to and resisted since the onset of colonisation. With an intent focus on opening Indigenous lands to settler development, colonial rationales and practices have been woven into development initiatives deployed in the name of Indigenous peoples' well-being. Over time, the settler state and industry have juggled objectives to protect, civilize, assimilate, exclude and include Indigenous peoples while maintaining an unwavering faith in settler jurisdiction. I now turn to an examination of the role of specific knowledges, techniques and technologies in generating, maintaining and occasionally subverting colonial power.

Knowledge technologies—accruing, maintaining and resisting colonial power

There is a substantial body of work detailing the importance of geographic knowledge and representational technologies to the processes and patterns of colonial expansion. An overarching argument in this research field is that maps—whether they work to dispossess (Harley, 1988, 2001; Harris, 2002; Pickles, 2004; Razack, 2002) or to resist imperial expansion (Brody, 1981; Bryan & Wood, 2015; Sparke, 1998)—are inherently political, rather than objective, representations, and they produce, rather than reflect, colonial landscapes. Moreover, maps are inscribed with the particular values and assumptions of their authors, and can advance particular aims (e.g. the state's) through purposeful omissions, or 'cartographic silences' as Harley (2001) describes them, which are widely taken for granted and accepted by the general public as necessary simplifications in the map making process. However, as Harris (2004) argues, the power of maps to dispossess Indigenous peoples in British Columbia did not stem

from purposeful omissions as is often argued in the literature on cartography and colonialism—where Europeans assume that spaces on maps represent *tabula rasa* on the ground. Rather, while early maps often only included outlines of the coast and rivers, colonial officials were occupied with resources not represented on the maps and were well aware that Indigenous peoples inhabited most of the map's 'blank spaces'. Instead, Harris asserts, a map's power to dispossess rested in its ability to "introduce a geographical imaginary that ignored Indigenous ways of knowing and recording space, ways that settlers could not imagine and did not need as soon as their maps reoriented them after their own fashion" (p. 175). Cadastral surveys in Australia served a similar purpose, introducing a grid-like division of the landscape that mimicked a European ordering of a kingdom into counties, shires, parishes and 'hundreds'—a system stemming back to Saxon times (Byrne, 2010). While this was a well-established spatial convention in Europe long before its inscription into surveys, its appearance in Australia was instantaneous with the white invasion. It came to mark the patterns of Indigenous peoples' dispossession, ignoring completely the pre-existing Indigenous boundaries, spatial practices and epistemologies. Settler colonial studies scholar Denis Byrne (2010) points out, "With England's cartographic language inscribed upon it, the landscape of colonial Australia would be in immediate dialogue with the landscapes of England" (p. 105). All this was necessary to the creation of Australia's racially segregated society and landscape because it served to naturalize and organize colonial governing practice. Even still, as Byrne details, Indigenous peoples found ways to subvert the white supremacist colonial system by eking out lives in the 'gaps' of the cadastral systems. As Bryan and Wood (2015) explain, from the 1970s forward maps became integral to the subversion of Canada's colonial claims to Indigenous peoples' lands. Shortly after Trudeau's White Paper misstep, and in conjunction with the Calder decisions, which outlined the

basis for Indigenous peoples' legal title, the Inuit, Dene and Cree took on extensive mapping projects that not only detailed land use and occupancy, but attempted to harness the power of maps in order to assert future visions that would maintain a collective way of life. That said, while these maps were integral to 'modern treaty' processes and defining Indigenous title through supreme court rulings, the state found ways to insert itself into such projects (often through funding) and ultimately "... set the limits on what could be mapped and which maps counted when it came to consultation with tribes" (Bryan & Wood, 2015, p. 73).

Statistics are another technology that has often worked in the service of settler colonialism. In large part, census taking in settler colonies, in conjunction with maps and a legal system, has facilitated the processes of land settlement as well as formalized and legitimated European constructions of racial categories—fixing race to place (see also Razack, 2002). The census has also been central to state taxonomies that define Indigeneity according to blood quantum, for example, in a move that Veracini (2010) calls 'counting Indigenous peoples out of existence' (p. 39). In British Columbia statistics were used as a way to track the 'progress' of assimilation by enumerating such things as band membership, landholdings, the number of cultivated acres compared with the number that could be cultivated, rates of land clearing and livestock, economic activities off reserve and attendance at residential schools (Harris, 2002). Through these tallies and with the aid of the 'Indian Agent', the courts would assess 'land requirements' for each band—if more was needed the band would be obligated to go through a lengthy and complex formal application process.

Other studies have shown instances where the census has been used to subvert settler colonial processes. For example, a study in Australia details a period from 1961 to 1971 where Indigenous groups used the census to effectively 'enlarge', rather than eliminate, the Indigenous

population (Rowse & Smith, 2010). In the mid to late 1800s Indigenous groups in New Zealand quickly recognized enumeration as a practice to 'control, bound, intervene in, displace and erase' Indigenous lives (Wanhalla, 2010). So, while widely resisted, the census was also strategically embraced or accommodated by some Indigenous groups who sought to reverse the process of land acquisition by taking control of what was being counted. In Canada, however, the practice of 'counting Indigenous peoples out of existence' persists through federal Indian Act policy. With the fictional race of "Indians" at its base, the number of "status Indians" are reduced by transferring them to the category of "non-status" through an array of legal avenues including "marrying out" (discussed in more detail below), erroneous exclusion from band lists, adoption into non-Indigenous families, as in the case of the infamous "sixties scoop", or 'paternity policy' that relegates Indigenous children into the non-status category if the status of the father is undisclosed (Byrne, 2010). These practices serve to alleviate the Canadian government from its legal obligations to Indigenous peoples as non-status Indians do not receive the same access to essential services and programs in exchange for the state's use of Indigenous land and resources (Palmater, 2014). Such legislation has deleterious effects on Indigenous communities and individuals as status is closely tied to "one's health and well-being—recognition, acceptance, self-worth, familial and communal supports, access to language speakers and traditional knowledge-holders, and the ability to enjoy one's culture in community with their specific Indigenous Nation" (Palmater, 2014, p. 47).

Statistics have been theorized by Tuck and Yang (2012) as facilitating a "settler move to innocence" (p. 9). Tuck and Yang draw from Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack's (1997) concept of a "race to innocence" whereby hierarchies among feminist women go unchallenged as a result of each woman's convictions that their own marginality is the worst, thus concealing

their complicity in the subordination of other women. Building on this analysis, the "settler's move to innocence" is described as "those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land, power or privilege, without having to change much at all" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 10). Notably, the parallel between the involvement of white settler academics (such as myself) in Settler Colonial Studies and the discipline's rapid ascent and embrace as a legitimate academic field of inquiry has some scholars wary of the potential 'move to innocence' within the field (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014). Another way in which the settler move to innocence is enacted is through the codification, representation and in/exclusion of Indigenous peoples in social science research. Tuck and Yang (2012) suggest that statistical representations of Indigenous peoples in social science and educational research are either as "at risk" peoples or as "asterisk" peoples. Whereas the at-risk representation places Indigenous peoples on the "verge of extinction", asterisk peoples are those who "...are represented by an asterisk in large and crucial data sets...", meaning their numbers are negligible within a much larger population (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.22). Adding to this analysis, Snelgrove et al. (2014) note that when Indigenous groups are framed as minority populations contained within the bounds of nation-states, the emergent logic is one of an "Indigenous problem" wherein the state is taken for granted as the logical manager of Indigenous populations. Such dynamics point to the need for careful scrutiny of statistical methodologies and findings, particularly in situations where Indigenous-specific statistics are deployed by non-Indigenous or settler state actors.

Colonial power in Canada was accrued, in part, through a history of institutionalized racist and gendered violence that legislated Indigenous lives and reordered familial structures according to European value systems. In her research on the effects of colonialism on First

Nations women in Canada, Winona Stevenson (1999) details the history of some of the most destructive colonial policy targeting First Nations communities, particularly regarding women and children. The introduction of an 'Indian' administrative legislation in 1850 marked a succession of sexist, racist technologies that aimed to usurp the power to define Indigenous membership. An assemblage of similar laws collectively known as the 'Indian Act' followed in 1869, which imposed a patrilineal definition of "Indian" by granting the state the power to dispossess First Nations women, and their children, of their Indigenous citizenship if they married anyone other than a First Nations man. Under these circumstances, women and their children lost access to any rights and protections afforded by the Indian Act, including access to their ancestral territories and participation in their Band's governance system—the same rules did not apply to men. The strong condemnation of these legislations by Indigenous leaders was ignored by the Canadian state until 1985, when the Indian Act was finally modified to address this opposition. In the interim, the regulations became more stringent when the Act was amended in 1951, resulting in First Nations women who married 'outside' of their Band losing their rights to "live on-reserve free from taxation or liens; be buried on-reserve; receive their fair share of First Nations annuities, revenues, and any on-reserve services like health and education" (Stevenson, 1999, p. 68). Analysing a 1970s court case in which an Indigenous woman had lost her status as a result of "marrying out", Mohawk legal scholar Patricia Monture-Angus (1995) framed the issue this way: "Many *Indians* by birth are non-Indians at law" (*emphasis* in original, pg. 135). Drawing on this court case, Monture-Angus demonstrates the extent to which gendered racism undergirds and is taken for granted in the Canadian legal system: the presiding judge found that, by no longer being "Status" the plaintiff had equal rights with all other Canadian women. Monture-Angus keenly observes that "such a conclusion is based on a faulty assumption

that Indian status is status less than the status of other Canadian women. [The judge] saw an elevation in personal status as a result of the disenfranchisement" (pg. 135). This observation lays bare the negative implications for Indigenous peoples, especially women, seeking justice within the settler legal system. As for the 'immediate and long-term effects of this Indian Act provision towards women and children', Winona Stevenson explains, "[it served to] reduce the number of status Indians the government was responsible for, impose the European patrilineage system, and elevate the power and authority of men at the expense of women" (p. 68). By 1985, at least 16,000 Indigenous women had lost their legal status as Indigenous persons, and tens of thousands of children were also affected (Palmater, 2014). The result was the disruption and destruction of traditional kinship systems including the matrilineal descent, and matrilocal, post-marriage patterns and ultimately the detachment for many people from Indigenous cultures and ontologies (Krebs & Olwan, 2012; Stevenson, 1999).

This section has explored the power of a selection of technologies of knowledge—maps, statistics, laws—and their role in shaping materialities, particularly the conditions of Indigenous peoples' lives in settler societies. This destabilizes the common conception of such technologies as value neutral and inert. Further, this body of literature details how assumptions and processes of simplification, omissions and inclusions become inscribed in the representational technologies and work to prioritise certain interests over others. There are, of course, contradictory outcomes as maps, statistics and laws (often operating in tandem) are deployed to both propel and subvert colonial power. I now look to closely related questions of expertise and power in Indigenous–state relations.

Expertise and power asymmetries in Indigenous–state relations

"[...] the claim to expertise in optimizing the lives of others is a claim to power, one that merits careful scrutiny" (Li, 2007, p. 5).

Implicit in the literature review's preceding sections are questions of expertise and the role of expert knowledge in the politics of settler colonialism. That is, expert knowledge is embedded in networks of statistics, maps and legislation, as experts grapple with available technologies, interpret data, organize exclusions and make judgement calls relating to Indigenous–state relations. Expertise helps to make the settler colonial governance practices thinkable, yet the politics of expert knowledge are easily naturalized and overlooked by the experts themselves. For this reason, I turn to those who have critically analyzed expertise.

Recent scholarship explores the work required in producing expertise and knowledge hierarchies through the proprietary claims over technologies and techniques and through the exploitation of research subjects (Inda, 2005). For instance, anthropologist David Horn (2005) details the ways in which "criminal anthropology" was invented as a discipline. Central to Horn's analysis is the struggle of criminologists to gain authority as experts within the nineteenth-century Italian criminal justice system. To achieve this elevated status, criminal anthropologists demonstrated their technical prowess with an array of technologies used to measure and diagnose pathological or 'normal' behaviour. Given that such technologies and techniques were unavailable to others, and appeared to produce scientifically 'objective' knowledge, in part by "deny[ing] the constructed nature of what was measured" (p. 149), criminal anthropologists were able to secure a position within the legal institution as 'expert witnesses'. From this privileged position they became advisors to other experts, particularly judges and juries, regarding appropriate treatment of criminals, thereby legitimizing so-called

expert interventions in the name of securing societal well-being. Whereas Horn focuses on the importance of technologies and techniques to generating expertise, Ian Mosby (2013) details the exploitation of Indigenous bodies to advance expert careers. Mosby's study of nutritional and biomedical experimentation in residential schools and Indigenous communities from 1942 to 1952, sheds light on this disturbing opportunism. At a time when Indian Affairs was cutting relief payments to communities experiencing hardship and while the science of nutrition was nascent, scientists, eager to make a name for themselves experimented on malnourished Indigenous peoples using whole communities as laboratories under the guise of solving the so-called "Indian problem". Malnutrition and hunger were treated as a result of cultural backwardness and were knowingly sustained so that scientists could conduct experiments with vitamin supplements. Mosby writes, "... these studies did little to alter the structural conditions that led to the malnutrition and hunger in the first place and, as a result, did more to bolster the career ambitions of the researchers than to improve the health of those identified as being malnourished" (p. 148).

For Tania Li, who researches development interventions in the 'global south' (2007; 2014) experts and expert knowledge are integral to the processes and practices of governing human conduct. They serve to define problems within populations and develop technical solutions through calculation and monitoring techniques and technologies. As Li points out, expertise is permeated with specific—rather than universal—visions of human nature and society. It matters, then, how experts conceive of populations and the subgroups within populations that they target for improvement interventions. For example, Li (2014) argues that current efforts to govern Indigenous peoples in the global south through their "free, prior and informed consent" would never have been thinkable during early 19th century colonial

interventions where administrators envisioned Indigenous peoples as wholly dependent. Li's work raises important questions about the role of expertise in producing and maintaining relations of domination in expansive governmental assemblages, as disparate interests coalesce around the notion of improvement (discussed in more detail in the Methodologies section of chapter two). Others have detailed the use of scientific expertise in struggles over land and resources to deny the legitimacy of Indigenous claims in court, thereby allowing development to proceed on Indigenous lands and further entrenching uneven power relations between Indigenous groups, industry and the state (F. Li, 2009; Wainwright & Robertson, 2003). Fabiana Li's (2011) study of a contentious mining operation in Chile explores the ways in which expert knowledge serves to commensurate the environmental impacts of mining with the company's mitigation and compensation plans to frame the company as socially and environmentally responsible and downplay opposition. While these studies demonstrate the various ways that expert knowledge is deployed to reify asymmetrical power relations, both Tania Li (2014) and Fabiana Li (2011) bring attention to the instability of and resistance to these attempts to govern or legitimate development projects. That is, while experts may devise and monitor a plan's implementation, the results are never fully known and unanticipated consequences inevitably emerge. For this reason, Tania Li advises that ethnographic studies of expertise must be attentive not only to the ways in which it is deployed and circulates but also to the ways in which it is contested or set aside (Li, 2014).

In this section I have attempted to highlight the various ways in which experts and expert knowledge matter to the processes and politics of land struggle. Expertise is used to legitimate infrastructure projects and manage opposition to them; its interventions are based on specific understandings of its subjects and its own authority. As Mosby (2013) and Horn (2005) have

demonstrated, it has taken extensive work to naturalize expert authority. In the case of Mosby's study, it is at the great expense of the targets of expertise. Once naturalized, expertise is drawn upon by public authorities to govern society at a distance, particularly in a neoliberal context (Rose, 1996a). In the final section of the literature review that follows, I turn to the literature on the history of social indicator research to explore this final point more closely by asking: Where does indicator research come from and what is its relationship with governance?

Social indicators and governance

The history and geography of social indicator research shows its deep entanglement with forms of modern governance in the West. Initially, the two central drivers behind the merging of numerical information and governance were nation-state formation and the management of resource extraction from colonies during the rise of industrial capitalism (Merry, 2016). While nations have made use of numerical information since at least the 5th century, formal statistical practice and a nation-state's interest in collecting and analyzing numerical data to organize, control, and manipulate populations spread through Europe during the 19th century. At this time, states were coming to understand populations and a workforce as the primary source of wealth, rather than securing territory. In this regard, a population census provided information essential to the management and growth of the nation-state's economic engine. Ian Hacking (1990) cites 1820 as the starting point for the "avalanche of printed numbers" that signaled the intensified—"fetishistic"—state practice of numeric classification (p. 17-18). Prior to this, he argues, the census was of greater importance to the management of colonies than to European homelands. Mitchell's (2002) research on Egypt similarly shows the centrality of quantifying projects to securing and maintaining colonial control, including through land surveys, the tallying of a population and the measurement of its capacities according to race and caste-based categories.

The project of modernity underway in the early nineteenth-century by and large worked to produce and depended upon a widespread understanding of quantitative knowledge as value-neutral descriptions of the world separate from the biases of hypothesis and theory (Poovey, 1998). The embodied assumptions and interpretive work inherent to the construction and manipulation of numerical information continues to go predominantly unacknowledged. As quantitative knowledge came to be understood as a distinct form of knowledge from other analytic modes, those who developed this knowledge came to assume the privileged role of expert knowledge producers. Such experts became critical to informing the processes and practices of governance, providing apparently neutral information.

Through the twentieth-century, policy and decision making practices increasingly came to depend on quantitative knowledge. In the mid-1930s the first intimations of what would come to be called 'social indicator research' emerged in the USA through the social sciences, including sociology, economics, and political science. Its intellectual, political pursuits were guided by the concerns of the then-prevailing welfare state—measuring and monitoring redistribution, and assessing needs-based aid entitlements for sections of society, and ultimately attempting to track and abate the potential threat of societal fissure resulting from the inequalities of capitalism (Noll, 2004; Sirgy et al., 2006). Two notable predecessors to the field of social indicator research include W. F. Ogburn's 1933 report on *Recent Social Trends in the United States*, which was published through president Herbert Hoover's "Committee on Social Trends" and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, and Odum's (1969) *Southern Regions of the United States*, originally published in 1936. While examining social trends, both focused primarily on economics. In a review of quality of life research, Noll (2004) also cites the earlier work of Italian statistician Alfredo Niceforo as an under-recognized but influential predecessor to the field. Niceforo's 1921

book *Les indices numérique de la civilisation et du progrès* sought to uncover quantitative data on living conditions so as to 'measure and track the levels of civilization and social progress across time and space' (see Noll, 2004, p. 152). In this sense, the cornerstones of the field of social indicator research are a continuation of the nineteenth-century project of modernity, and its linear teleological vision of progress.

In 1966, the U.S. space agency NASA launched the first major social indicator initiative, which set out to assess and predict the impacts and social fallout in American society resulting from their space program (Sirgy et al., 2006). The years that followed saw the christening of the 'social indicator research movement', a boom in the field that enrolled international organizations such as the United Nations and OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) and extended the practices beyond America and Europe while still showing the heaviest concentrations in the West. Throughout the 1970s and early 80s, social indicator research flourished, with confidence that its broad agenda of monitoring and making necessary interventions through statistical measurement would engender "planned progress" and improvement in societal well-being. However, in the waning years of the 1980s the movement rapidly dissolved, leaving some American social scientists in the field to announce its official death, citing three major causes: lack of funding due to an economic downturn and therefore a change in government priorities; lack of political will on the part of the Reagan administration to support indicator projects that could lead to increased social spending; and a lack of 'product utility', meaning, policy makers did not appear to be using indices in their work (Andrews, 1989).

Following its 1990 launch, the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI) appeared as a key player in resurrecting the field of indicator research, if indeed it had ever really

died. It followed in the tradition of indicator research of the welfare state era insomuch as it concerned itself with measuring the welfare of populations. Its underlying "human capabilities" theory, which combines and measures three factors—health, education and income—and focuses on ends, came to supplant the economic utility-based measure of GNP (Gross National Product), which focused on means and had previously stood as the principal definition of development.[8] While the UNHDI readily gained political acceptability among government representatives, it was the product of sustained and incremental effort, building on nearly thirty years of work in the field of development economics (Davis, Kingsbury, & Merry, 2012; Stanton, 2007). Since its release, it has been subject to a variety of critiques from academics and politicians alike, but has proven its durability, maintaining its widespread credibility by responding and at times adapting to certain critiques. As Davis et al (2012) note, an important element behind its durability also relates to the position of its authors, a group of prominent academics who profited from the support of powerful international institutions. Many of the points relating to the UNHDI's emergence and success are relevant to that of the CWB and the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI). As I will discuss in the empirical chapters that follow, the researchers who developed the CWB and its predecessor, the RIHDI, were among a wave of indicator researchers directly influenced by the UNHDI and who set out to adopt and adapt its methodologies, applying its underlying human capabilities theory to their measurements of Indigenous populations and communities. However, broad shifts in governance were also at play in the shaping of such measuring endeavors.

[8] While a measure of economic growth, GNP, like the UNHDI, was tied to the intellectual/philosophical history of welfare economics. It built on the early efforts to use national income as a principal measure of economic well-being pioneered by influential actors such as A.C. Pigou, a founding father of welfare economics, Arthur Lyon Bowley, an economist and statistician, and later Simon Kuznets, a Nobel Prize-winning American economist and statistician (see Sirgy et al., 2006). Also, like the HDI after it, the GNP took decades of work to gain widespread acceptability as a proxy for development (see Davis, Kingsbury and Merry, 2012).

Another major factor driving the contemporary boom in indicator use in policy and decision-making practices relates to the rise of neoliberalism, the transition from "government to governance". During the 1990s, a strong bond was formed between what Merry (2016) terms "indicator culture" and evidence-based governance. Indicator culture, as Merry understands it, is an element of "audit culture" (see also, Shore and Wright, 2015). Both are deemed cultures not because they describe society, but rather because they are a set of techniques, practices and assumptions applied within specific—namely bureaucratic and institutional—situations. Audit culture in particular is seen as "the process by which the principles and techniques of accounting and financial management are applied to the governance of peoples and organizations—and, more importantly, the social and cultural consequences of that translation" (Shore and Wright, 2015, p. 24). It privileges a set of technocratic and expert practices, techniques and assumptions that place high value on numerical data for knowledge production and decision making, especially within institutional and bureaucratic environments. Following Foucauldian scholarship, Merry (2016) explains, rather than deploying coercion or the imposition of "hard law" measures, such as sanctions, the governmental form at work in indicator culture operates through the shaping of behaviours by establishing standards that require actors—all levels of government, individuals, groups, communities, corporations—to report on how they have met them. Whereas welfare economic era indicators were concerned with societal improvement through activating redistribution mechanisms and allocating aid, those that arose through evidence-based governance were infused with concerns of business management, efficiency, transparency, performance and so on. In this sense, the proliferation of indicators stands as evidence of corporate and neoliberal cultures and modes of governance permeating the broader social sphere (Merry, 2011). Compliance and change are enacted through assessment, reporting

and ranking. A central tactic to elicit compliance and change is to "name and shame" those actors who fail to meet, or improve towards the targets set by indicators. As I aim to show in the subsequent empirical chapters, the CWB emerged through a convergence of welfare-state based governance imperatives, with influences stemming from the social indicator movement and the UNHDI, as well as imperatives and influences tied to the emergence of indicator culture and neoliberal governance.

My review of the postcolonial, settler colonial and critical development literatures highlighted the historical and geographic entanglements of settler state governing rationales and practices, knowledge production, expertise, dispossession and concern for and about Indigenous peoples. It has also brought attention to some of the politics of 'expert' knowledge in Indigenous–state relations and related techniques and technologies that propel and occasionally challenge colonial processes. Reviewing the literature on the history of social indicator research outlined its relationship with different forms of governance dating back to the formation of the nation-state, through to the rise of neoliberalism and the flourishing of indicator culture. Still, across these literatures, little attention has been paid to the production and uses of development measures in settler governance and development/improvement interventions.[9] My research contends that Indigenous-specific development indices are one aspect of a settler policy and bureaucratic performance that narrows the pathways of socio-economic development available to Indigenous communities. They serve to distribute power, between index users and targets, surrounding development initiatives as well as to naturalize and universalize various facets of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's (INAC) development agenda, including determining what appropriate forms of development look like, who is in need of development, who is made

[9] Exceptions to this include: Salée (2006) and Walter and Andersen (2013)

responsible for it, and in what ways this responsibility can or ought to be addressed. Yet, the politics of such ordering practices—the inscription of the producers' and users' assumptions, interests, and concerns in the processes of data selection, manipulation and presentation—are largely invisible. By examining the everyday and discursive practices of index creation and proliferation, I hope to disrupt the ostensibly apolitical nature of these quantitative knowledge technologies, showing them to be tools that predominantly uphold the settler state and non-state authorities as the "natural" and "benevolent" managers of Indigenous populations. Further, I hope to destabilize the ways in which CWB studies frame Indigenous peoples as somehow both developmentally stunted and also responsible for the conditions of their poverty.[10] Such a framing sets the stage for Canadian state actors, industry and free-market proponents to champion and pursue the intensified engagement in markets and intensified resource extraction by individual communities as *the only* viable development option, in the process opening up communities to further state and industry-driven development interventions.

[10] I draw here from Walter and Andersen (2013) in their exploration of statistical constructions of Indigeneity through official data, such as the census. They see the "deficit Indigene" as part of a practice within dominant quantitative methodologies of shortchanging Indigenous peoples and ultimately reinforcing the already well-entrenched neo-colonial relationship between narrowly conceived statistical constructions of Indigenous sociality and development-based policy grounded in a racialized terrain of knowledge production. These forms of knowledge production, they argue, are tethered to long-standing government policies to "close the gap" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and continue to marginalize alternative, and often more positive, statistical stories and understandings of Indigenous sociality.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters including this introduction. In the second chapter, I detail my research design. I start with a discussion of key insights from theorists of "performativity", which I use as a frame for conceptualizing the CWB. I then explain the guidance that I take from Mountz's (2003) "institutional ethnography" and Cameron's (2015) "stories as material relational practices" in shaping my methodology. After this, I locate myself in the research and describe how I arrived at a combination of methods—interviews, textual analysis of official documents and observation of CWB presentations—to generate the data I analyze in the substantive empirical chapters to follow. I also discuss some of the limits of my work.

My empirical research material is divided between the third and fourth chapters. Chapter 3, *Tracing the Emergence of the CWB,* explores the history and conditions of possibility that underwrite the CWB's emergence. I have organized it into three vignettes that detail the connections between the intellectual projects of Indigenous-specific development index 'pioneers', those of the CWB network, and then trace the ways in which the concerns, interests and governing rationales of the state became inscribed in the CWB. Additionally, the chapter demonstrates the immense effort and resources necessary for this particular vision of Indigenous-specific development to take hold. Chapter 4, *The CWB in the Wild,* examines the efforts of social scientists, academics and technicians to extend the CWB network out of universities and DIAND and into the policy sphere, in part, through developing discursive and material strategies to frame the index as existing outside of politics. I examine the index's material and discursive effects, as a variety of actors—politicians, bureaucrats and free market think tanks—come to produce new meanings about Indigenous peoples' well-being by combining community level

data with CWB scores and prescribing particular development pathways. The chapter's final section explores examples of Indigenous leadership engaging with and contesting the CWB and its predecessor the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI). In the final concluding chapter, I highlight the key findings and interventions of my thesis, attempt to bring together the major themes that have surfaced and discuss some of the research's limitations.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework, Methodologies, Positioning and Methods

Index Performativity

This thesis aims to describe the role of the Community Well-Being Index and its adjacent indices in (re)producing and concretizing settler state and industry-driven development "common-sense".[11] My approach is principally informed by the theory of performativity as elaborated in explorations of gender and sexuality (Butler, 1988, 1990), markets and the economy (Blomley, 2007; Butler, 2010; Callon, 2010; Christophers, 2014; Collard, 2013; Mitchell, 2007, 2008), and the discipline of economic geography (Barnes, 2002, 2008). I also look to Indigenous and anti-colonial scholars and to those who engage with critical and feminists strands of Science and Technology Studies and its sub-discipline Actor Network Theory (ANT) to help me develop methodologies that articulate with performativity and that are attentive to the discursive and material relations particular to persistent structures and practices in settler state (quantitative) knowledge production (Andersen, 2013; Cameron, 2015; Haraway, 1999; Latour, 2005; Law, 2009; Merry, 2016; Smith, 2012; TallBear, 2013; Walter & Andersen, 2013). These intellectual networks have been instrumental in unraveling the entanglements of culture and politics with technological and scientific knowledge production, while also revealing power relations whose nature is often camouflaged. Relatedly, this diverse body of work has contributed to disrupting the myths of universality and objectivity stubbornly cherished by Western science,[12] and destabilizing dualisms which are foundational to Western epistemologies (i.e., modern/primitive, culture/nature, micro/macro, formal/informal economies and so on) that

[11] Loosely following Uribe (2015), I use "common-sense" to describe knowledge that assumes hegemonic status (Gramsci, 1995).

[12] Science studies scholar Donna Haraway (1988) most famously led the charge against the prevailing form of objectivity in white masculinist positivist scientific and philosophical practices and cultures that she referred to as "the conquering gaze from nowhere... [which] makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation" (p. 581). She then termed her radical reworking of this dominant approach "situated knowledges", which calls on researchers to remain rigorous in their research while also accounting for their specific positions within their work.

are deeply entwined with historical and ongoing operations of colonial power.[13] My research carries forward a set of theoretical insights and assumptions drawn from this work that I elaborate in the following section. I start by reviewing key interventions in theorizing performativity that guide my analysis of the CWB. I then go on to explain the processes and limitations of my own knowledge production and account for my position within this research. The final section of this chapter details the specific research methods I employed.

At base, performativity rejects a separation between representation—or discursive practices more generally—and reality. Under a performative framework, rather than inertly reflect existing external phenomena, representations and statements—quantitative technologies included—contribute to producing and enacting the material world. For example, statistical measures do more than just mirror existing realities; they shape people's understandings, experiences and behaviours and therefore participate in the production of reality (Bowker & Star, 2000). Likewise, to describe a fee simple property ownership model as performative is to acknowledge that the model itself reorganizes relations and actions according to its own assumptions, thus giving form to the world that it represents (Blomley, 2007). Performativity scholars are not, however, suggesting that the world is somehow fake as a result of being performed. Instead, the theory calls for a reimagining of the relationship between representation and reality, discourse and materiality**.**

Arguably, one of the most influential reimaginings and contributions to the theory of performativity emerged in feminist philosopher Judith Butler's (1990) book *Gender Trouble*. One of Butler's central achievements in the book is to destabilize the hegemonic conceptions of gender and sex as elemental, innate or stable. *Gender Trouble* analyzes gender and sex as

[13] For more on the role of networks of dualisms and interlinking forms of oppression in western culture see Plumwood (1993).

performed phenomena, contending that societal expectations produce the anticipated norms that demarcate and regulate both. Butler draws on Foucault's understanding of power as diffuse and generated through material and discursive relations to demonstrate how the performance of gender and sex, and performances more generally, gains power through the mundane (re)production of norms, subjectivities and identities. Moreover, while gendered performances create an apparently "seamless" identity—a "gendered self", generally within a hierarchical binary of male and female "compelled by social sanctions and taboos"—Butler (1988) argues that this identity is in fact a stylized discursive form created by the "bodily acts" of subjects repeated through time (p. 520).

While Butler focuses on gendered bodies, my theorization of the CWB follows scholars who extend performativity, and its related intuitions, to make sense of the production and regulation of norms of political bodies, such as states and settler collectives (Cameron, 2015; D. MacKenzie, Muniesa, & Siu, 2007; Mitchell, 2002, 2007; Mountz, 2003). For example, geographer Emilie Cameron (2015) examines the performance of "iconic" stories of white settler encounters with Inuit in the North of Canada (particularly the travel narratives of Samuel Hearn), in ordering relations of the Canadian state, settler society, and industry with Inuit. As with the mundane and repetitive production and regulation of sex and gender norms, Cameron demonstrates how the everyday storying practices of settlers "… not only order and naturalize forms of violence, domination, extraction and dispossession in representational terms; they also intervene in material orderings of lives and livelihoods and they make such orderings make sense" (p. 26). Rather than interpreting stories as merely texts, Cameron sees them as "embodied material practices shaped by the social, cultural, environmental, and political contexts within which they are told" (p. 21). Thus, she opens up such storying practices to a place-based

empirical investigation of where, when, how and why they are performed and what relations they make possible. Another example of a study that extends performativity from the corporeal to the body politic comes from Timothy Mitchell's (2002) book *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, in which he investigates the rise to dominance of expertise (e.g., civil engineering, administration, economics, accountancy and so on) in shaping Egyptian society from the height of British colonialism through to the era of development spurred by structural adjustments of the International Monetary Fund and visions of modernity. He argues that the categories widely taken for granted as universal and as possessing a pre-existing ontological status, such as private property, the economy, or the state, are in fact produced through the social practices that define them. The naturalization of such categories is largely accomplished through a combination of drawing and policing discursive boundaries between interlinking dualisms well-entrenched in Western epistemologies, a view that the state, society and economy are separate, and a commitment on the part of social scientists to uphold a distinction between apparently universalist abstract knowledge and the materiality of local contexts. Following Cameron and Mitchell, my theorization of development metrics rejects the apparent universality of the CWB and in turn interrogates the spatiality and everyday practices of experts in the processes of knowledge production. This entails examining the concerns, assumptions, abstractions, exclusions and boundary-making practices that constitute the index and the subjectivities and relations that it gives rise to. Accordingly, I set out to explore not only what the index authors and its users say but also what they do.

Another vision of performance that influences my theorization of the CWB comes through Actor Network Theory, whose foundations are affiliated with the work of Bruno Latour, John Law and Michel Callon, all of whom got their start studying how scientific practices produce the

world they profess to reveal. Informed largely by post-structuralist philosophy, ANT has developed what Law (2009) describes as "a disparate family of material semiotic tools, sensibilities, and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located" (p. 141). This has been used to effectively unsettle dominant assumptions and explanations in the social sciences, resisting generalizable theories of power, agency and representation, as well as rejecting rationalist and linear narratives of development (see Mitchell, 2002).

According to ANT, a performance is a network. Whereas we colloquially understand *network* to denote a stable structure with nodes and ties, like that of a municipal sewer system, ANT networks comprise disparate actors—human and non-human, material and social—that are in flux (Latour, 2005). It follows that one of ANT's central preoccupations is how new relations and networks—made of heterogeneous actors—form and dissolve, as well as concerning itself with how and why certain networks, or performances, are stronger than others. (Law, 2009). A strong performance depends on the alignment of actions, entities and representations and for such assemblages to remain aligned—a process ANT terms "translation"—long enough to become stable, but never static, as a new piece of reality (see, Blomley, 2007; MacKenzie et al., 2007). Translation entails the alignment of disparate actor's interests into a network with the promise that their separate goals can be achieved through collaboration. Along the way, actors necessarily compromise and alter their initial interests as a result of their new relations. If we hold true ANT's assumption that "nothing has reality or form outside of the enactment of […] relations" (Law, 2009, p. 141), the methodological implication for my study of the CWB is, to borrow Latour's phrase, the need to "trace the relations" in its formation (Latour, 1987, 2005). In

my understanding, tracing relations also entails an examination of social, material and political processes through which the index proliferates.

Finally, to capture the dynamics behind the variations in the force and effects of a performance, Judith Butler (2010)—weighing in on questions of the performativity of economics—turns to JL Austin (Austin, 1975), the philosopher of "ordinary language" credited with developing the foundations of performance theory. Austin distinguishes between three speech acts: statements of truth or falsehood, illocutionary utterances, such as a minister stating "I baptize you", which enact that which the speaker announces, and perlocutionary speech acts, which depend on an alignment of specific intervening conditions in order to produce effects over time. Butler (2010) highlights that in both illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts, the agency to perform is dispersed rather than being held by a 'sovereign' speaker. Even in the case of illocutionary utterances, Butler points out that "… the speech act is a reiterated form of discourse, so we would be mistaken to overvalue the subject who speaks" (p. 148). Considering again the example of the minister, Butler's point is that the minister's pronouncement of baptism is itself a learned and codified speech act. The powers we imbue in the speaker are themselves contingent on internalized codes and rituals. For instance, the phrase "I baptize you" will quickly change meaning and importance, depending on the beliefs of the listener, and the authority vested in the speaker. After all, the performances of experts, using expert instruments in spaces of expertise, are likely to be more persuasive than those of non-experts lacking apparatus; e.g. a baptism performed by an unordained or non-minister outside of a church without the usual ritual objects will not ring as "true". When it comes to defining Indigenous-specific development, consider how those experts who are equipped with indices that can be read at a glance, indices which themselves correspond with definitions put forth by an array of well-resourced and

influential international governance and development institutions, are likely to have greater sway using those indices than a layperson or, ironically, the peoples describes by those same indices. Butler is also highlighting how even those speech acts that are seen to enact reality are dependent on histories and sets of relations.

My theorization of the CWB mobilizes the key insights of performativity that I have outlined above to make sense of the state and the practices and cultures of quantitative development-based knowledge production born of state and academic institutional collaborations. To explore the performative work of the CWB, I have organized my thesis according to two broad aims. The first aim is to analyze the historical geographic context surrounding the emergence and stabilization of the CWB network. To pursue this aim I ask: What are the conditions of possibility for the CWB's emergence; what are the practices and processes of the experts that engage with the index; and what is the role of power relations in producing quantitative knowledge about Indigenous peoples' well-being? The second aim is to examine the new forms of politics made possible through the index's proliferation. In this vein, I ask: What role does the CWB play in the performance of development discourses in Canada; what types of subjectivities does it help to constitute and by which means; how does it serve to order socio-material relations, and to what effect? Below, I discuss the more specific focus of my research methodologies, within an explanation of my understanding of the state and discourse.

Methodologies

As with all institutions, the state performs a coherent public facade even when diverse interests and agendas are at work under the surface (Mountz, 2003, 2007). Institutional ethnography offers methodological openings for examining the spaces and socio-material relations beyond the facade of coherence. Take for example feminist geographer Alison Mountz,

who observes immigration officers, administrators, and policy makers working in the department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and who in doing so captures the embodied practices of these actors as they determine belonging to, and mobility within the bounds of, the nation-state. Mountz (2003) explains,

> Rather than an abstract, hegemonic, repressive, autonomous body that affects social relations, I conceptualize the state as an everyday social construction. This approach entails looking at the bureaucracy as a site where the nation-state is produced unevenly across time and space and where the everyday relations among those theoretically conceived of as 'outside' of the state bleed into the dimensions of bureaucratic life in fascinating ways (p. 626).

Mountz' approach to assessing the everydayness of state-building exercises is instructive for my understanding of the work of social scientists at Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND),[14] who, through a network of collaborators (human and non-human) and colleagues (some of whom are conventionally considered to work "outside" the state)—academics, technicians, politicians, policy analysts, and bureaucrats—produce "common sense" about and circumscribe economic development pathways for Indigenous communities. In the early stages of my project, I imagined conducting an ethnography in the spirit of Mountz' work, spending time at a desk in the research unit examining the spaces and embodied practices of the state actors in situ as they collected, manipulated, interpreted, and presented data and deployed the indices to make decisions informing Indigenous policy. I was, and still am, particularly interested in the role of quantitative indictors in shaping policy orientations, as these

[14] The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) was the name of the department from 1966 to 2011. At the time of my visits to the department in 2016 it was named Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Before this it was named Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Some of the reports that I analyze are published during the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada era, but in an effort to limit confusion I generally stick to DIAND, which was the department's name at the time that the indices I am studying were first being developed.

technologies at the outset of my research appeared to be both on the rise and under studied. However, for reasons elaborated in my methods section, I was unable to achieve the "insider" status necessary to conduct sustained ethnographic fieldwork in the department and instead drew on Mountz' work to guide my research in contexts mostly peripheral of the DIAND research unit.

As my project progressed and shifted, I also drew indicator-specific ethnographic techniques from Merry (2011, 2016), whose work looks at the impacts and roles of human rights indicators on global governance using a wider variety of research techniques, but still within the purview of ethnography. Recognizing that indicators are increasingly implicated in the exercise of power in international governance (e.g., influencing political decision making processes, the allocation of resources, and the tracking of human rights records), Merry advocates an ethnographic approach that is attentive to the creation and histories of indicators. Such an approach entails, "examining the history of the creation of an indicator and its underlying theory, observing expert group meetings and international discussions where the terms of the indicator are debated and defined, interviewing expert statisticians and other experts about the meaning and process of producing indicators, observing data-collection processes, and examining the ways indicators affect decision making and public perceptions" (Merry, 2011, p. 85). My work attempts to respond to Merry's appeal by tracing the systems of meaning through which the CWB is produced, maintained and proliferated. This includes examining the alliances and tensions of actors involved as well as instances of contestation, failure, and occasional dissolution of index networks in struggles over how and to whom these indices count.

To analyze the networks and meaning making practices and processes of DIAND Indigenous-specific development measures, I return to Cameron's (2015) conception of "stories

as relational and material ordering practices", which I understand as a sustained engagement with, and methodological intervention into, the predominant discourse analysis techniques, findings, and assumptions in postcolonial studies. Discourse can be thought of as series of ideas, statements, representations, and practices that produce a distinct body of knowledge; give meaning to concepts, rhetoric, stories, texts; constitute identities, and social relations; and condition political and moral outcomes (Barnes, 2003; Berg, 2009; Gregory, Johnston, Pratt, Watts, & Whatmore, 2009). Discourse Analysis in postcolonial studies is used to excavate the hidden or taken for granted systems of meaning that structure knowledge and social practices, including the ways that relations of domination and oppression are ordered and maintained (Berg, 2009).

Palestinian-American literary critic Edward Said (1978) used discourse analysis to launch a powerful critique of the power relations buttressing Orientalism—the West's study of the East. He argued that Western imperialism was conditioned by representations and imaginings of Oriental spaces and those who inhabit them. Imperial domination, in all of its materiality, was justified and carried out based on the social and individual imaginings of the West's difference from, and supposed innate superiority to the Oriental "Other". Said's work has been highly influential and generative for scholars assessing colonial and neocolonial power and disrupting the view that representations, stories or narratives are somehow innocent.

Cameron (2015), in her thoughtful and potent analysis of Samuel Hearn's story of Bloody Falls massacre, both draws from and pushes against the now well-trodden path of postcolonial discourse analysis sparked by Said. While acknowledging her debt to this work, Cameron contends that examining colonial texts and discourse alone "… relies too little on geographical contexts, too readily conjures homogenized, stylized constituencies, and too easily accepts a

timeless, static rendering of colonial relations" (p. 24). Among the consequences she calls attention to is the tendency of such analyses to reinscribe the colonial relations that they seek to dismantle by foregrounding the actions and imaginaries of colonizers and assuming that white settlers are always and everywhere the most powerful actors in Indigenous politics and territories,[15] all the while omitting Indigenous peoples' accounts. This is to say, such frameworks prefigure the scope and terms of colonial power relations and resistance to them—that Indigenous responses to white settlers must be made "in modes, formats and terms that are dictated by, and legible to, [white settlers]" (p. 15). Therefore, rather than only examining the power of representation, Cameron traces messy, material, and contextual relations. In doing so she evades assuming and reinforcing well-known roles and lines of difference between settler and Indigenous, colonized and colonizer. Cameron's treatment is instructive to my examination of the CWB. To follow her methodology means visiting the places and contexts where CWB stories are practiced, as well as being attentive to the broader political, social and economic structures and contexts in which these relations and practices are embedded. While I take up a relatively standard discourse analysis by examining texts, power relations and subject positions constituted through quantitative representations, their authors, and targets, (in ways that I will detail in the following methods section) I have also done my best to heed Cameron's call to avoid "assuming to know in advance who and what matters in a given context" and instead turn to those messy contextual and material specificities and practices that come to account for how, why and to whom development indices matter. Before detailing my methods, I first locate myself within my research.

[15] Cameron's work addresses specifically Inuit politics and territories in the North and in this context she uses the Inuit term "Qublanaaq" to describe white settlers.

Locating Myself in the Research

"... whether positioning ourselves as compassionate witnesses, reliable observers, benevolent technocrats, accurate scientists, bearers of history, or champions of Inuit tradition, [white settlers] have a practiced capacity to write our own interests out of the story" (Cameron, 2015, p. 174).

I became interested in researching the CWB in 2012. This was a time of reinvigorated struggle over ideas about, and definitions of, Indigenous peoples' well-being, during which Indigenous self-determination struggles, including movements such as Idle No More, and Indigenous networks such as Defenders of the Land, were taking the socio-political foreground. There was also, however, a parallel ramping up of the Canadian federal government's neoliberal governing tactics designed to undermine Indigenous self-determination, including legislative and policy mechanisms—the push for the First Nations Property Ownership Initiative/Act, Bill C-27 (First Nations Financial Transparency Act), and Bills C-38 and C-45 (omni-bus legislation) to name a few. Yet, despite the public backdrop against which these Indigenous-led movements and these Federal mechanisms were interacting, it remains challenging for me to locate an exact entrance point for my own entanglement in the network of Indigenous-specific socio-economic indicators.

For many years prior to studying geography, I had participated in varying capacities in a range of social and environmental justice campaigns working with community organizations, such as Books to Prisoners and Food Not Bombs, in a number of American and Canadian cities where I lived and visited. My interest in geography started with a view towards a career in environmental science, pursuing broad questions and concerns surrounding issues of climate change, wildlife habitat destruction and water management. Towards the end of my

undergraduate degree at Concordia, I was swept up, along with over 250,000 other students across the province, in a months-long battle over the Liberal government's proposed increase in tuition fees during the 2012 Quebec student strike. This reinvigorated my activist commitments that had in recent years taken a lesser role in my daily life. The experience also reoriented my academic interests. Through conversations and debates at picket lines and in classrooms, during rallies ("manifs") in the streets, and over lengthy general assemblies, I became fascinated and dismayed with the extent to which neoliberal discourses, practices and logics permeate the day-to-day. Additionally, seeing certain voices marginalized within what appeared from the outset to be a shared struggle, I was faced with questions of solidarity, with finding ways to participate that would hopefully support and involve, rather than alienate, potential allies. Critical and feminist geography as well as political ecology introduced me to a set of analytic tools and had begun to help me make sense of the power relations at hand not only between the student groups, the university administration and Quebec politicians, but also among those organizing to resist neoliberal affronts.[16]

By the time the student strike had reduced to a simmer, the Indigenous mass movement Idle No More (INM) was ablaze across Turtle Island. Led largely by Indigenous women, INM arose as an iteration of hundreds of years of Indigenous sovereignty struggles, and set out to oppose Conservative government's Bill C-38 and C-45 omni-bus legislation that included far-reaching amendments to the *Indian Act, the Fisheries Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, and the Navigable Waters Act*, among others. In part, INM was a refusal of the state's attempt to circumscribe Aboriginal and environmental rights to market logics, a condemnation of the Conservative's amendments, changes that were designed to transfer a wide

[16] For a fascinating and in-depth geographic analysis of power relations within the student strike at Concordia see Matak (2012).

array of legislations into the government's economic folder in order to then manage and deregulate them through fiscal mechanisms (see Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014).

INM created space for dialogue and action surrounding the possibility of shared environmental and social justice struggles that would centre Indigenous voices and proceed on Indigenous peoples' terms—an arrangement that settler environmentalists and scientists have historically proven to misapprehend and undermine (see, Willems-Braun, 1997). Attending INM rallies and teach-ins and marches for Missing and Murder Indigenous Women and Girls in Montreal, in tandem with classes in post/anti-colonial geographies, inspired me to revisit and deepen my understanding of solidarity. It also spurred me to take seriously the politics of knowledge production, including acknowledging the ways in which my privilege as a white settler conditions my intellectual pursuits and actions. To act with the aim of *being in solidarity*, including through a geography Master's research project, however naive this may be, I believe, demands that I be transparent about my privilege. My position affects how I gain access to research spaces, subjects and material and how I move within such networks. It also shapes my choice of analytical frameworks and my ability to communicate my understandings down to the content and structure of my thesis. My hope was that my Master's could be an opportunity not only to learn much more about Canadian history, but also to potentially use my privileged position to support Indigenous self-determination struggles, or more modestly to push back against the weighty power imbalances that permeate Indigenous-settler relations supported, in part, by quantitative technologies of knowledge production. The broader point is that the contextual entanglements in which I am embedded, including my personal trajectory, political orientations, scholarly influences etc., have oriented my research interests, the types of questions I ask, and my methodological approach. This is also to acknowledge that, while I seek to be

rigorous in my analysis, I make no attempt to produce a "complete" comprehensive history of the CWB—it is necessarily partial and contingent.

It was in the summer following the initial flurry of media attention surrounding INM, that a friend sent me a *National Post* article that first introduced me to the CWB. This friend and I had been discussing the politics of the recent intensified push for the privatization of reserve lands—a push that came from a coalition of federal bureaucrats, neo-classical economists in right-wing think-tanks, and the First Nations Tax Commission under the leadership of Manny Jules (see Schmidt 2018). The article was essentially a press release for a study conducted through the free market think-tank the Fraser Institute, as well as a promotion for the First Nations Property Ownership Act (FNPOA), a piece of legislation designed as an opt-out mechanism from the Indian Act that would allow First Nations bands and individuals on reserves to transfer their lands into fee simple title (Flanagan & Beauregard, 2013; Gerson, 2013).[17] The study itself, *The Wealth of First Nations*, an ode to classical liberal economist Adam Smith, deployed the CWB to generate multiple regression models and ultimately suggest that, according to the *National Post*, "First Nations that opt for proposed federal legislation allowing private ownership on reserve land could see the well-being of their communities improve" (Gerson, 2013). I read the report closely from the comfort of my parents' house, a building located squarely on the unceded territory of the Sinixt Nation, in the Slocan Valley in what is commonly known today as British Columbia. The Sinixt, at this time, were in the midst of a protracted legal battle to have their very existence recognized by the Canadian state (referred to as the "Crown" in legal contexts) who had wrongfully declared them "extinct" in 1956 after their having been gradually pushed across to the American side of the border by the incursion of settlers and extractive industries.

[17] For critical perspectives on the formation of the FNPOA see Pasternak, 2014; Schmidt, 2018

This served the Crown as a justification for the complete denial of Sinixt' inherent rights and title to the land, a denial that was recently successfully challenged in the Supreme Court of British Columbia by the plaintiff DeSautel who, on the long road towards reversing the "extinction" status, has won the initial case as well as two appeals by the Crown to date (Kassam, 2017; *R. v. DeSautel*, 2017). As I considered *The Wealth of First Nations*, the gravity of the Sinixt situation sunk in, as did my own position of privilege. I was faced with the question of my unencumbered presence on Sinixt land while they were in court fighting for recognition of their existence, to say nothing of access and rights to their lands. I was also struck by the power optics and qualitative differences in the Sinixt legal struggle for recognition of inherent rights and title, versus the quantitative expertise of white settlers in the Fraser Institute's proposal that First Nations transform their reserve lands into fee simple holdings in the name of their well-being. (But consider, being deemed "extinct," the Sinixt are not recognized under the Indian Act and are not allotted reserve lands by the state and thus couldn't even follow the Fraser Institute's advice if they chose to**)**. All this led me to examine and reexamine the underlying question of *well-being* and the power of its quantitative definition. Drawing on this simple, apparently unambiguous and objective measure of development, Beauregard and Flanagan (2013) were able to tell a seductive story about property markets and Indigenous peoples' poverty, and then provide seemingly tidy solutions for First Nations to pursue in order to attain higher levels of development—i.e. "develop stable governing institutions and property rights that encourage participation in economic markets" (p. 25). The CWB brings to its performance the conventional wisdom that development exists along a hierarchical gradient, which in turn motivates, justifies and naturalizes expert interventions in a quest for higher and more evenly distributed scores, where

all parties are elevated to the level of socio-economic status enjoyed by settler society.[18] As I searched further into the history and uses of the CWB I found it deployed in a variety of contexts by a number of different actors, most of them institutional. I found that while there were commonalities in its application, it did not always reflect the same politics as those I initially encountered in the Fraser Institute report. At times the CWB was used as a tool for advocacy, but it predominantly provided a starting point from which various actors and interests would investigate and suggest development pathways. It was the emergence of new politics and power effects that have come to comprise this thesis.

Methods

My research pursues two interrelated threads: tracing the conditions of the CWB's creation (e.g. examining cultures and practices of knowledge production) and the material and meaning-making effects of its proliferations (i.e. its function in shaping how "Indigenous development" is understood and enacted in Canada). I have structured the two empirical chapters that follow according to these threads. They also inform how and why I have produced my knowledge, requiring methods that attend to the metric's historical development and explore its work in the present. During twelve months of fieldwork between December 2015 and December 2016, I visited and examined sites where the index is produced, maintained and circulated. This included four visits to DIAND headquarters in Gatineau Quebec, three of which were spent in the departmental library and the other of which included a visit to the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD—currently the Strategic Research Directorate SRD) where the indices were elaborated. I conducted twelve semi-structured interviews with the index authors and technicians who developed and worked with the indices (detailed below). I also observed

[18] In keeping with the free market capitalist aphorism that "a rising tide lifts all boats".

presentations, in situ and through archival video footage, in which the CWB and its closest predecessor the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI) are deployed so that I could better understand the processes, politics and spaces of their circulation.[19] The videos I analyze are from ParlVU, the online Canadian parliament streaming service, and YouTube. Finally, as geographer Lawrence Berg (2009) suggests for those practicing discourse analysis, I "absorbed [my]self in the texts", reading and re-reading well-being index studies (both published and drafts), research briefs, newspaper articles, meeting minutes and official reports.[20] This was helpful not only for identifying themes, but also, to use Barnes' (2012) metaphor, to triangulate with other sources, such as accounts from interviewees or presentations. This was particularly useful for corroborating and occasionally correcting information from interviews, such as when interviewees misremembered details such as names or dates. It was also instructive when I revisited interviews I hadn't wanted to interrupt, but which I hadn't fully comprehended at the time. When, for example, interviewees off-handedly referenced organizations or concepts that I was unfamiliar with, rather than derail their train of thought, I would later return to the section of

[19] As I will elaborate later in more detail, the RIHDI was developed in 1998 (a few years ahead of the CWB) within the same research unit as the CWB. The RIHDI was modeled after the United Nations Human Development Index and is a population measure that produces scores for Indigenous population living in Canada (rather than a measure of communities) at either the provincial or national level. These scores correspond with those of the UNHDI to provide a basis of comparison between Indigenous peoples' development with that of Canada and all other countries measured by the UNHDI. The RIHDI and the CWB often appear together in the introductory explanations of experts who use them.

[20] **Drafts included**: *Treat Land Entitlement and Urban Reserves in Saskatchewan: A Statistical Evaluation* (Flanagan & Harding, 2017). *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective First Nations* (Flanagan & Harding, 2016). *The Community Well-Being Index: Methodological Details* (received from the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate in DIAND, no listed author, 2016). **Published studies**: I have reviewed a plethora of published CWB and RIHDI studies and research briefs. Rather than list them all here I believe it is more meaningful and productive to let those that I have engaged most closely appear in the pages of my analysis in the subsequent empirical chapters. **Official reports**: Similar to the I published studies, I will let those that I most closely engaged appear in my references. In general, I tracked and compared the use of the CWB (and the RIHDI) between the Plans and Priorities Reports to the Departmental Performance Reports of DIAND (then-INAC, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) from 2004-2005 to 2015-2016. I also examined departmental audits and research evaluations as well as a range of final reports from government organizations relating to the emergence and circulation of the indices. I also reviewed digital archives of defunct government and University of Western Ontario conference and networking blogs (during the early days of blogging).

the recorded interview in order to research and clarify the points that I had missed. In the following section I detail my methods and the processes of knowledge production I used as I traced the relations of the indices network and examined the performances of quantitative knowledge and expertise used therein.

My research involves a variety of actors within the following institutions: DIAND, the University of Western Ontario (UWO), the Fraser Institute, the Frontier Center for Public Policy, the Institute for Liberal Studies, the House of Commons and the Senate among others. That said, it is predominantly populated by the SRAD researchers and the social scientists at the UWO who came together in a collaboration called the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP), which was responsible for creating the CWB and RIHDI and ultimately spearheading Indigenous-specific indicator development in Canada as we know it.[21] From SRAD and the FNCP, my interview subjects included a variety of roles including former student interns, professors, researchers, technicians, analysts and past directors. Remaining within DIAND, I also interviewed a member of an adjacent directorate to SRAD the Results and Performance Measurement Directorate about the CWB's use as a departmental performance measure. Both SRAD and the Results and Performance Measurement Directorate are housed within the *Planning Research and Statistics Branch* (see Figure 1). Interviewees from outside of DIAND mostly included academics associated with the University of Western Ontario and its FNCP, with the exception of Tim Albert, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technician who was integral to the development

[21] Since its start in the early 1990s the research unit has undergone a number of name changes depending on departmental objectives and ensuing mergers and/or separations of research groups. I use SRAD because this was the name at the time of my interviews and is therefore most commonly used by interviewees. I did not find any documented record of the name changes. This quote from an interview with a long time member of the research unit, gives some insight into the nature and potential for confusion of the name changes: "So the name changed a few times. We came together; we separated a few times. Maybe it was like three times since I've been here. So, it really depends, you know. There's a re-work and people decide to stick with other groups. That's right, when we were with STRAT [?] Policy we had SMD with us at the same time, in fact they were probably still SEDS in those days. The whole goal at that time was to try and get people in strategic policy to be wedded to the hip of the research group and the stats group. So it [the policy unit] would use the research and the statistics more naturally" (interview, 2016)

of the widely circulated CWB map, and had also worked on an interactive web-based map that vanished—some speculated that it may have ended up in the sub-basement of DIAND (*see Chapter 4: The CWB in the Wild*). Finally, Robin P. Armstrong is a prominent figure in my research, a geographer by training who worked for DIAND and Statistics Canada through the 1990s and who is considered a founder of indicator research at SRAD. Given that he had passed away in the early 2000s, my knowledge of Armstrong comes through reading his published materials, his indicator research and dissertations, and through discussions with his colleagues, although only one of them directly collaborated with him.

A good explanation of SRAD's basic structure and role within DIAND (then-INAC) comes from its former Director Dan Beavon in an interview about career opportunities in the department (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010):

> My group has two different components. One group is that of researchers, the other group is the stats side… The statistics side is the interface with Stat[istic]s Canada. We get most of our data from Stats Canada, from the census, or from other surveys. A lot of this information feeds other research groups in the department. I'm actually one of only about 55 research groups in the department, but I'm probably the only group who has a visible face because we do a lot of external publications. On the research side, basically we're like university professors, except we don't have to teach, and we actually have a budget for doing our research, so we don't have to beg for money.

During Beavon's tenure, the SRAD unit had approximately thirty employees, but more recently there are around twenty. The institutional structure fluctuates and individuals move within and beyond the unit assuming different roles and titles. By the time my research began, SRAD was

organized into four "teams": *Survey Development, Statistics, Research, and Knowledge Transfer* (see Figure 1).

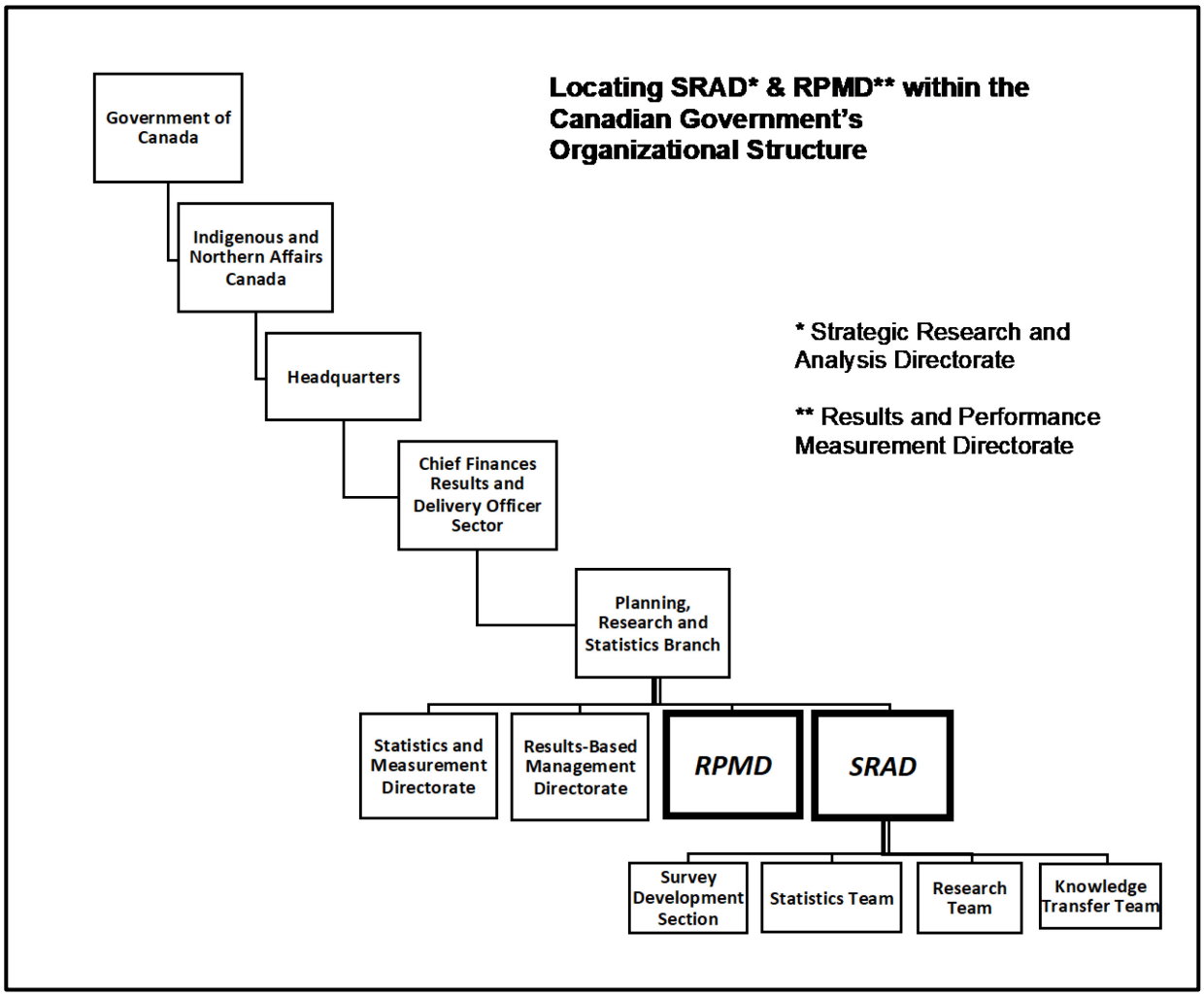

Figure 1. Diagram of the Canadian federal government's organizational structure

I laid the groundwork for developing my methods during a yearlong undergraduate research project conducted in 2014, which entailed a historical geographic exploration of the index. At that time, I requested interviews with the authors of a number of research papers discussing the production and use of the CWB. Of eight requests—some contacted through cold calls and emails, others through referrals from participants—I found a group of four interviewees who were instrumental to the development of the CWB and I subsequently digitally recorded

approximately five hours of semi-structured interviews conducted over the phone.[22] Through the project I got to know some of the key actors in the network and I became familiar with the contextual backdrop, the underlying development theories, key debates, and the types of limitations shaping these development measures, as well as some critical lacunas in the field. In this Master's thesis I continue to draw material from these initial four interviews to elaborate the early formation of the index networks—the coming together of the FNCP and collaborations with Robin P. Armstrong.[23]

Contacting potential interviewees for my Master's research was a relatively straightforward process. However, securing those interviews often proved to be a greater challenge, as did gaining access to the sites where the CWB was elaborated. In the fall of 2015 I reconnected with two previous interviewees at DIAND to see about further research possibilities and to ask for recommendations for other potential interviewees. At the same time, over the course of several emails and phone calls, I arranged to interview Tim Albert about his collaborations with SRAD as an outside contractor working for *Focus* (acquired by WSP inc.), a geomatics and engineering company that got its start in the mining industry.

There were a mix of responses from those who I approached at DIAND. Aside from two people who directly declined my invitation and one who did not respond, people mostly expressed interest in my research and a willingness either to be interviewed, or to discuss the indices and answer questions more informally. There were those who were enthusiastic to meet with me and helped to connect me with their colleagues, and others who had initially expressed interest that later refused to commit or cancelled. Twice I traveled to Ottawa from Montreal for interviews that ended up being cancelled at the last minute. In one of these instances, someone

[22] To clarify, I did not count these as part of the twelve interviews discussed above.

[23] I received ethical approval to conduct my undergraduate research through the Departmental Ethics Committee at the Department of Geography Planning and Environment, Concordia University.

else from the research unit was willing to fill-in for their colleague. In the other instance I changed gears and instead conducted research in the INAC library. On another occasion, I found my request to be the source of bureaucratic jurisdictional tensions as colleagues messaged back and forth about which departmental unit was responsible to address my request. After a string of group emails spanning seven months, from early May to late November 2016, and after my having forwarded a set of questions to be reviewed (Appendix A), one of the people from the group finally agreed to meet me. Unfortunately, they sent the confirmation the day I visited the department, which I did not see until after I had already left; thus, I missed my opportunity for the in situ interview, although we did reconnect by phone at a later date.

Of my twelve interviews, most were conducted over the phone. Only one ended up taking place in the research unit, allowing me a highly limited but fascinating opportunity to observe the space. Another was conducted in the basement studio/office of Dan Beavon in a suburb of Ottawa. A subsequent interview with Beavon took place via Skype. Most interviews lasted about an hour, although a few took ninety minutes. Most were also recorded with a hand-held digital recorder, with the exceptions of three interviews where the interviewees requested not to be recorded, in which case I simply took notes during the discussion. The interviews included both general questions about the background of the interviewee, their role in the index network and then more specific questions about the day-to-day practices and processes of their work. In relevant situations, I prepared for interviews by reading index studies conducted by the specific interviewee in question, as well as sometimes reading sections of their dissertations as a way to have a more directed and conversational exchange. Whenever possible, I tried to encourage an open discussion or engagement that allowed for the researchers to tell stories about their backgrounds and work in detail. At times this also lead into discussions about broader themes

surrounding the politics of Indigenous–state relations and economic development, while still revolving around the subject of the CWB and its related indices. In two instances, interviewees had requested to preview questions, leading to discussions that were understandably more circumscribed.

I believe that my position as an academic-in-training likely greatly influenced my ability to access these interviewees and these spaces. This both opened up certain opportunities and blocked access to certain actors, depending on the specific circumstances. For instance, during my undergraduate thesis project, one interviewee would not offer me contact information for the retirees who had worked on the CWB. This same person, however, was comfortable in connecting me with some of their colleagues in academia. I imagined several explanations for this at the time, a policy perhaps, this person's not feeling sufficiently comfortable in their position within the network to offer such information, or simply their protective desire to keep these retirees free from unsolicited interruptions to their daily life. However, once a Master's student, a different colleague of this first interviewee formally and without hesitation introduced me, via email, to these same retirees. In other instances, interviewees openly expressed both sympathies and camaraderie, reminiscing with me about their own experiences as junior academics. On occasion, people expressed suspicion about my work, suggesting that I might use information from the interviews in ways that might be damaging. At the end of one interview (2014), an interviewee asked offhandedly, "So, you're not going to write down anything that's going to get me in trouble or anything?" followed by an apprehensive laugh. In this instance, my position as an academic examining the work of civil servants seemed to shift power relations in ways I was not expecting.

One final consideration relating to access and power relations in my research is that, as a white academic, access to INAC spaces appeared simply as a matter of following protocol—calling ahead of time to schedule a visit, signing in at the security desk, and having someone from within the department willing to accompany me through the metal detectors and up the elevators to my destination. It would be easy for me to take for granted this access as a more or less democratized and egalitarian process (practically anyone can get in if they follow the appropriate steps). However, I am not blind to the multifarious and sometimes subtler manifestations of white settler privilege that afford me a position in a Canadian university in the first place, nor to the histories of colonial pillage that benefitted first my ancestors and now me, so that my access to these contemporary bureaucratic spaces is made readily and without question.

In addition to interviews, I was interested in observing the spaces and sets of relations surrounding the (re)production, maintenance and proliferation of the indices themselves. In my initial email requests to potential interviewees and in phone calls with the research unit I inquired about visiting SRAD and the Statistics Canada Research Data Centres to observe any engagements or elaborations of the index "in action". I suggested attending presentations or meetings that would involve the CWB as possibilities for my observations. It appeared that my timing was poor. The responses I received indicated that I was welcome to arrange a visit to the department, but that I wasn't likely to see the CWB in action. This was due in part to the fact that I had just missed the most recent re-production of the CWB; it is produced once every five years following the cycles of the census. Further, even if my timing had been better, it was explained to me, the Research Data Centres where the CWB is assembled are secure locations and would require special permissions for me to gain access. As an observer of the space and research

practices of others, rather than a researcher accessing quantitative data for my own project, I was told it would be a greater challenge, not to mention that it would require coordination with the INAC researchers whom I would hope to accompany—a big ask to say the least. Instead, I was sent a statistical analysis package (Statistical Analysis Software code) used to calculate the latest CWB and a draft of a soon-to-be-published document explaining the methodologies in producing the CWB. I did not hear back about any departmental meetings involving the CWB. I also reached out to the INAC library in search of archival material about the history and structure of the SRAD unit. Somewhat comically, this request was redirected through emails to the same people I was in the process of appealing to for interviews. When dealing with a relatively small and prolific research unit, it became increasingly clear that many roads led to the same place.

While I was limited in observing the researcher's cultures and practices within departmental spaces to my one visit to conduct an interview, which did include a brief walkthrough tour of the cubicles and meeting rooms, a sequence of other opportunities arose that allowed me to gain knowledge of the embodied nature of Indigenous-specific index proliferations. Early on in my research, I had set up Google alerts to notify me of content relating to the CWB and RIHDI circulating on the internet, including news articles, press releases, government or think tank reports and so on. Through this I was made aware of a *Frontier Centre for Public Policy* report that deployed the CWB. After contacting the think tank I was able to secure an invitation by one of the study's authors, Tom Flanagan, to observe him present his work at a one-day symposium on property and law at the Institute for Liberal Studies in Ottawa. This initially came as a surprise given Flanagan's influential position as former advisor to Stephen Harper,[24] as a conservative media darling and as a Senior Fellow at the high profile and

[24] Flanagan has been credited with organizing the campaign that led to Harper's election in 2006.

prolific free market think tank the Fraser Institute. The symposium was elucidating, allowing me to witness the CWB "in the wild", where I could get a sense of the politics, cultures and spaces generated through the CWB, including the types of questions and discussions that it engenders, and the concerns that are shared among an audience of predominantly white male law and policy experts (see *chapter 4: The CWB in the Wild)*. While there, I took notes, recorded the presentation, sketched maps, and tried to absorb the details of an array of interactions and social relations. Afterwards, in an effort to capture the many details and my initial impressions, I wrote my reflections in the pages of my research journal, a practice that I also applied following interviews. Flanagan also put me in contact with one his co-authors/interns, who, through a phone conversation and a few emails, explained to me the details of constructing a new index from the CWB and raw data collected from the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

In keeping with the observation of spaces, cultures and expert practices, I also searched the online archives of House of Commons and Senate Standing Committee meeting minutes for content relating to the CWB and RIHDI. There I found and pored through a selection of meetings in which the indices were deployed in presentations by politicians and invited guests to various Committees.[25] The archive includes transcripts and in some instances audio and video recordings. I used these videos in an "ethnographic" manner, taking advantage as well of the pause feature to examine finer details I wasn't able to scrutinize in presentations I personally witnessed. This was also my approach to observing CWB presentations at a policy conference posted on YouTube. The Standing Committee transcripts are also dynamic, although they do not provide the details of spaces or subtleties of exchanges between actors (e.g. the tone of a speaker's voice). Finally, in my interviews, I asked for interviewees to recount in detail the steps

[25] The CWB first appears is in a 2004 House of Commons *Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development*.

taken in the quotidian processes of index production, maintenance and circulation, something I was unable to learn through these other sources.

While I have combined various methods—interviews, textual analysis of reports and studies and observation of presentations to offer a detailed account—there remains a number of noteworthy silences in my history of the CWB. This includes the many people I did not interview who were involved in the broader index network through either SRAD or in the FNCP. Finally, given the challenges of providing confidentiality for interviewees within a relatively small group of easy to track public figures, I have included only the names of those who both agreed to having their names included and where it was most helpful to my explanations. In other words, for the sake of providing greater confidentiality to some, not all those participants who agreed to non-confidentiality are named in this study.

Chapter 3: Tracing the CWB's Emergence

Introduction: Complicating Index Origin Stories

To explain the emergence of the CWB, its authors commonly tell a story that involves the social scientists at the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) at DIAND seeking empirical evidence to resolve a debate between politicians about Canada's high ranking on the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI) in the 1990s.[26] As the story goes, then-Prime Minister Jean Chretien was boasting widely that "Canada was the best country in the world in which to live"— and the HDI confirmed it.[27] Ovide Mercredi, the then-chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), countered Chretien's boast by pointing out the irony of a #1 UNHDI ranking when so many First Nations communities lived in poverty. Spurred by the debate and a passion for unearthing empirical evidence, the SRAD unit took the opportunity to create the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI) and intervene with its findings in the form of a development "score" that would locate the First Nations' population along the UNHDI scale. Once accomplished, the social scientists realized that having only an average score for the aggregate population obfuscates the diversity of conditions that First Nations experienced, and so then set out to build a community level index—thus the CWB was born.

This is undoubtedly a compelling and succinct origin story. It is easy to recount and offers a glimpse of the context surrounding the index's emergence, something that can fit within the limited timeframe of a conference presentation, where the story is often told, before its narrator moves on to the pièce de résistance—statistical findings, geographic distributions of well-being and so on. Further examination of the published materials about the history and methodologies of

[26] A good example of this contextual anecdote being delivered can be found in video footage of a CWB presentation at a Canadian Research Data Centre Network (CRDCN, 2013) conference.
[27] See Chrétien (1997)

the CWB do not lead much further; its authors are busy "doing" index research and do not relay the messy contextual and material specificities of the index's emergence. In contrast to the brief historical anecdotes and published accounts in which the index generally appears fully formed, this chapter argues that the discourses, subjects and material relations of heterogeneous actors comprising the index network are grounded in particular histories and geographies of Canadian settler colonialism. This chapter traces the contextual fragments, including the practices, assumptions, concepts of social scientists and the institutions in which they produce their knowledge in early Indigenous-specific index construction and examines how all this has contributed to the CWB assuming the status of a hegemonic proxy for Indigenous development.

Rather than detailing its complete and comprehensive history, this chapter presents three interweaving vignettes significant to the emergence of the CWB. The first vignette locates the index within the broader history of efforts of social scientists to make visible and track "the gap" in socio-economic conditions, and then examines the texts of two "pioneers" in the Indigenous-specific development index network, detailing their efforts to create quantitative development typologies—a process of narrowing the development vision in accordance with limited data and to address the priorities and constraints of the state. The second vignette explores the centrality of the concept of Social Cohesion to the formation of the CWB and its closely related indices. I demonstrate that this concept was a manifestation of broader national anxieties about difference and societal change surrounding Canada's neoliberalization and intensified engagement with economic globalization. Within this context, the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP) carved out an intellectual niche, built up their network, and began to produce their family of indices aimed at measuring, tracking and locating the source of challenges to Indigenous peoples' development. Steeped in positivist and policy cultures, the FNCP did more than simply represent

existing conditions; they rendered questions of Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous peoples' political concerns surrounding development external to the process of formulating expert solutions. The final vignette details the formation of the FNCP and a shift in the cultures and practices of the SRAD research unit towards an intensified quantitative knowledge production. Together the three stories demonstrate how, amidst benevolent intentions, expertise and state imperatives have predominantly driven index research agendas and design.

3.1 The Trials and Tribulations of Index Pioneers

Naturalizing development hierarchies

"The key to a successful index is that everybody can understand the logic, that the data is easily found and easily reproduced census year after census year. If it's too complex, or the data disappears... [or] if you can't reproduce it over a longitudinal period then the value of that index is going to be reduced." (Jerry White, interview, 2014)

This section focuses on the early efforts undertaken first by sociologist Lynda Gerber (1979), and later by geographer Robin P. Armstrong (1994, 2001; Armstrong & Rogers, 1996), to construct development typologies that laid the foundations for INAC socio-economic indices. I examine how their research naturalized development hierarchies and constituted subjectivities of expertise and its Indigenous targets. Notably, neither Gerber nor Armstrong and Roger's typologies appear to have gained much traction at the time. However, they provided important methodological and conceptual guidance towards their indicator research successors in the FNCP and Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). My analysis sketches the contours of early typology production to reveal their material, intellectual entanglements with

the CWB and the RIHDI both.

The most recent of the two typological predecessors to the CWB and RIHDI comes through the work of Armstrong, who worked to produce early prototypes of development indices during the 1990s for DIAND, and later for Statistics Canada, in the same research unit in which the CWB and RIHDI would be produced,[28] years before the FNCP got its start. Armstrong's index work was inspired in part by the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI) as well as by the work of Gerber, who had created a development typology as part of her doctoral thesis at the University of Toronto in the late 1970s. Although all of the people I interviewed from the research unit knew of Armstrong and his indicator work, only Dan Beavon, who became the director of the research unit in the late 1990s, had directly collaborated with him before Armstrong transferred to Statistics Canada and then passed away in the early 2000s. One of the founders of the FNCP, sociologist Jerry White, describes Armstrong's work as "pioneering":

> Robin had looked at the UNHDI material and said, 'you know there is something more that we can do here with this'. And he started to compile data sets of information. He wasn't sure what was going to pan out and what wasn't. But he just had some ideas that we should start to pull together some of these things. (Interview, 2014)

Over the course of a decade Armstrong documented some of what he pulled together in a handful of reports for the department and in an article for an academic journal,[29] detailing the limitations he encountered and providing suggestions for future index research. Beavon, recounts the

[28] In the study that I closely examine below, Armstrong has a co-author, Tim Rogers. At the time of my interviews I was unaware of Rogers and therefore know considerably less about him.

[29] Of the seven reports authored, co-authored, or supervised by Armstrong that are available through the INAC library two of them pertain directly to indicator and typology creation (Armstrong, 2001; Armstrong & Rogers, 1996). For the peer reviewed journal article about DIAND's efforts to develop indicators see (Armstrong, 1994).

influence of Armstrong's typology work in the department:

> I can't remember, he [Armstrong] split it down to maybe four or five factors that differentiated the First Nations communities, but there was no comparison to non-First Nations communities. But it was the first time people saw the 'Well-Off', 'Average' and 'Below Average' and where they [First Nations communities] were situated [within these categories]. And what you could see... was basically Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the Northwest Territories were sort of the 'worst off' in terms of this typology he had developed. And the ADM [Assistant Deputy Minister] I had at the time... loved this. (Interview, 2016)

The important point is that what today appears as a relatively mundane development classification scheme was novel enough to grab the attention of the ADM. This, in turn, helped to spur further typological work at SRAD, some of which would come to circulate more widely, producing material effects in its wake, and altering people's understandings and actions surrounding questions of Indigenous development.

Despite Armstrong's influence, his early typological work was seen by his successors as overly complex, combining hard to quantify indictors, a quality that would limit its reproducibility and wider application. Further, as Beavon points out above, Armstrong stopped short of a creating a system of measurement that would serve as a basis of comparison between Indigenous and settler communities,[30] an innovation which later became one of the FNCP's major contributions and an axis of their research portfolio. Another of his colleagues describes Armstrong's contribution and the later developments as part of an early stage within the scientific method:

> It's like what we see generally in science: somebody has an idea but doesn't quite know how

[30] Beavon may not have remembered Armstrong's (2001) last published work through Statistics Canada, in which the final of four research questions included: "Where do First Nations communities find themselves placed in the socio-economic landscape of non-Aboriginal Canada" (p. 2)

> to do it but tries and you kind of go, 'hmm... okay, yeah'. And then somebody else reads it and then says, 'ooo, oh, wow—I would do it like this' and then they publish and so on. (Interview, 2014)

This is a compelling portrayal of the index network's broader knowledge production process, however it should be noted that the citational trail leads back beyond Armstrong to sociologist Linda Gerber and still further to the 1966-67 *Hawthorn Report*.

The Hawthorn Report is the common name given to the study by lead researcher and anthropologist Harry B. Hawthorn, who conducted an extensive pan-Indigenous study and produced a two volume report formally entitled *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies.* It was the first comprehensive study to detail "the gap" in development between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, setting out with the explicit imperative to produce information about current conditions of First Nations meant to be practical for DIAND officials to develop and reformulate programs (see Weaver, 1993).[31] At this time, First Nations integration had become an official objective of the federal government; community development was seen as the means to achieve this (Shewell, 2004). The Report had ninety-one recommendations, many of them running against the grain of DIAND's operations, including granting band governments greater autonomy from DIAND and allowing Indigenous peoples be taught in their native languages. Its most well-known intervention advocated that Indigenous peoples be considered "Citizens Plus" in accordance with the substance of some of the treaties—rights and title—and based on the fact that prior to the arrival of European settlers, Indigenous peoples had a much higher quality of life. As Weaver

[31] At this time Indian Affairs was operating as a sub-department housed within the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which had implications for how the department aimed to solve the "Indian problem": by offering full citizenship into the settler state (Shewell, 2001). The Indian Affairs branch lacked the research capacity to undertake the study internally, so in 1963 the Government of Canada commissioned Hawthorn and a team of fifty-two researchers (most of them also anthropologists).

(1993) points out in her analysis of the report, its guiding philosophy was still grounded in liberal conceptions of individual choice and saw integration as something that would need to be chosen by Indigenous people themselves when presented with meaningful options, rather than achieved through coercion or assimilation. The report also took the position that "...further economic participation of Indians in White society seems the only feasible path by which to achieve substantial improvement in economic status" (Hawthorn, 1966). More specifically, the authors assumed that given a broad shift in the Canadian economy from more rural-based industries (e.g. farming) to greater urban employment opportunities, integration would necessarily be urban. Also notable was the Report's recommendation that reserves be treated as municipalities.[32] I raise these points because they resurface in the work of Gerber, and later Armstrong, contributing to a (re)iterative performance that works to naturalize particular settler norms within the development sphere.

Pioneering quantitative community development typologies part 1: Linda Gerber

Gerber (1979) was among a wave of social scientists giving shape to the federal government's official goal of community development in the decade following the Hawthorn Report.[33] In 1979, Gerber published a study, *The Development of Canadian Indian Communities: A Two-Dimensional Typology Reflecting Strategies of Adaption to the Modern World*, marking the earliest attempt to produce a 'community development typology'. Drawing data from a 1966 comprehensive INAC survey of over 500 bands, and using statistical techniques and technologies such as multivariate analysis, z-scores, charts, and graphs, Gerber

[32] The recommendation reads: "Reserves should be treated as municipalities for the purpose of all provincial and federal acts which provide grants, conditional and unconditional, to non-Indian municipalities, except where the application of a specific act conflicts with the provisions of Section 87 of the Indian Act or is unacceptable to the Indians concerned" (Hawthorn, 1966, p. 18)

[33] Notably, Gerber was not working for the Canadian government when she published.

sought to measure the extent and variation of community development initiatives. By revealing that a diversity of socio-economic conditions exists among reserves and showing that such variation is distributed in seemingly discernible geographic patterns, Gerber proposed to discard the stereotype of Native communities as "unavoidably poor and devoid of opportunity" and to show that "the evolution of communities with particular [development] profiles cannot be attributed to chance" (p. 405). Gerber's fascination with the geographic patterns of development set the stage for Armstrong's work and later became a keystone of the INAC and FNCP indicator research agendas, as did the narrative that by revealing a diversity of conditions, the stereotypes of reserves could be discarded.

Gerber's (1979) work contributed to the larger body of social science expertise that sought to guide communities in surviving the processes of adaptation to modernity. For Gerber, this involved performing a balancing act between the fostering of characteristics understood as true to the traditional nature of Indigenous communities while also encouraging the kinds of interventions intended to provoke improvement in the conditions of these communities, so as to match those of the dominant "developed" society and to do so without disrupting the qualities of a community that upholds its fundamental difference from the dominant group.[34] This tension emerges in Gerber's effort to define community development and in her moves to draw a discursive line between adaptation and integration (or assimilation). By Gerber's definition, effective community development amounts to equal parts "institutional completeness" and "personal resources"—concepts drawn from the community development and integration literature and modified to fit the available data. Institutional completeness sought to "define…

[34] My understanding here of Gerber's balancing act is influenced by anthropologist Tania Li's (2007) conception of "the will to improve", a form of neocolonial governmentality in which the desire of the colonizer to improve the colonized group stands in tension with the perceived difference of the colonized group from the colonizer. This is also informed by Rose's (1999) theorization of "governing through community".

internal opportunity structures and determine… the degree to which potentially mobile members [of an Indian band] can be retained" (p. 405). On the other hand, "personal resources", defined as "an individual's experience with mainstream institutions", measured namely employment and education factors and was believed to either enhance or compromise a community's viability depending on its relationship to institutional completeness. If an individual's personal resource score outweighed the community's institutional completeness score, it was assumed the individual would migrate and gradually (completely) integrate into the dominant society, thus threatening a community's viability. The central idea behind Gerber's project then, was to discover ways to maximize opportunities for individuals while simultaneously enhancing a community's "viability". More broadly, Gerber and her peers in the field of community development assumed that an alternative to community development was the encouragement of urban migration.

Embedded in the concept of institutional completeness is an underlying assumption that there are degrees of purity to a community's traditional nature, and that this purity—maintaining the community's distinctness from settler communities—is vulnerable to disintegration if the pressures of change are not properly managed.[35] The role of expertise in guiding such change is implied in the very existence of the indicator project. Gerber (1979) notes the overtones of settler dominance in the concept of institutional completeness, and that Indigenous leadership has firmly resisted "the adoption of 'modern' behavioural patterns (e.g., *elected* band councils, *formal* committees, and *hierarchical* relations)" (*emphasis in original*, p. 406). She then goes on to describe how the concept applies to the development of First Nations bands:

Whereas the institutionally complete band may be viable as a distinct community, it is not a

[35] This again draws on Tania Li's (2007) reading of Rose's (1999) "Governing through Community"

> purely traditional one: native languages, elements of aboriginal value systems, and various other cultural traits may be retained, but for the most part the developing band is actively responding to modern conditions. The distinguishing characteristic of this particular mode of adaptation is its potential for allowing improvement in socioeconomic conditions without requiring total assimilation and structural integration… (Gerber 1979, p. 406)

Here, Gerber envisions institutional completeness as occupying a sort of "sweet spot" for communities in which they might adapt to modernity (read "improvement") without threatening their distinctness (i.e. their difference from settler communities) by falling into assimilation or "structural integration". In keeping with the community development work at the time, Gerber, like Hawthorn, discursively delineates a boundary where adaptation ends and integration (or assimilation, seen as integration without choice) begins. It is then the role of the expert to foster the former without instigating the latter.

Based on the variously weighted variables comprising institutional completeness and personal resources, Gerber then generates four categories to rank communities according to their level of development and adaptations: listed here in descending order, "municipal", "integrative", "pluralistic", and "inert". While Gerber's work effectively disrupts the foundations of the stereotype that paints Indigenous reserves as universally succumbed to poverty, she problematically constructs her typology on a foundational colonial trope that frames some Indigenous peoples as naturally existing outside of modernity, stuck—"inert"—in need of help to ascend from a state of pre-modernity. "Inert" communities are those seen as "not actively adapting", or resisting development initiatives. Such resistance was commonly interpreted by social scientists at the time as evidence that something was culturally wrong with a community (see chapter 7 of Shewell, 2004). "Inert" communities rank below average in regards to 'personal

and group resource scores'. At the opposite pole of inertia are those communities that resemble municipalities, at least in regards to their governance structure, and who are considered to be following the most—if not the only—viable development option. They are able to retain members through the provision of "opportunities both internally and within commuting distance" (p. 412). "Pluralistic" communities are seen as isolationist, having higher levels of institutional completeness than personal resources; while they retain their members, their economic scores are low. "Integrative" communities are the mirror opposite of pluralistic and are perceived as being at risk of losing their members to integration or assimilation.

Finally, in defining the highest form of governance as "municipal" Gerber follows Hawthorn's assumption and further enrolls her typology in a performance normalizing settler colonial logic and interventions that Indigenous peoples have been resisting since the Indian Act, and even since its earlier iterations, such as the 1869 Enfranchisement Act. This is not to deny that Gerber's work comes from a place of benevolence. Yet, consider how policy analyst and Indigenous rights activist Russ Diabo (2017), a Mohawk from Kahnewa:ke, locates the drive to transform Indigenous Nations into municipalities within a broader settler state effort to terminate Indigenous rights through the Indian Act. He explains that this attempt started with the fracturing of Indigenous Nations into "Indian bands" which were then meant to "become a collection of Canadian citizens living within municipalities without any legal distinctions from the general Canadian population" (p. 23). As Diabo (2012) argues elsewhere, the effort to terminate First Nations rights and title, and to municipalize Indigenous communities, lives on through the Canadian government's contemporary land claims process—Comprehensive Land Claims and Self Government Final Agreements.[36]

[36] This process was first introduced in 1973 following the landmark Supreme Court *Calder* decision which confirmed the basis of Indigenous peoples' legal rights as resting in their historic occupation of the land, thus

Reading Gerber, it is clear that terminating Indigenous rights and subsuming Indigenous individuals and communities into the Canadian body politic is not what she has in mind (i.e. she is clearly not an unwitting puppet carrying out the settler state's agenda of assimilation). However, as I have tried to highlight, her aim of finding ways for Indigenous communities to adapt to modernity while preserving their distinctness from settler society relies on and perpetuates a number of settler colonial assumptions, norms and logics deployed in the quest to manage Indigenous lives in the name of improvement. Some of these assumptions, norms and logics are hallmarks of the then-nascent community development context in which Gerber was embedded (e.g. assuming settler society to be the appropriate yardstick of development; positioning resistance to settler state interventions as a sign of "inertness", living outside of progress or modernity; assuming that Indigenous communities had somehow otherwise avoided adapting to influences beyond their lands). As Shewell (2004) notes, "...community development ideally is a method of self-determination and actualization yet [ironically] it is often used as a form of indoctrination to preferred paths" (p. 225). Gerber positions her typology as social science working to upend stereotypes of impoverished communities and to help preserve distinctness amidst adaptation. However, through revealing the heterogeneous values and aspirations of different communities, Gerber is also working to find policy makers cost effective paths forward in devising strategies for implementing development programs to encourage First

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forcing the federal government to seek a fast resolution to the many outstanding Indigenous claims that threatened the state's claim to sovereign jurisdiction. The land claims process initially set out to "extinguish" First Nations "undefined' inherent rights and title—borrowing the language of "ceded, release, surrender" from the numbered treaties, the last of which had been signed in 1921. After being rejected by Indigenous leadership, the state amended the language of land claims from extinguishment to "achieving certainty" on Aboriginal rights. Critics point out that the central principle remains intact, to significantly narrow Aboriginal rights and title in exchange for monetary compensation, fee simple title, and a top-down delegated authority for Indigenous communities under federal, provincial or territorial jurisdiction, all of which essentially render these communities into ethnic municipalities (Kulchyski, 2005; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; Pasternak, 2010).

Nations bands choosing to adopt municipal-type governance models on their own accord.[37]

Pioneering quantitative community development typologies part 2: Robin P. Armstrong

In the early 1990s, while working for the then-Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) Research and Analysis Directorate (later SRAD), Armstrong (1994; Armstrong and Rogers, 1996) began assembling the building blocks for social indicator work within the department, bringing his geographic training to bear on DIAND administrative data, and that of Statistics Canada's national surveys. As alluded to earlier, Armstrong was a critical actor in the performance of the Indigenous-specific indicator research network, in part through his reinvigoration of elements of Gerber's typology work, adapting these elements to the institutional and increasingly neoliberal context in which he worked. That is to say, compared to Gerber, Armstrong's work was more concretely grounded in the priorities and constraints of DIAND, which had in recent years become interested in gauging improvements in Indigenous peoples' socio-economic conditions and monitoring the gap between Indigenous peoples and the settler population.

Neoliberal governance was spurring the rise of what Merry (2016) refers to as "indicator culture", broadening the scope of indicator development to apply in performance measurement. DIAND, along with all other federal departments, was obliged to define objectives for an "operational planning framework" designed to enhance its accountability to the Treasury Board. However, neoliberal governance was also serving to constrain indicator development. Armstrong (1994) points to a list of challenges to indicator work, among them pressures reflective of a department subject to austerity, noting "strict limits on the availability of financial and human

[37] In her conclusion Gerber (1979) writes: "Evaluation of developmental tendencies as well as the values and aspirations of the group involved, prior to program implementation, could prevent waste of capital and manpower resources" (p. 421)

resources" (p. 239). Armstrong also saw indicators as useful to processes of funding and resource allocation to communities, as well as a way for DIAND to demonstrate accountability to the general public, given DIAND's central role in fulfilling the federal government's responsibility to First Nations peoples.

The dominant discourse that emerges from Armstrong's work is a systematic, statistically technical, geographically inflected, intently empirical focus on producing practical research for policy purposes. Armstrong (1994, 2001; Armstrong & Rogers, 1996) always includes suggested paths forward, whether pointing to ways for the department to source or produce more practical data for its quantitative research needs, or underlining the implications of his research for socio-economic development solutions.[38] Following Gerber, Armstrong and Rogers' (1996) contend that by revealing the diversity of community conditions and by knowing the geographic distribution of "like-typed" communities' better policy will follow, rather than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

In addition to Armstrong's work more closely reflecting the priorities and constraints of the state, he also departs from Gerber's typology in other ways. For one, while measuring many of the same socio-economic variables as Gerber, Armstrong and Rogers' (1996) typology does not attempt to measure Institutional Completeness. Secondly, they avoid using Gerber's descriptive categories, bookended by "municipal" and "inert", entangled with linear and racialized conceptions of history and belonging within "modernity".[39] Instead, they start fresh with five community "types" situated along a "better-to-worse continuum" (p. v). In this typology,

[38] I should note that highlighting implications is not the same thing as making specific policy recommendations. Armstrong (as with those who succeed him) keeps an arm's-length from the policy decision-making process. Instead, he makes inferences such as "innovative solutions will be required to rectify the disparities [between First Nations communities]" (Armstrong and Rogers, 1996, p. 29).

[39] Armstrong and Rogers do not engage with the variables that pertain to Gerber's conception of Institutional Completeness.

communities with the best socio-economic conditions fall under the category of "primary industries". It derives its name from the "primary sector" of Canada's national economy: extractive industries responsible for Canada's historic and continued wealth—logging, oil, and mining. This gives some indication of the underlying assumptions about the types of economic activities Armstrong and Roger's development scheme has in mind for Indigenous well-being. The rest of the categories in Armstrong and Rogers' typology are named in a manner that aligns with dominant vocabulary from the field of international development, in which communities, like nation-states internationally, are ordered according to their comparative socio-economic conditions: *emerging economies*; *typical levels of on-reserve disparity*; *relatively high disparity*; *extreme disparity*. Finally, Armstrong and Rogers do not explicitly explore questions of Indigenous peoples' adaptation that are so central to Gerber's investigation, and they reserve discussions of integration to a single sentence in the conclusion of their typology report. However, Armstrong's narrow treatment of the question of accessibility stands in for integration as a more readily measurable metric (measuring distance from a reserve to urban centre, for example) and serves a similar purpose—privileging conclusions about certain development pathways over others. For example, in an early investigation into indicator development for DIAND he includes a map of Canada depicting "accessibility zones", delineated by isometric lines meant to show "how near Indian communities are to large enough numbers of people [100,000] to support regional-scale manufacturing and services activities" (Armstrong, 1994, p. 236). In a later report, Armstrong (2001) looks into the accessibility of resources and urban labour markets for the socio-economic development of First Nations communities. To clarify, I am in no way seeking to diminish the importance of Indigenous peoples' access to services (e.g. health services, *access* to clean drinking water), but rather am pointing to the more narrow

framing of accessibility at work in the typology production, which I see as myopically focused on finding inroads for Indigenous people to integrate into the settler economy.

Armstrong also brings strength to the indicator network by openly acknowledging and attempting to address the blind-spots and limits of the work. For instance, rather than exclude any discussion of Indigenous peoples' dispossession as negatively impacting community well-being, Armstrong attempts to model it (see Armstrong, 1994, 2001). Armstrong's model, entitled *Dispossession Model: Causes and Dynamics of Social Decay on Reserve,* visually conveys a relationship between dispossession and conditions on reserves, including the impact of factors such as Residential Schools, the Indian Act, Child Welfare Grab and the Settler Economy on individuals, families and communities. While the model brings visibility to the violent interrelated systemic and structural underpinnings of poverty, rather than sweeping them under the rug, for better or for worse these factors are never transformed into measurable variables, and thus do not enter into the indicator's constitution. Instead, they appear as a piece of the puzzle of well-being to be addressed in the future, ostensibly when resources are more readily available to support such a measuring endeavor.[40] Relatedly, Armstrong is careful to avoid overstating the scope of the development view put forth by his typologies. On the one hand, this more reflexive approach shows a shift away from purely positivist traditions and a willingness to acknowledge the epistemic limits of indicators. On the other hand, it performs a naturalizing effect for the broader indicator network, bookmarking phenomena to later be transformed into quantitative language, flattening difference so that all things deemed to matter can be discussed in measurable and comparative terms.

Whereas the Indicator Development Project favored a process in which each community

[40] Armstrong's model called *Dispossession Model Causes and Dynamics of Social Decay on Reserve* first appears in his 1994 peer-reviewed article (p. 244) and then again in a 2001 working paper for Statistics Canada.

adopts its own unique sets of goals and indicators, Armstrong and Rogers (1996) note that their own goal of producing a more generalizable set of indicators with the potential of mapping well-being across communities will require that they draw insights from the international development literature. As a guide they use a model including fourteen goals of development housed under three overlapping areas of community well-being—range of choice, life sustenance, and esteem—that they note "is subject to the biases inherent in western international development science" (p. 4). Again, due to data constraints, only three of the fourteen goals were deemed measurable: housing adequacy, labour opportunities, and material wealth.[41]

Finally, Armstrong and Rogers (1996) include several variables that are "indirectly, but theoretically linked to well-being, such as geographic accessibility, language and elements of demography (for example, age distribution and migration)" (p. 6). Notably, these variables are not drawn from either the visions of development put forth by the Development Indicator Project or from the international development literature that had thus far provided the parameters for constructing the development typology. Instead, they are points of enduring interest to DIAND, relating to questions of the department's jurisdiction and responsibilities including, for example, the federal government's responsibility for providing Indigenous peoples with access to health care.

Before arriving at their five "type" classification scheme another round of narrowing was undertaken to generate statistical models, a combination of "factor analysis" and "cluster analysis". The technical details of, and rationales for, factor and cluster analysis, are explained

[41] Some of the variables excluded during the early stages included: a healthful, balanced diet in all seasons; adequate medical care throughout life (with special attention to the early years of life); environmental sanitation and quality as it pertains to human health and control of disease; safety of a person and possessions; freedom of anxiety about the future well-being of one's children and descendants; absence of a reason to harm oneself; freedom of conscience and belief; access to technology; opportunity to acquire and develop skills and knowledge; a social and political and milieu wherein people enjoy equality. Other variables that that proved challenging to fully represent with data were later dropped following statistical tests. (Armstrong & Rogers, 1996, p. 5)

and then followed by matrix charts, tables,[42] and three different maps which display the geographic distribution of the new typology based on the different factor analysis models the authors had run. Although the geographic patterns of development are most apparent only after having read the accompanying notes, the maps' performances are powerful. The complexities of the social conditions behind the representations all but disappear, and what the viewer of these maps gleans instead is the sense of a deceptively simple and clear-cut First Nations community "type" and its relationship to adjacent "types". Similarly, the tedious and time-consuming work of constructing the typology is hardly visible. Without wading into the pages of the report, one would not guess, for instance, that a "primary industry" community, represented by a upwards pointing triangle, included twenty-nine variables (the final number for one of the three factor analysis models after all the tests and rejections), not to mention that these twenty-nine variables had themselves been coded and oriented according to whether they were understood to have either positive or inverse relationships with "well-being". Through the combination of the maps and typology, the well-being vision becomes readily knowable and easy to share, and the labour and subtleties that went into of the typology's creation melt away. Even putting aside the ways in which the typology masks certain community experiences and codifies others, the emphasis on easy-to-read geographic distributions can be seen as naturalizing the contemporary status quo, and thus naturalizing land left, and the violence implicit and explicit therein.

By assembling disparate factors such as Aboriginal language, birth rates, accessibility, employment and so on, Armstrong and Rogers, like Gerber before them, are doing more than just representing existing conditions; they are participating in creating particular development realities, those that are grounded in, and that prioritize the concerns and interests of settler

[42] This includes statistical calculations of Z-scores, variable means and standard deviations.

society and state. This is not to suggest that the work is undertaken with deliberate ill intentions. However, it brings the authority and apparent objectivity of quantitative social science to bear on the questions of Indigenous well-being by putting forth empirical numerical evidence that, for example, "low Aboriginal language usage" in a community is linked to higher well-being (see Armstrong and Rogers, 1996, p. 27). Such a finding not only reveals the glaring prioritization of settler interests—the importance of language to the sense of well-being is irrefutable—but also omits the violence that conditions state researchers to ground such findings in a purportedly universal common sense. In doing so, the indicator and typology project participate, albeit through sometimes subtle epistemic means, in perpetuating that violence.

3.2 Making Space for Experts and Anatomizing Indigenous Communities

Social cohesion, national anxieties and eking out an intellectual niche

In the mid-1990s Canada along with France, Britain, the European Union and a number of international organizations—OECD, Council of Europe, the Club of Rome, UNESCO and others—began dedicating resources to policy and development-oriented social science research to explore the concept of Social Cohesion in the hopes of exposing the elusive social dimensions of development and finding ways to operationalize it towards governance and private sector pro-poor initiatives. This vignette details the centrality of this concept in the formation of the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP) and for the expansion of Indigenous-specific social indicators developed through the SRAD unit at DIAND for two reasons. First, the concept provided lines to resources through existing and powerful academic and government networks, propelling the exploration of social cohesion; and second, it furnished a theoretical framework for researchers to formulate and test hypotheses about Indigenous communities' socio-economic "outcomes," creating an intellectual niche for the group of researchers in the process. In the following section,

I show how technical demands, aspirations for wider—global—comparability, and DIAND's development-based policy agenda came to dominate the methodological design of the CWB and its adjacent indices.

The First Nations Cohesion Project's major lines of support came indirectly through the federal government's Policy Research Initiative (PRI) and its collaborations with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) that aimed to engage academics in the production of policy research through a government initiative called *The Project on Trends.*[43] In 1996, while overseeing significant neoliberal restructuring of the public sector and intensified pursuit of global market access, the then-Clerk of the Privy Council, Jocelyne Bourgon,[44] launched the PRI with three purported aims: developing a future-oriented research agenda; strengthening the policy and research capacities of academics and government; and facilitating a change in the cultures of government and academics. These were later narrowed to strengthening research capacity and creating infrastructure to support greater "horizontal" policy research.[45] Social Cohesion was adopted by the PRI as a central research theme, which then precipitated the formation of the *Social Cohesion Network*, a group comprising representatives from approximately twenty federal government departments and agencies, including a handful of experts from DIAND.

In 1997 the Social Cohesion Network began working intensively to develop a definition of Social Cohesion with the idea that the concept could steer Canadian policy while also

[43] For background on the Project on Trends see (Chapman, 2000; Coleman, 2000).

[44] Before becoming the Clerk of the Privy Council, Bourgon was Deputy Minister of Transportation and oversaw the privatization of Railways and Airports. Then, as Clerk of Privy Council Bourgon, working with then-finance Minister Paul Martin, oversaw cuts to the public service by close to 50,000 positions in Ottawa as well as launching a process of devastating cutbacks to health, education and social assistance across the country (Kellogg, 2011).

[45] While Bourgon's horizontal policy research was inflected by neoliberal imperatives to "shrink" government by 'tightening up' the management of so-called "soft" infrastructure such as human resources, social and foreign policy, health care, and sustainable development (see Jeannotte, 2003), the efforts to change academic and government cultures so that they might better align with one another was hardly new. Shewell (2004) reviews the major debates surrounding academic–government collaborations in Canada during the 1960s.

corresponding with international institutions undertaking similar efforts. At the heart of the Network's formation and work was an anxiety that Canadian social fabric was showing symptoms of growing "faultlines". This is in keeping with Jenson's observation that the language of Social Cohesion was generally invoked by "those who judge that things are not going well" (as quoted in Jeannotte, 2003, p. 4). In workshops and reports, researchers identified a variety of sites and potential drivers behind such vulnerabilities.[46] Notable examples included the 1995 Quebec independence referendum, which threatened the perceived unity of the national political community. Within these same workshops and reports, Indigenous peoples were generally treated broadly as aligning with Quebec sovereigntists as groups "ambivalent about the country" due to historical factors—erasing the specificities of First Nations nationhood aspirations. There was also the suspicion that Canada's 1971 adoption of an official multiculturalism policy and its related immigration policies ought to be studied in case they, decades on, risked weakening the societal fabric.[47] Nonetheless, the FNCP found funding by aligning its vision with the broader concerns surrounding the pressures of globalization on Canadian society. The FNCP's four founding professors at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), Paul Whitehead, Roberta Ferrence, Paul Maxim, and Jerry White were awarded a $600,000 grant through a SSHRC program entitled *Exploring Social Cohesion in a Globalizing Era* for their project entitled *Social Capital, Social Cohesion and Population Outcomes in Canada's First Nations Communities*. Thus, a broad climate of national anxiety over the idea of social cohesion, coupled with interest in the same from the upper echelons of the federal government, made it possible for the FNCP to

[46] I specifically examine: The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology 1999 *Final Report on Social Cohesion*; *Social Cohesion: The Canadian Urban Context* (Toye, 2007) Report for Library of Parliament, Political and Social Affairs Division, Canada; *Inclusion for All: A Canadian Roadmap to Social Cohesion Insights from Structured Conversations* (Government of Canada, 2001); and *Social Cohesion: Insights from Canadian Research,* Sharon Jeannotte (2003) Strategic Research and Analysis (SRA) Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination Department of Canadian Heritage

[47] For in-depth critical analysis of multiculturalism in Canada see Chazan, Helps, Stanley, & Thakkar (2011)

secure the resources necessary to stabilize itself within a scientific knowledge production network.

As a burgeoning theoretical framework with no widely-agreed upon singular definition, Social Cohesion was a windfall for the FNCP as they set about constructing tools and amassing resources to steer policy. As Jerry White (interview, 2014) explained, "we [the FNCP] worked with the OECD on Social Cohesion. We started looking at trying to develop a more global or generalizable theory around cohesion that would allow us to predict population outcomes" (Figure 2). Aware of the pitfalls encountered by their colleagues in the Social Cohesion Network whose original definition struggled to gain traction and policy applicability because they had included difficult to quantify concepts such as "shared values", the FNCP took a decidedly functionalist approach choosing to incorporate only measurable factors into their definition. In a theoretical model that the group held as the foundation of their broader research agenda, they depict three emerging social science concepts popular within the international development and policy networks at the time determined as interrelated yet independent variables—Social Capital, Human Capital and Physical Capital (see Figure. 2). Social Cohesion was seen to flow from the relationship of these variables and the group envisioned it as a dependent "analytic variable capable of explaining population outcomes" (p. 24). Crucially, population outcomes are measurable—including only phenomena that can be counted, compared, and ranked. So even in its most fanciful moments, where the social scientists pursued universal truths, seeking out "the features of our communities to explain the human condition… [and] to understand them and predict their effects", outcome measurement tethered their project to the canon of evidence-based policy research and predictive modeling (White, Maxim, & Whitehead, 2000, p. 1). Still, a lot of theoretical heavy lifting remained to be done, particularly in regards to delineating the

boundaries between otherwise overlapping features of social cohesion and social capital—an opportunity for the social scientists to eke out an intellectual niche in the increasingly crowded community development field. They also set to work on the ever-present challenge of selecting appropriate indicators that fit the concepts and could be supported by available data.

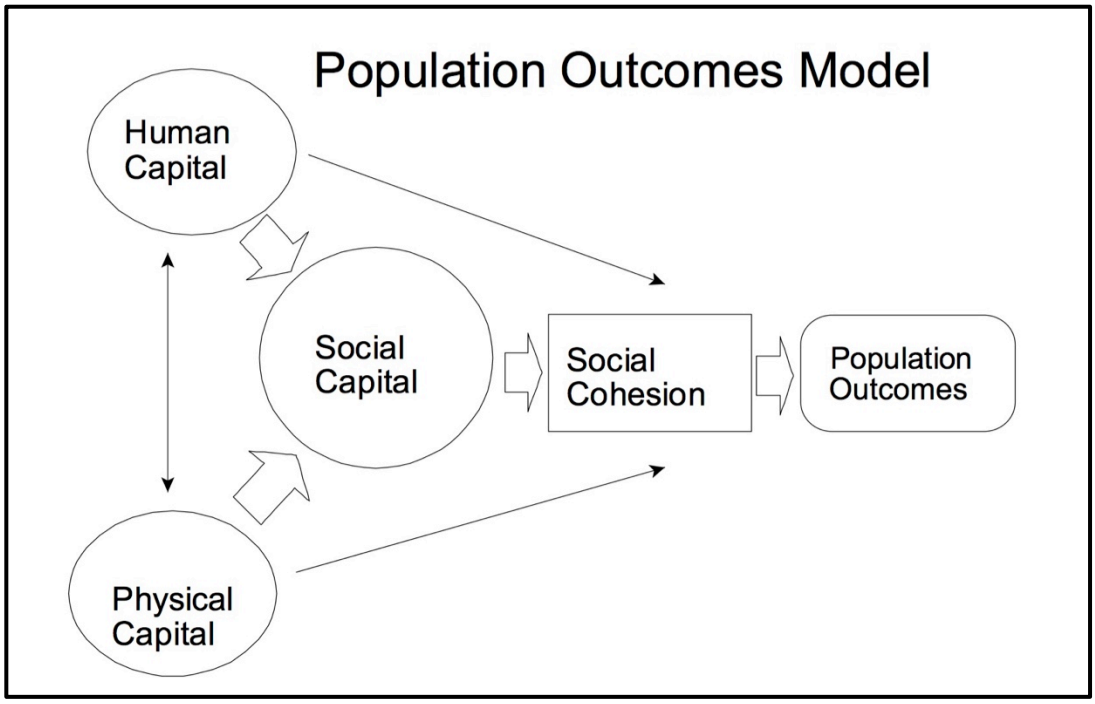

Figure 2. Population Outcomes Model. Source: Social capital, social cohesion and population outcomes in Canada's First Nations communities (White et al., 2000, p. 3)

Importantly, this practice in optimizing Social Cohesion was the domain of policy experts closely guided by quantitative social scientists. The FNCP outcomes model echoed what Rose (1999) describes as the intensified investigation of collective life undertaken by sociologists in the 1960s in which they "… anatomized the bonds of culture and the ties of locality that were thought to be the essential conditions for moral order of society and for individual and familial well-being" (p. 175). Each form of Capital provided new points of intervention for potential programs meant to enhance the functionality and capacities of the target communities. For example, in the FNCP's effort to create an index of "community capacity", the researcher's

investigation of Human Capital precipitated an analysis of demographic information such as a community's population size, "Age dependency ratio", "Occupational Diversity" and Educational attainment (White & Maxim, 2003). Each of these components was considered to reveal truths about a community's capacity to take over the management of Health and Social programs from the federal government. Social Capital, also considered to reflect a collective's capacity, brought about an analysis of a community's trust or the trustworthiness of its institutions and civic engagement (i.e. institutions and governance)—which, despite efforts to simplify through wedding the concept to "outcomes" proved to be a significant challenge to quantify. Evoking Gerber's (1979) much earlier attempt to strike the right balance between a community's "institution completeness" and "personal resources" so that its adaptation to modernity would not threaten its vitality, the outcomes model, with its aim of ultimately improving the functioning of a community, was believed to reveal how well a community's "constituents adhere to the collective" (White et al., 2000, p. 4). This created an opening for a further analysis of a community's inner workings and for purportedly transformative policy interventions to follow. Further, Social Cohesion was believed to expose the extent to which "communities can draw on civic involvement, positive norms, trust and trustworthiness while having education and training based skills and the requisite financial and physical resources… [including] how a community manages its diversity and resources through established institutions for the benefit of its constituents" (p. 4).

The discourse of First Nations uniqueness was at the heart of the FNCP indicator research. Whereas Gerber's (1979) work held the distinctness of Indigenous communities to exist according to degrees of purity in their traditional nature, the FNCP set aside questions of culture, given its heterogeneity, and instead committed to an evidence-based and technical course of

inquiry—examining First Nations' *demographic* uniqueness. Nonetheless, on closer inspection, the FNCP understood demographic uniqueness to rest somewhere in the nature of the communities. In their words:

> We are centrally concerned, as social scientists, with what makes the population outcomes of the First Nations peoples so unique. The First Nations communities in Canada share a demography that sets them apart from the non-Aboriginal communities. Despite being particularistic by culture and geography they share commonalities across the country. *We believe the key to this enigma lies in the very nature of the communities* and how different social and physical resources interact to effect the cohesion of those communities. (*Emphasis mine*, White et al., 2000, p. 2)

In understanding communities to be distinct because of their lack of development, and to believe this as emanating from "the very nature" of First Nations communities, the FNCP participate in an iterative performance, one that (re)produces deficit Indigenous subjectivities through quantitative social science methodologies and technologies (see Walter & Andersen, 2013). The performance is characteristically depoliticizing—eschewing inquiries into the relationship between settler practices and Indigenous peoples' impoverishment.[48] Instead, as I have detailed above, the FNCP engages in technical assessments of a community's internal relations and capacities. This performance is iterative in that it builds on and (re)makes the intellectual common sense constructed through the particular histories of quantitative social sciences in the service of the settler state's official turn to community development and sharing orientations, assumptions and exclusions with its intellectual predecessors such as Gerber and Armstrong. In

[48] I borrow this insight from Cameron's (2012) critique of the dominant framework in studies of human vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change in the Arctic. Cameron in turn engages Li's (2007) *Will To Improve* to interrogate the exclusions and orientations in this field of research that "lead scholars to systematically overlook the immense importance of resource extraction and shipping as human dimensions of climate change in the Canadian Arctic".

turn, it conditions the possibilities of Indigenous development-based indicator research yet to come and signals the orientation of development interventions and where the responsibilities for improvement of conditions will lie (as I explore further in *Chapter 4:The CWB in the Wild*).

The Academic–State Nexus and the Quest for Policy Relevance

The government-wide social cohesion initiative was part of a concerted effort to wed research and policy. From the outset, the social scientists at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) were ardent proponents of such a union, spearheading what they termed the "research-policy nexus". The scholars formed a "strategic partnership" with the researchers in the SRAD unit under the banner of the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP). Contending that "the need for policy relevant research has never been greater…" the group positioned itself as a team of social scientists "both in and out of government" willing to work through deeply entrenched cultural differences between academics and policy makers in the name of producing better policy to address poor Aboriginal conditions (White, 2003, p. xv). In the words of sociologist Jerry White, one of the FNCP founders:

> Any hope of pushing forward the resolution of these issues rests on developing a research-policy maker interaction… Making public policy that addresses the socio-economic difficulties and the resultant health and social conditions that face Aboriginal peoples requires a refined scientific investigation of the true conditions facing the Aboriginal population in Canada. (White, 2003, p. xv)

This excerpt offers a good example of one of the predominant narratives justifying the emergence of the FNCP; an impassioned plea contending that all other avenues for improving Indigenous communities' conditions have been exhausted, and that the hope of finding a solution to "Aboriginal issues" rests in expert collaborations to steer improvement interventions.

Some of the group's SSHRC funding supported the initial five-year collaboration between the group at UWO and the research experts at DIAND. Support also came through DIAND contracts created by Beavon to supplement his research team with student researchers from UWO. At the same time, the FNCP included an internship program where students were funded while honing research skills and working with data sets. As White explains, the nexus sought to bring together particular sets of expertise:

> What we really needed to do was bring together demographers who were also attuned to Aboriginal culture, language, history and understanding, sociologists that had the same kind of attuning, and quantitative methods people who bridged those two disciplines, but also could understand the Indigenous context. The last group was the Indigenous researchers themselves both at the community level and in organizations. (Interview, 2014)

Regarding the aspiration of the FNCP to involve Indigenous researchers in the development of the index, White lamented the group's approach:

> I think one of the things looking back is that we should have had more Aboriginal partners actually engaged with us. We did work with, and help to try and establish the First Nations Statistical Institute and others. That was certainly in the back of our minds that we wanted to not own this thing and use it ourselves, but rather pass it over to more Indigenous control. I think that we [non-Indigenous academics] have learned a lot in the past ten years on that… We probably could have been more upfront and more partnership-building at the very beginning of the process, but that wasn't necessarily the government way at that point at all and we were still just beginning to understand what it meant to do research with the four R's: Respect, Responsibility, and Reciprocity etc.[...] So, looking back I'd say we dropped the ball a little bit on that. (Interview, 2014)

White's reflection is revealing of the culture of research–state knowledge production and the ways in which that knowledge production shaped the CWB. For one, White expresses a sense of social-pressure in which non-Indigenous academic culture, in the presence of state research culture, followed then-state research protocols, and that through all this Indigenous engagement was initially minimal. The sordid history of scientific and state research collaborations that target Indigenous peoples is shot through with similar dynamics, but is only being exposed and explored in recent years through the work of Indigenous scholars and their allies (Mosby, 2013; Shewell, 2004; TallBear, 2013). Another interesting point that emerges in White's reflection comes through the order of operations in the production and sharing of the Index. Once the index is developed, it is then supposed to be 'passed over'—pre-formed—to more Indigenous control. As I detail in a section of *Chapter Four: The CWB in the Wild,* this does not entirely preclude the CWB's deployment by Indigenous activists and scholars in ways that advance their advocacy efforts or arguments for self-determination. However, this order of operations has implications when considering the performative insight that indices produce the truths they seek to reveal. That is, it matters who is present in the creation of an index given the social and political nature of these processes, and the ways in which the interests and techniques of the authors become inscribed in the index as decisions are made and contestations played out (Barnes, 1998; Latour, 1987). The production of an index has implications for the subsequent politics and interventions that an index legitimates and enacts, often extending beyond the spheres that its authors may have anticipated (Merry, 2016). Further, the lack of Indigenous involvement in the index creation process leaves the metric vulnerable to forceful critique, despite the authors' numerous and highly visible—often made in bold print—caveats regarding the limitations of a narrow conception of well-being (Canada, 2018). Yet, notwithstanding White's self-reflection, the CWB

continues to endure, and has even flourished, as a hegemonic vision of Indigenous development.

By all accounts the assembled FNCP team was highly motivated, highly productive, and driven by a sense that they were working towards positive, impactful goals, achieved through "evidence-based" research with policy applications. Each of the FNCP participants that I spoke with came to the project with their own particular interests and aspirations which gave shape to, and revealed the limits of, the development vision. Most also already had interests that aligned with the work of the FNCP, although some expressed ways in which they modified their interests and skillsets to better align with the mandate of the organization. One of the then-doctorate students interning with SRAD, Nicholas Spence, reflects:

> I was very interested in conducting research looking at social inequality, racial, and ethnic issues, and looking to see if I could develop research that was, I would say, policy focused or at least had policy implications associated with it… I felt that I could really learn a lot [working with researchers at the SRAD unit], but also be a part of something that could be really ground breaking in Canada in terms of helping to develop indicators and helping to be on the ground level in terms of providing some kind of insights into what sorts of indicators might be important if we're wanting to track well-being and decrease inequalities between the Aboriginal population and the greater Canadian society. (Interview, 2014)

When asked about the challenges of shifting into work with SRAD, Spence describes the mundane aspects relating to assuming the subject position of a state-researcher:

> …just getting used to writing for different audiences, in terms of, you know, you're working for government now. And working on specific projects that were of interest to them that might not necessarily have been my primary focus, say, working as a student at Western. So, the transition wasn't really that difficult. Maybe just learning the data sets and learning the way

that research was done within the context of government [took some getting used to]. (Interview, 2014)

Dan Beavon, a former director of the SRAD research unit, shared the ethical considerations behind his motivation for getting involved in index work at DIAND:

> As an Aboriginal person, I didn't want to work for the 'evil empire' [referring to DIAND in jest], or I didn't want to work for the organization unless I thought it was doing good. But being the crass empiricist that I am, I says [sic], 'well how do you measure that'? How do you measure whether or not we are improving the lives of the people in these communities? And that's what I wanted to be sure of. I didn't want to work for an organization that was not accomplishing that. (Interview, 2016)

Interestingly, Beavon's professed skepticism about working for DIAND is trumped by his commitment to policy-relevant research. Beavon did not elaborate any specific benchmarks of improvement that might guide his sense of commitment to working at DIAND, for example, whether he would track if the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations was closing; if there were improvements in average scores over time; or if there was an increase in the percentage of communities whose scores had improved. Meanwhile, rather than assessing DIAND's performance, CWB studies tend to focus on issues with implications relating to First Nations' courses of action, such as the value in pursuing Specific Claims processes. Moreover, neither the CWB nor the RIHDI were designed to evaluate the department's performance, or its specific programs, although the CWB was later adopted into this role for a few years. Starting in 2009-2010, it appeared in the annual Plans and Priorities and Departmental Performance Reports as the department's key performance measure at the "outcomes level" and was used to evaluate a shifting assortment of programs. During the CWB's tenure in this role, peaking in its number of

uses in the 2010-2011 Plans and Priorities and Departmental Performance Reports, targets for the programs it was set to evaluate were left undetermined or "under review".[49] Eventually, for a host of reasons beyond the scope of the present thesis, the CWB was dropped as a departmental performance measure.[50] All this to say, while Beavon had a clear vision for and personal commitment to producing development measures, using these indices to evaluate whether or not the "department is improving the lives of people in the communities" proves to be a highly nebulous and complex project.

The important point is that the FNCP aim for policy relevance was among the ways in which the types of knowledge produced, or considered valuable, were narrowed. As one SRAD researcher described to me, the CWB was meant for use by the general public, but it was the needs of the departmental managers and policy makers that served as the bottom line.

> It was designed mostly to be, you know, useful to the department. Well… it was designed to be useful by whoever found it useful I guess, but you know, I guess if our managers find it useful then that's good… Because if our managers, if policy makers here [in the department] use it then that's our gauge to say 'okay, we'll produce it again because you guys are using it'. (Interview, 2014)

Finally, although the group of scholars and experts were recruited in part because they "could understand the Indigenous context", the body of work they produced consistently avoids discussion of colonialism or dispossession, which is remarkable, if not ironic, given the

[49] For example, in the 2009-2010 Departmental Plans and Priorities Report the CWB target for "The People Strategic Outcome" was to "reduce the difference between the CWB scores of Aboriginal communities and those of the general Canadian population" (p. 6). However, in the in the corresponding Departmental Performance Report (p. 10) the target is "under review".

[50] None of the people that I interviewed were surprised about this outcome and saw the CWB as a poor fit as a performance measure. Among a variety of reasons was the fact that the CWB depends on Census data which is only produced every five years, but the Departmental Performance Reports were produced annually—i.e. annual performance targets could only be updated every five years.

preeminence of these processes in shaping the conditions and experiences of Indigenous peoples throughout Canada. It is not to say that these subjects are unacknowledged by the researchers I interviewed; with some, I had candid discussions about colonial power relations and their influence in the development context. However, as an outside observer, such omissions in the group's research appear to be part of the culture of Indigenous-specific policy-focused social indicator research. As I have tried to demonstrate throughout this section, the quest for policy relevance and efforts to bridge divides between academic and policy cultures of practice has also involved a process of narrowing the frame of what counts, or what can be counted, in assessments of Indigenous well-being. Even while individuals within the network, some of them Indigenous, set out with intentions to develop methods to track improvement and contribute to positive change, colonial structures, including political-economic, systematic, structural relations generally appear as either irrelevant to, or beyond the scope of such a technical assessment of well-being. In the subsequent section, I examine an additional way in which the well-being frame is narrowed in accordance with the researchers' predominant preference for simple models.

Simple models reign

> I looked at dozens of different policy indices that either academics and others had developed… But I settled on the work of the Human Development Index [as a model for the Registered Indian Human Development Index], the work of the United Nations Developmental Program because it was simple (Beavon, interview, 2016)

Despite numerous caveats from the group, the research-state nexus showed an overwhelming preference for simplicity in index design. Simplicity acts as an index's armor securing its longevity, while complexity and nuance exposes an index to numerous vulnerabilities. In one example, during a 2013 presentation showcasing the then-latest CWB findings at a *Canadian*

Research Data Centre Network conference in Waterloo Ontario, SRAD researcher Erin O'Sullivan remarks:

> I have to speak again to my love of, I don't want to call them 'simplistic analyses'—complicated models are great—but more simple things, particularly things that policy makers can understand are so invaluable. Like, something like this [points to the map]. Anybody that does statistical analysis would know that it would be very hard to capture that pattern in a number, you know? But you see it on a map and instantly it's understandable what's going on. We have this clump of red in the centre, which is the lower well-being, and then the higher well-being tends to be around the periphery of the country. Breaking things down by region... any other break down you do, and try to do, just with numbers obfuscates that. And it's always fun because [Indigenous] people at the end of the presentation, like, go up and, like, try to find their [community on the map]. (CRDCN, 2013)

This excerpt reveals the discursive power generated through a combination of simple to understand representational technologies, capable of enrolling policy makers and others into the indicator development network with their ability to reveal otherwise invisible patterns. It also demonstrates the inequalities in which development knowledge is produced. The vision of well-being projected by the index benefits from having been born of a collaboration between academia and state researchers; access to resources and far reaching networks are far less of an issue than they would be, for instance, in a vision of well-being carried in a song sung in a language with only a handful of remaining speakers. Further, through the simplicity of its representation, the index knowledge takes on the appearance of being universal, while the years of expert work leveraged to create development-based, policy relevant knowledge, is obscured. Individuals identify their communities on the well-being map and in the process the idea that

their community is part of a broader pattern of development is naturalized, including for example, the degree to which their community is deficient, compared to others. It is also important to note that non-Indigenous communities are left off of the CWB map, likely to serve the map's primary function without unnecessary 'noise'. The patterns that O'Sullivan describes emerge from the distribution of First Nations communities (based on Census Subdivisions) represented by one of five development symbols based on the range of well-being scores in which a community fits within—red triangles, for example, represent communities with low well-being scores between 1-49. The underlying logic is one in which Indigenous communities, bounded by Canadian nation-state's borders, are distinct in their need for development. Further, it encourages people to visualize whether a community fits inside or outside of the bounds of 'development', which in turn helps them to imagine that those who are outside of development will one day be included (Mitchell, 2007) (see Figure 3).

Through years of toil and experience, the FNCP came to realize that, everything else being equal (allotted resources, allies, access to data etc.), a lack of simplicity could spell an index's demise. This was especially of concern as the group pursued aspirations to produce a more universal measure of Indigenous community well-being, one that could be deployed internationally. For example, the CWB eventually outcompeted its more complex cousin, the Community Capacity Index (CCI), which had been constructed a little before it under more or less the same conditions. Also, as the index network grew and enrolled a greater number of allies (particularly those with far-reaching influence such as actors associated with the United Nations), aspects of the greater index project thought to be too ambitious or non-replicable were set aside. Forging closer alliances with powerful international allies required the group to shift its course and abandon a number of its indicator projects, undergoing a process described by Actor

Network Theorists as translation (Latour, 2005). When asked about the CCI's dissolution, Jerry White put it this way:

> I think that we bit off a bit more than we could chew. We sat back and we looked at it, and at the 2006 Aboriginal Policy Research Conference, in discussing with people who were on the standing committee of Indigenous Affairs of the UN, and Elsa Stamatopoulou [the Chief of the Secretariat UNPFII] and several others, one thing became clear: if we were going to have something that would apply outside of Canada we were going to need something that had a great deal of simplicity... I think that the CCI, when you take a look at that one paper, you'll say to yourself, I think, 'oh these are the similar elements that ended up in the Community Well-Being Index', but it's just a slight bit more of a complicated model and we thought [the CCI] would be less replicable and less understandable, unless we simplified it. (Interview, 2014)

In other words, the FNCP's quest for indices with significant generalizability, with international reach, spelled the demise for all but the most rudimentary of metrics. Thus, the CWB, owing in large part to its simplicity, came to assume the role of the hegemonic Indigenous-specific development index. That said, White later relayed to me that efforts to disseminate the CWB methodologies to other countries with Indigenous populations targeted for development (including Russia) had stalled due to a lack of consistent data and due to political instability in the relevant governmental departments.

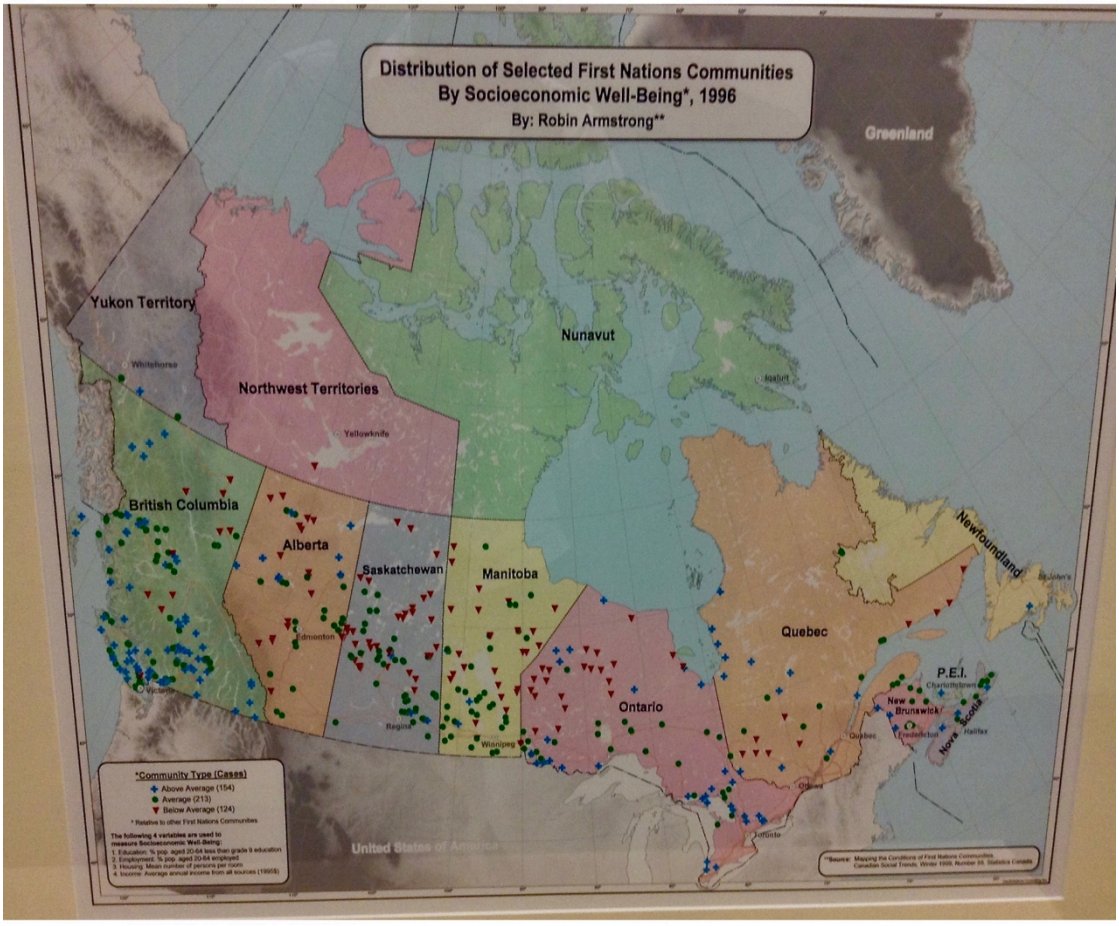

Figure 3. An early map of Indigenous community well-being hanging in the INAC headquarters in Gatineau, Quebec. Maps like this one have played an important role in normalizing particular understandings and geographies of indigeneity on which the CWB depends for its intelligibility. Photo credit: Noah Cannon

3.3 The Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate's Quantitative Turn

Shifting modes of knowledge production

In this final vignette I examine interviews with members of the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) at INAC and study official documents to reveal the contextual threads in a shift in the modes of knowledge production within INAC's Strategic Research and

Analysis Directorate (SRAD) towards an invigorated quantitative analysis.[51] In turn, I show how this contributed to the formation of the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP) and to the emergence of the Indigenous-specific development index network. Driven by a commitment to empirical-based policy-relevant research to the exclusion of other possible intellectual modes and interests, SRAD engaged in struggles over what, why and for whom the knowledge they produced mattered. Whereas the previous vignette privileged accounts of the formation of the FNCP from the academic perspective, this section focuses on the context surrounding the collaboration between UWO and SRAD from the perspective of SRAD.

Born of a "failed" institutional joint initiative

In the years leading up to its collaboration with the University of Western Ontario (UWO), SRAD had been going through some qualitative transformations in its approach to knowledge production. The research unit had initially formed through a joint initiative with SSHRC, under the guidance of the then-director Victoria De La Ronde. According to one interviewee, "the joint initiative failed to achieve what it had set out to accomplish", but the research unit remained active nonetheless (2016). Another SRAD researcher told me that unit's collaboration with SSHRC was terminated because the two institutions no longer shared the same objectives. I found a more detailed account in the 1992 *Final Report on the Interim Evaluation of the Joint SSHRC / DIAND Aboriginal Affairs Research Initiative Program* which addresses the break up of SSHRC and DIAND (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 1992). The executive summary explained:

[51] The official documents I examine include: *The Final Report on the Interim Evaluation of the Joint SSHRC / DIAND Aboriginal Affairs Research Initiative Program* (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 1992); Horizons – Sunset Issue (1998) *The Report on the National Policy Research Conference*; *Detailed Program of 1998 Policy Research Initiative Conference;*

> Those objectives identified as being of priority to policy makers are shorter term in nature and appear to be incompatible with the full range of objectives for the program. Also, DIAND officials and First Nations representatives have divergent views on program objectives, primary users of the research results, and appropriate researchers... policy-making officials questioned the relevance of some of the projects selected for funding. [They deemed] the quality of proposals in the first competition [to be] lower than expected, particularly in the area of economic development... there is disagreement on whether the target audience for research funding should be aboriginal or non-aboriginal... [the program] has difficulty in reaching audiences outside the academic network. Within the academic community, there does not appear to be a satisfactory appreciation of policy relevance. Policy makers wish to play an active role in the selection of projects.

While interviewees consistently described such tensions as "cultural differences" between the policy and research communities, the picture painted in this report instead reveals a power struggle over whose interests are prioritized, who determines what knowledge matters, where resources will be allocated, and who gets to make decisions about what.[52] From my reading of the final report, while Indigenous peoples were the objects of the knowledge production at the heart of the SSHRC/DIAND collaboration, it appears that policy makers, DIAND and academics struggled to assume the right to dictate the terms, privileging expertise in decisions concerning research objectives, project funding and who stood to be the primary users of the resultant data.

What is particularly notable in the Final Report is the appearance and discussion of First Nations' concerns and interests in the network. When the First Nations Cohesion Project would

[52] Such epistemic struggles echo what has long characterized the dynamic of academics and other researchers gathering of information on Indigenous peoples. See for example, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies* (particularly chapter four *Research Adventure on Indigenous Land*) in which she describes the institutionalization of such knowledge and its relatedness to colonial expansion and processes of empire building.

come together in the late 1990s, part of the mandate was to specifically address tensions between policy and research through the "research-policy nexus". However, the omission of First Nations, or their inclusion at a later stage of the collaboration, was replicated in the very naming of its "research-policy nexus"—expertise is foregrounded, Indigenous peoples remain paradoxically outside the very nexus predicated on "First Nations Cohesion". It is key to critique these issues in relation to the claims of social scientists that knowledge production is simply good in-itself, which flattens difference and erases underlying struggles. The Final Report of the Joint Initiative lists three options for the SSHRC / DIAND break up, ranging from a continuation of the agreement with "minor administrative changes" to discontinuing the program and phasing out its funding commitments after the 1992/1993 competition. I am unaware of the details about which path was taken, but do know that, following the department's split with SSHRC, SRAD continued to produce research that primarily catered to the interests and needs of policy makers, even while later developing systems and strategies for disseminating its knowledge production to the general public.

SRAD's quantitative turn

It was within this context that Dan Beavon, a self-proclaimed "crass empiricist" with a background in criminology, transferred in 1996 from the Department of Correctional Service to join the research unit, a decision that he would second guess for the two years following and that would have lasting effects on the orientation of the unit's knowledge production. Beavon's career up to this point had been forged in the fires of audit culture, working for approximately seven years in program evaluation for the Department of Justice and then another five years for Correctional Service Canada in the field of accountability and performance measurement. Beavon had requested the transfer, pursuing an earlier invitation from Catherine Bragg, Beavon's

boss at Correctional Service Canada, but also a director at DIAND.[53] However, he found that it meant leaving behind easy access to mountains of data and going where access to numerical information was comparatively scarce.[54] Beavon's introduction to the unit also came as the entire department was (re)directing its efforts to respond to the recent release of the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). His first impressions were far less than favourable, as he recounted:

> The research group that I had, the director… a woman by the name of Victoria De La Ronde. She had a research plan that I looked at. It just made me sick—want to vomit. I mean it was just pure mush. I said to myself, and for a couple years I lamented why I left Corrections [Correctional Service Canada] because I am a quantitative kind of guy, and I'm in a data heaven where we control all the data. I had access to all the data there. I go to an organization that's just [pauses to search for words] got nothing basically. And it's just in disarray. (Interview, 2016).

Asked to elaborate, Beavon continued:

> Well they got no data [sic]. Like, they have all sorts of different systems, but it's just for transactions. All the different information systems they have are for processing financial transactions. It was never designed for research purposes... beyond [the Indian Registry] you are basically dependent on data from Stat[istic]s Canada, primarily the census. Because you have some six-hundred-thirty-odd First Nations communities whose average size is only 500 or so. All the large surveys that Stats Canada does don't go onto reserves because of the cost and because of the small size [of a community]… So basically the only source of data you have is the Census... which itself has all sorts of problems with respect to incomplete

[53] Catherine Bragg was an early champion of evaluation and performance measurement in government.
[54] Beavon also described facing a minor hurdle in gaining approval from the department to buy his preferred statistical software, SPSS, used in his everyday work.

> coverage of reserves. But that being said, the research they were doing [scoffs], like the first project I was handed was looking at 'Traditional Indigenous Knowledge', written by a couple of academics from that program out of Saskatchewan. I looked at it and it was just mush. You know, there was no empirical data, it was just a bunch of ideas mashed around and, you know, they were thinking 'how could we turn this into policy'. And I'm thinking, 'yeah, garbage can'. And that was like most of the research there with the exception of one of the researchers there, Robin Armstrong, who at least was trying to work with some of the data from the Census. (Interview, 2016)

Beavon's explanation not only emphasizes his tenacious commitment to empirical quantitative research above all else, but also points to the political nature of decisions about what gets measured, both before it reaches the SRAD unit and then again when assessed for its value in steering policy and programs. That is, research was not a consideration, or at least not a priority, when the Indian Register was established for the purpose of managing treaty entitlements and financial transactions between the state and First Nations bands. Now, decades after social sciences had assumed a prominent role in steering INAC decision-making, researchers like Beavon perpetually lament the dearth in data and continue to seek ways to modify existing data for wider, more generalizable applications, in the vein of a national survey (see Armstrong 1994). Finally, Beavon's dismissal of the research he deems "mush" is indicative of the narrow intersection between policy-relevance and an understanding of social conditions and the state's willingness or ability to act on these understandings. Generalizable and comparable understandings of Indigenous "populations" according to development categories are key to constituting particular subjectivities, which in turn, through statistical surveys, support the state in its quest to realize particular development interventions. Further, such categories validate

other state interests and technologies, such as the Indian Act, to performative ends, building a sense of "naturalness" in their work (Andersen, 2013). In other words, these various state-developed technologies, such as the Census, the Indian Act and development indices (much more recently) overlap and work to justify and reinforce each other's performances/existence, creating an increasingly entrenched narrative that they are necessary, natural, and benign.

As Beavon acclimatized to working in the SRAD unit and being limited more-or-less to Census data, he began constructing the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI), the first in what would become a set of socio-economic indices produced through the SRAD unit, under the FNCP banner.[55] Beavon set to work with the help of a student intern (first Mathew Cahoon and then Martin Cooke) producing a composite index that directly corresponded with the development ranking scheme established by the UNHDI, adopting and adapting its methodology to include three equally weighted indicators—life expectancy, education, and GDP (average individual income). This measure could be applied at either the national or provincial level to rank Registered Indian, under the Indian Act, populations relative to the UNHDI development scores of nation states. Beavon considered it to be a personal project insomuch as he did not initially discuss it with De La Ronde, given that, in his estimation, she "was a lawyer by background, [and] had no understanding at all about data" (interview, 2016). When he did finally raise it with De La Ronde, he explained that the idea had come to him through the PRI's Social Cohesion Network and another of the PRI's three themes, Human Development (see previous vignette**)**. As mentioned in the opening of this chapter, Beavon also positioned the index as an empirical response to settle the ongoing high-profile debate between politicians surrounding Canada's ranking on the United Nations Human Development Index.

[55] However, note that Beavon began working on the RIHDI before the FNCP was fully formed.

Beavon would eventually present the RIHDI at the Policy Research Initiative's (PRI) first ever conference *Policy Research: Creating Linkages*, a presentation that would help to spur a sort of quantitative revolution within the research unit, leading to a galvanized quantitative analysis effort and a concerted effort to shift the processes and politics of knowledge production undertaken by the SRAD unit. On October 12th 1998, Canadian Thanksgiving, and ten days after the PRI conference, the RIHDI earned a front-page headline in the *Globe and Mail* that read "Canada's Squalid Secret: Life on Native Reserves: Income, education life expectancy worse than in 62 countries" (Appendix B). Beavon recounted that of approximately two hundred presentations at the conference, his was the only one from DIAND.[56] In the days leading up, he was summoned to meet with Scott Serson, the then-Deputy Minister who was interested to know what Beavon was putting forward to represent the department. In the one-on-one meeting, Beavon presented the RIHDI to Serson. Serson's response, as Beavon remembered it, was highly enthusiastic and he encouraged Beavon to "do whatever [he could] to get it out there" (Interview, 2016). The following day at the conference, Beavon recounts:

> I go to the conference; we're at the luncheon banquet. I see Jefferey Simpson, who is the most prominent journalist in Canada at the time. I had worked with his wife […] so I knew Jefferey personally, because we would go to garden parties, when we would have office parties and you know, Jeffery would be there with the babies in his arms and maybe I'd chat with him. So I went up to Jeffery, sat down right beside him and said 'Hi Jeffery how are you doing?' And we started chatting and he asked me what I am doing. I said 'Oh, I'm presenting a paper'. He said 'Oh what are you doing it on'. And I said 'Oh, I'm doing it on this Human Development Index', explained it to him. He says 'Oh that sounds really interesting. Could I get a copy?' I

[56] Beavon was one of three presenters on a panel entitled *How Do We Know Things are Getting Better or Worse? For Whom?* (Government of Canada, 1998)

> said 'sure'. He didn't publish the article himself, he gave it to the young journalist [Erin Anderssen] whom he was mentoring. It's the same way like I mentor students. He gave it to a young journalist. And so that was her first headline that she had ever got in her career. I didn't know what was going to happen with it. (Interview, 2016)

The headline of which Beavon is speaking is of course the aforementioned *Globe and Mail* story. Beavon's recounting of how this story began to circulate highlights the role that everyday state spaces and mundane interpersonal relations had in impacting how the Indigenous-specific development indices gained ground early on. It also points to the index network's dependence on a degree of contextual serendipity; on the favorable alignment of actors and circumstances. According to Beavon, the headline sensationalized his research and then, "Every paper in Canada and every T.V. show covered it. It just exploded."

This coalescing of relations had profound implications for the index network. Beavon expected fallout: "I went into work on Tuesday morning wondering if I was still going to have a job" (Interview, 2016). Instead he was surprised to find that the response from "all the ADMs in the department" was in fact enthusiastic and grateful. In the wake of the *Globe and Mail* article, Beavon explained how "the taps came on from the Treasury Board", meaning that funding for the research unit increased. "We're talking close to a billion dollars all of a sudden was just freed up like that, as a result of that study".[57] Soon after, Beavon was promoted to be the Director of the unit. De La Ronde transferred to become the Director of Treaty Policy. As Director, Beavon "...embarked on a whole building process. Building up the [research unit] and mak[ing] it more quantitative and doing that kind of research" (interview, 2016). This entailed deploying an array of strategies to shore up ties between the research unit and Statistics Canada, including efforts to

[57] I was unable to verify the amount of money that was directed to SRAD following the Globe and Mail story, but note that one billion dollars seems exceptionally high.

establish a Statistics Canada Research Data Centre directly in DIAND so that data was readily accessible to SRAD researchers without having to travel outside of the building, and to staff the research unit primarily with researchers Beavon hired from Statistics Canada. He also continued the push to re-work the ever-vexing administrative data. This is not to say that Beavon's efforts were myopically quantitative; he supported other projects, such as contributing his time, quantitative prowess and privileged access to data towards the formation of the *Aboriginal Healing Foundation*.[58] He also made efforts to highlight upcoming Indigenous artists in policy magazines that he had a hand in publishing. However, what is relevant to the development of index network is that under Beavon's direction the research unit was ushered into a new era of intensified quantitative analysis, an epistemic shift which continues to characterize SRAD today. Around this time, the First Nations Cohesion Project began as a "strategic partnership" with the University of Western Ontario and SRAD. I see the emergence of the First Nations Cohesion Project as marking a turn toward concerted indicator research, given its preoccupation with indicator and index production.

Many of these indices took years to develop but did not manage to survive past the initial construction phases before dissolving, exceptions being the RIHDI and the CWB. Nevertheless, the creation of the FNCP remains a critical moment when considering the history of Indigenous-specific indicator development, and in examining the types of knowledge substantiated and supported by the proliferation of quantitative indices. Moreover, the indices that failed to stabilize still helped to create conditions for the success of the CWB and RIHDI. For instance, they contributed to the expansion of the index-making network, populating shared published

[58] Its archived website describes the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (n.d.) as "...an Aboriginal-managed, national, Ottawa-based, not-for-profit private corporation... with a mandate to encourage and support, through research and funding contributions, community-based Aboriginal directed healing initiatives which address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada's Indian Residential School System, including inter-generational impacts."

volumes, circulating in journals and conferences organized around common research approaches and themes and ultimately naturalizing such modes of inquiry and their application in governance contexts.

Conclusion

Organized into three vignettes, this chapter has explored historical geographic contexts underpinning the CWB's emergence. The chapter's overarching aim was to disrupt the view of development indicators as having emerged organically to name and measure pre-existing, value-neutral and universal categories. The first vignette attempts to show how the concerns, concepts, assumptions and research orientations of previous efforts to quantitatively define Indigenous development have contributed to shaping the CWB and its related indices. The early quantitative development typology work of Gerber grappled with conceptions of modernity and improvement and drew discursive boundaries between integration and assimilation while seeking out cost-effective paths for programs and policies in support of the Canadian government's development agenda. Decades later, under increasing neoliberalism, the typology work of Armstrong and Rogers struggled to incorporate indicators of development that might be relevant to Indigenous conceptions of well-being, but ultimately arrived at a narrow model that predominantly forwarded the interests of the state and settler society. These pioneering efforts and an overall dearth in data helped shape the politics of the indicator work that followed. The second vignette detailed how the index network, through its engagement with the concept of social cohesion (popular within development and governance networks), aligned itself with the interests of powerful institutional allies, and drew support from them. These alliances, in combination with the CWB's versatility and rudimentary development vision, were central to the emergence and stabilization of the index's network. Further, with social cohesion and "measurable outcomes" as

its epistemic foundation, the research network oriented itself towards investigating the "very nature" of Indigenous communities, rather than looking at structural power imbalances in Indigenous-state relations, for example. In this sense, index research also contributed to constituting deficit-based Indigenous subjectivities and circumscribing a development vision to capture the "under-development" of Indigenous sub-populations relative to the settler population. Finally, the third vignette examined the quantitative shift in knowledge production at SRAD, which included the collaboration with the University of Western Ontario, forming the First Nations Cohesion Project, and ultimately made way for the production of a series of indices to be produced with the aim of informing policy. In conjunction with support of its institutional allies, Beavon's account of the early circulation of the RIHDI shows how serendipity and the mundane interpersonal relations within state spaces were also an essential condition in the rise of the CWB to its position of relative prominence. Having explored some of the key political, intellectual and institutional conditions underpinning the CWB's emergence, I now turn to an examination of the politics of the CWB's wider proliferation.

Chapter 4: The CWB in the Wild

Introduction: The CWB and Governing Networks

The previous chapters demonstrate that the CWB is a complex and evolving product of expertise, scientific formulas, institutional arrangements, and much more. A close look at historical struggles and articulations through which the index was elaborated reveals an unfinished work that cannot be separated from the power relations that created it. This chapter seeks to extend my analysis of the CWB by examining how this unfinished network has been, at least temporarily, articulated in other projects and processes. Specifically, this chapter examines how the index has been articulated by governing networks within and around what is conventionally understood as the Canadian state.

The chapter is organized into four empirical sections. The initial three examine the index's mobilization by distinct yet often interconnected governing networks for different purposes. The first section is divided into three subsections that detail efforts of the very same INAC scientists who developed the index to extend the index research network: first, I explore a variety of discursive and material practices and mechanisms deployed by the scientists to legitimize and circulate their work to a broader audience; second, I examine an account of the network's failed web-mapping project to reveal how, despite access to resources and institutional allies, the proliferation of the index knowledge was never simply a given; the final subsection shows how in publication written for government audiences the index researchers emphasize their own expertise in order to contest Indigenous demands for land and resources. In the chapter's second empirical section, I document how bureaucrats use the index to allocate responsibility and resources for economic development. The third section engages methods from state and event ethnography. It is organized around excerpts from my research journal detailing

my observation of a one-day Law and Property symposium in Ottawa in which a researcher from the influential free market think tank, the Fraser Institute, presents his CWB research that proposes to "empower" Indigenous people by "freeing" them from reserve lands. The fourth and final empirical section examines instances of Indigenous engagement with and contestation of the CWB and the RIHDI in order to reveal some of the limits and possibilities its proliferation.

I briefly conclude by observing how these examples reveal the discursive power and performative potential of the index. Although the index can be mobilized by networks with quite different affinities and capacities, the resulting interventions are in some ways homogenous. In each case, whether the index is used for conservative or more emancipatory projects, it contributes to spaces and networks in which Indigenous well-being is analyzed with little to no input from actual Indigenous peoples. On the other hand, actual Indigenous interventions in such spaces and networks disrupt the index's hegemony and open up space for other ways of defining well-being.

4.1 Researchers and Academics Strengthening Networks and Contesting Indigenous Demands

Publishing, touring and assorted mechanisms for extending the index network

In interviews with members of the CWB team, they reflect upon about their efforts to circulate their ideas in the uneven but interlinked policy and academic geographies. These discussions reveal how strategic these scholars are in extending the index network as well as indicating some of their assumptions about their roles in the political process.

As with most experts, the authors of the CWB sought to maintain their expert status be distancing themselves from politics. At the same time, they did want to influence policy and they did so by publishing in peer-reviewed journals. As one interviewee explained:

> …all research we produced—not just the CWB—we tried to publish, whether it was on our own or in collaboration with Stat[istic]s Can[ada], we tried to get [it] published through the peer reviewed journals… And the peer review was external to us, which brought more credibility to the work. If we control[ed] the entire dissemination process, we really affect how people will use and receive this work, because it's seen as [hesitates] 'government work'. (Interview, 2016)

The same interviewee went on to reflect that peer reviewed outlets were not entirely satisfactory for their purposes because:

> Government people don't typically read scientific journals. In fact, they hate reading that stuff. So we need to develop our own little products and they were called 'research briefs', I believe. A couple of page[s], three, four max, summarized high-level, not too complicated charts and tables so that people can get the information that is really useful to them without getting bored too quickly and abandoning the reading of it.

In other words, the group sought to create a balance between the perceived objectivity of peer reviewed journals and the need to reach the less academic world of politicians and consultants who typically prefer to read policy briefs. To reinforce the materials circulated to government, the group also delivered lectures "where we would give presentations because, you know government, they like their power points" (Interview, 2016). In sum, as the interviewee explained, the work of bringing the work into the policy sphere was a project of taking "different approaches depending on who we wanted to reach… If we wanted legitimacy we went the traditional peer reviewed journal [route and if] we wanted [policy makers and colleagues in the department] to use the knowledge…we tailored products just for them" (Interview, 2017).

While the interviewee did not discuss the peer review process in depth, it is worth noting

that the normal workings of sympathetic journals also enlarge the networks of the CWB by enrolling additional actors into the performance. This is significant since the work is conducted by a relatively small and isolated research unit which cannot produce and maintain the indices alone, and which is reliant on these journals for their infrastructure, for the labour of evaluating the work, and then publishing and circulating texts to libraries and other centers of learning. Further, publishing via peer-review was enthusiastically encouraged by Beavon, the former director of the research unit, who hoped to foster an environment where individuals in the network could pursue their career paths whether in academia or in policy. It is also worth noting that these journals, along with databases and online forums, were created specifically to extend the reach of Aboriginal policy research by both the academic branch of the network (working out of University of Western Ontario, as part of the offshoot from the First Nations Cohesion Project)[59] and by the Canadian government's Social Cohesion Network (see chapter 3: *Tracing the CWB's Emergence*).

In addition to tailoring publications to academic reading publics, the scholars involved in producing the CWB also leveraged collaborations with other institutions to circulate the knowledge of the index. In a self-conscious effort to boost their credibility, they hired an outside firm to assess their level of production.[60] The result was that in terms of citations and other indications of research success, the SRAD research group (the authors of the CWB and RIHDI) was "among the top two in the country. And [that] included universities" (interview, 2014). To achieve such high productivity, members of the group deliberately fostered research networks

[59] Among its efforts to strengthen Indigenous-specific policy relevant research the First Nations Cohesion Project developed *The International Indigenous Policy Journal, The Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium (International),* and *IndigiLINK,* an online platform meant to create space for sharing Indigenous knowledge. They also organized a series of Aboriginal Policy Research Conferences in 2002, 2006 and 2009. The 2006 conference included influential collaborates such as the National Association of Native Friendship Centres and brought in delegates from the United Nations.

[60] The name of the firm was not disclosed to me.

that would multiply their capacity to publish their ideas (interview, 2017). Statistics Canada was particularly important in this regard. As one scholar in the group reflected:

> So there were only a couple of people in our unit working on the CWB, but because we were working with those five, six, seven researchers at Statistics Canada then we were closer to ten. We quintupled our capacity in terms of the production of research related to that topic. (Interview, 2017)

While the group was clearly quite self-conscious about how they published and with whom, they nevertheless expressed frustration about their inability to circulate their outputs more effectively. Members typically complained that they found it difficult to track the use of their research tools, and indices and briefs alike and mentioned the long wait for a citational management service internal to the department. As one interviewee noted, "that's the curse for all academics. You really don't know if anybody is using it [your research] unless you get quoted. But we don't get quoted by policy[makers] anyhow" (2017). Nevertheless, the group did attempt to track the uptake of their materials. The same interviewee noted that "this year in our research consultation process [members of the department involved in policy creation] are reporting that 'yes we've been using them. We've been reading them'". The researcher also noted anecdotal evidence of uptake. He described with some pleasure walking through the department past a colleague working on policy creation and noticing that "she had like a dozen of them [research briefs] on her desk, one in her hand and she's reading it and asking me questions. And I'm going 'this is great'. At least somebody is using it."

The group deployed a collection of other notable mechanisms in their efforts to extend the index network. For instance, in the early days of the index production SRAD secured funding to physically tour their research to different communities across Canada in what some of my

interviewees jokingly referred to as “the road show”. Former SRAD Director Dan Beavon recounted “We would work with the regions [the regional offices of the department] and they would bring in people, different Chiefs, or people who had interest in the [...] research we were doing. And often we would team up with Statistics Canada and set up little mini conferences in different regions, presenting our research” (interview, 2016). Another method involved allocating the different areas of expertise to different branches within the research unit. Some members produced and analyzed the initial research while others were tasked with distilling and communicating the findings in an easy to understand manner to the general public. Accordingly, some members of the group were given media training. Beavon also recounted that part of SRAD’s early dissemination strategies was to distribute “these very fancy, glossy posters with all of the research that we had done on it” within the department and to different First Nations organizations. Similarly, they “would send copies [of the research books] to every First Nation in Canada, free” (Beavon, interview 2016). While these strategies may seem banal or obvious, they give a view into the resources required in the processes of index proliferate.

It becomes apparent that SRAD extended the reach of its index network through a number of different mechanisms. First, there is the creation of discursive boundaries that exploit the distance/difference in institutional cultures between the policy world and the academic world by publishing in both. Second, there are efforts to create research networks with productive individuals in other institutions, in particular Statistics Canada, and third, the use of both formal and informal methods to assess uptake of research products, presumably as a way to improve circulation strategies. Finally, the group gathered resources and organized ways to disseminate their research to Indigenous communities and the general public including through road trips, widely distributing books and posters free of charge, organizing conferences, strategically

structuring the research unit according to domains of expertise and getting specialized training to hone such expertise. Resources and calculated efforts notwithstanding, proliferation was not easy. The researchers encountered a range of technical, organizational and institutional challenges and were met with occasional failures, one of which I detail in this next section.

A failed web-mapping project

As can be expected, not all strategies to create and exploit distance between the research and the operations of government result in successful extension of the index network. Tim Albert, a GIS (Geographic Information Science) technician hired by SRAD as a consultant in developing CWB maps, described one such instance of failure. Following earlier collaborations with SRAD, Albert was brought in to assist in developing a prototype of a multifaceted web-mapping application. It was an application that Albert described as "sort of a Google maps with hotspots" that included a database with bundles of information connected to reserve communities (for example, information about a community's language, Census data and CWB scores from 1981 forward) that would be displayed when a reader clicked on the symbol representing a specific community (Interview, 2016). As the project progressed and the group attempted to put the application on INAC's main website, Albert described encountering "headache after headache", citing a series of issues including the pace of communications with the department, time-specific data related issues, and the capacity to meet the criteria for such federal projects surrounding accessibility for certain user groups, such as those with visual impairment. Albert recounted that the director of the project eventually recognized "…we can't do this within the federal government's website, but we do have partners". Albert explains,

> FNSI, the First Nations Statistical Institute, which… was First Nations run, Crown funded, but supposed to be at arm's length so that they could handle all of their own statistics data and

> they could become a... sort of an independent organization that could collect and deal with the First Nations [data] without having the stigma of being government. So what we did was we moved... [SRAD] went through their process, actually divesting the whole thing over to FNSI and I started dealing with the FNSI. And we were going down the road again of developing the website [with an interactive web-based version of a CWB map] and we got a prototype to them with the a web map [mumbles] development application prototype stage so that they could see what was available, or what was possible and then they went 'ok great, we want to go to the next step'. So, I start writing up the proposals and I'm getting everything going, and of course everything takes a long time dealing with organizations like this, and then they [the FNSI] were defunded in the federal budget. So, I was like 'great'! And it sits now, I believe, in limbo. (Interview, 2016)

Albert's story highlights how, despite surmounting numerous hurdles, including navigating well-known bureaucratic challenges and finding a way to distance the project from the "stigma of being government," in the end, faced with unforeseen institutional pressures, the web-mapping project was unable to stabilize enough to gain further influence for the indicator network. Somewhat ironically, when the federal funding to the "independent" umbrella organization dried up, so did the opportunities to build this aspect of the index network, at least for a time.

Advising First Nations on preferred "agendas" based on a CWB study

Finally, the academic and policy channels were used by the index authors to, among other things, emphasize their expertise and leverage the index in ways that contest Indigenous demands for land and resources. We see this in the introduction to *Aboriginal Well-Being: Canada's Continuing Challenge,* a book that helped to alter the trajectory of the wider index network by introducing its two most durable actors: the RIHDI (initially introduced in 1998) and

the CWB. In the introduction Dan Beavon and Jerry White (2007) stray from their purported objective of informing policy, reiterated repeatedly throughout their work, and instead deploy the CWB to implicitly advise Indigenous peoples on where and how best to approach their contemporary struggles. The advice is offered in the context of heightened anxiety on the part of the Canadian government about "Aboriginal unrest" and specifically surrounding a National Day of Action organized by the Assembly of First Nations to mobilize against poverty (Diabo & Pasternak, 2011; Groves & Lukacs, n.d.). Beavon and White champion the day of action as a "new type of Aboriginal protest", which they see as a positive development. They elaborate their claim and then point to the findings from a CWB study from their book as supporting evidence. They explain:

> […] the event was not an occupation of a specific piece of land. In fact, protest was not really about land at all (sic). What we witnessed was a shift from a *rights-based agenda* (e.g., specific and comprehensive claims, self-determination, self government, Indian status, membership, citizenship), which have dominated the Aboriginal political landscape over the last thirty years, to a *needs-based agenda*. While all of these latter rights-based issues are important, there is no direct evidence to suggest that the disproportionate attention that has been paid to them has improved the quality of life of Aboriginal people or their communities. This is not to say we will not see improvements coming from these actions, but only that to date such gains have not been measurable (see chapter 9). (*Emphasis* in original, Beavon & White, 2007, p. 5)

Drawing discursive boundaries between a so-called "rights-based agenda" and a "needs-based agenda" the social scientists work to dissociate questions of land from those of "well-being" and poverty. Put differently, coupling poverty with a "needs-based agenda" and land with a "rights-

based agenda", Beavon and White summon the weight of scientific objectivity to urge that struggles for rights/land receive "disproportionate attention" without showing 'measurable gains'. Despite their caveat that "rights-based issues are important", the implied conclusion is that more attention needs to be paid to a "needs-based agenda"—left undefined—and to poverty, rather than rights and rights to land. This shift in "agendas", while couched in an appeal to produce measurable gains in the socio-economic conditions of Indigenous communities, is an avenue through which the academic-state nexus intervenes and attempts to direct Indigenous peoples' struggles away from pursuing questions of land and rights, despite having legal precedence, and instead towards integration into the settler economy.

The CWB study Beavon and White (2007) reference in support of their argument for a "needs-based agenda" seeks to determine whether settlement payments attained through the Specific Claims process result in improvement in living conditions for First Nations communities.[61] While the evidence from the study is not definitive,[62] the authors conclude, amidst caveats, that there is "[…] little evidence that settling claims leads to improvements in well-being" (p. 20). The study authors, White, Spence, and Maxim (2007) are also clear in concluding that "the results of this work are less than definitive", noting the limits of the time span of the data and the limited availability of relevant outcomes in claims settlements. The limitations, complexities and nuance discussed in the study do not make it into Beavon and

[61] The study narrows how Specific Claims are valued—limiting the assessment to only measurable gains in the four socio-economic conditions captured by the CWB. It therefore excludes questions of justice despite this being paramount to First Nations who engage in the process (Lombard & Charette, 2018). The study also comes in the context of mounting pressure to overhaul the Specific Claims process, which was widely criticized, including by the Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples and the Auditor General, for being "[…] confusing, complicated, time-consuming, expensive, adversarial, and legalistic" (Canada, 2006)**.** In 2007, when the study was published, the Specific Claims process had a massive backlog of upwards of 800 outstanding claims and an average 13 years needed to resolve a claim (see Senate, & Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2006)

[62] The researchers describe a range of challenges inherent to the process of aligning datasets drawn from two sources (Census and from INAC's Specific Claims Branch) as well as their inability to know what year claims were filed. Communities also changed CSD boundaries, and the researchers were faced with the issue of "under enumeration", as a number of communities asserted their jurisdiction by refusing to participate in the Census.

White's introduction, nor into their discussion of the efficacy of pursuing a "needs-based agenda" for First Nations communities. Still, Beavon and White suggest that a shift in focus from demands based on rights, to those based on needs, is a positive step in broader Indigenous struggles.

Finally, Beavon and White offer no empirical support that a "needs-based agenda" may result in the improvement of socio-economic conditions. This is odd given their continual reiterations of their commitment to empirical evidence. Not only does their intervention focus on guiding Indigenous conduct, rather than policy as they propose, but its implied directives are made without citing any research. Moreover, neither a needs-based agenda nor "measurable gains" diverge from, let alone challenge, the existing systems and structures used by Canada to govern Indigenous communities. That is, the pursuit of a needs-based agenda and efforts to "close the gap" in socio-economic conditions have been the primary drivers of the immense public policy infrastructure put in place to manage the so-called "Indigenous problem" (Walter & Andersen, 2013). This makes Beavon and White's implied path forward seem both misleading and ineffectual in terms of guiding Indigenous struggle—particularly for self-determination—because they simply point back to the work already being pursued within the existing official channels.

In addition to setting narrow parameters for the discussions around well-being and Indigenous struggle, relating it to either a "rights-based" or "needs-based" "agenda", and saying that "there is no direct evidence" to suggest that a so-called rights-based agenda has improved the quality of life of 'Aboriginal people or their communities', forges the path for expert knowledge to take the forefront in Indigenous struggles going forward. Those with the knowhow, technical skills and resources to collect and transform data into evidence are thus

empowered. “Measurable improvements”, rather than, for example, justice or land repatriation, are introduced as the basis upon which Indigenous struggles are valued or deemed justifiable, while experts are given an elevated role in determining what counts as evidence, who can produce it and how it might matter.

4.2 Politicians and Bureaucrats Deploying Development Indices

In the following section, I examine archival video footage of a 2012 Senate Standing Committee on National Finance meeting in which the CWB is deployed by Michael Wernick, then-Deputy Minister of the recently re-named department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC). I use this as a case study of the CWB’s use by politicians and bureaucrats. While the CWB has appeared numerous times in the parliamentary and senate committee meeting proceedings since 2005, I have chosen Wernick’s CWB interventions as my case study in part because of his particularly influential position within the department and also because I find his rather reactionary use of the index demonstrative of its persuasive powers. Specifically, Wernick draws on the CWB to quickly quell challenges to the integrity of the state’s development agenda, redirect the focus of debates, shift responsibility for development—and blame for “under-development”—onto Indigenous communities, and justify the allocation of resources to the state’s benefit. Before analyzing Wernick’s use of the CWB, I briefly contextualize by describing the characteristics of the index’s broader use in parliamentary and senate committee meetings and then give background to Wernick’s intervention.

Much like in published reports, the CWB is brought into debates and presentations to rationalize actions taken by policymakers and elected members of parliament in the name of Indigenous peoples’ well-being. For the most part, those who invoke the CWB do so within a scripted presentation. Presenters generally make three steps in the process. First, they introduce

the index, briefly citing its bibliographic background and its component parts, to establish the existence and extent of "the gap" in socio-economic conditions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Sometimes specific numbers and statistics are listed or projected or distributed in handouts to the audience, but more often presenters simply describe the general trends in "closing the gap". Second, its user—usually a visiting expert, researcher, bureaucrat, or technician—offers an explanation about what is behind the gap moving trends, whether the gaps are opening or closing.[63] The third step is to prescribe an improvement intervention that is predominantly treated as technical, rather than political, in nature. While these dynamics hold true in Wernick's intervention, he uses the index in a more off-the-cuff, less pre-scripted manner, as a ready-made tool to summon expertise in support of his position and deflect challenges from his counterparts in the senate meeting.

During a Senate Standing Committee for National Finance, the CWB is called on to act in a larger performance of settler state economic development and governance. Michael Wernick, then-Deputy Minister of the recently re-named department of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), is presenting the department's estimates for the upcoming 2012-2013 budget to a group of approximately twelve Senators and their assistants, all seated at large oak tables configured in a rectangle facing one another, flanked by Canadian flags and tripods for video cameras. At first, Wernick mostly stares downwards at his papers, running quickly through introductory remarks in a perfunctory manner. He emphasizes the department's robust fiscal management to date despite "ever growing responsibilities" and highlights its numerous accountability and transparency measures. Securing such accountability and

[63] Notably, there is a near ubiquitous move on the part of CWB users to point to perceived determinants behind the trends in development scores. Generally, the CWB authors try cautiously to avoid this—especially in the early stages of the research, which were seen as simply a process of measuring—however, even they occasionally participate in the slippage and suggest drivers behind the CWB trends. With the numbers and trends visible, such a move appears irresistible.

transparency from First Nations on the other hand, he suggests, requires sustained efforts from the department and the implementation of proper mechanisms. Posing this challenge, Wernick seeks to foster a sense of common understanding among branches of government so that the committee can see that AANDC is justified in its financial demands— that it has much to accomplish that will serve the national best interests. The estimate amounts to a total of $7.8 billion, "a great deal of public money", he acknowledges. That figure is up by 5.8 per cent from the estimate tabled for 2011-2012. To explain the increase he points to $286 million in the cash flow related to negotiation, settlement and implementation of claims, and a one-time payment related to the settlement of the Coldwater-Narrows Specific Claim in Ontario, and finally cites an example of Residential School Settlement Agreements to explain that the remainder of the budget increase can be explained by a number of "targeted investments that respond to specific initiatives and needs". Regardless, he emphasizes, the main estimates are ultimately an indication of the government's commitment to improving Indigenous peoples' and Northerners' quality of life. As he frames it, "resolving these kinds of claims and litigation is a priority of the government because it puts issues from the past to rest and lets us focus on the future". Then, drawing on the contemporary departmental rhetoric, he explains, "[it] is part of building self-sufficient and prosperous communities. [Resolving] claims enables Aboriginal people and communities to take charge of their own futures, make their own decisions, manage their own affairs and make a stronger contribution to the country". After running through a number of additional large ticket budget items Wernick seems buoyed and ready to answer questions, largely without referencing the large stack of documents on his table.

Throughout the presentation Wernick characterizes the department's work as the "empowerment" of Indigenous communities so that they can "meet their potential" and "improve

their own social well-being and economic prosperity" (Senate Standing Committee on National Finance, 2012). In turn, Indigenous peoples are expected to integrate and "contribute fully to Canada"—Wernick highlights this as the department's 'dominant policy theme'. He contends that the "most efficient way" to conjure this aim is by "increasing Aboriginal participation in the labour force and the economy of the country… [and by] moving people out of dependency into employability". The alternative, according to his framing, is for Canada to face the threat of drowning in a veritable demographic tidal wave of dependent First Nations youth who will amount to "a big drag on growth and productivity" (Senate Standing Committee on National Finance, 2012). What is initially cast as empowerment ends up more closely resembling a decorated reiteration of the so-called "Indian Problem".

The CWB does not enter Wernick's presentation until part way through question period. Its foremost contribution to the performance is to showcase settler state accountability while somehow simultaneously allocating blame and responsibility for the poor conditions experienced by many communities onto the communities themselves. It also furnishes Wernick with an easy to explain, simple to grasp, narrowly framed, well resourced vision of development that he deploys to naturalize neoliberal interventions on Indigenous communities and their lands. After having fielded questions and taken the occasional grilling from some of the senators about a range of issues from funding allocations to welfare and education reforms, Wernick draws on the CWB to deflect a suggestion from Conservative Senator Housakos for the department to adopt additional policy benchmarks. Housakos opines,

> I came from a world where, as an operator of medium-sized businesses, when I authorized the expenditures of tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, I set clear benchmarks. In this case you are authorizing hundreds of millions of dollars to deal with a specific issue. What sort of

> benchmarking is being done in the department? [...] Why the discrepancy of results from community to community? My general opinion would lead me to believe that the discrepancy is due to the fact that as a government, we are not doing enough in terms of benchmarking.

Subtly bristling at Housakos' suggestion to start benchmarking, Wernick compliments him for the "excellent questions" and then turns to the CWB, introducing it in the most efficient manner possible—by referencing its much more famous relative, the UN Human Development Index (UNHDI). He then enrolls unnamed expertise from "outside" of government to come to his aid in explaining the longitudinal trends and variation in geographic distribution of CWB scores.[64] He explains, "The people who do serious research on this look at the data and see why some communities are trending up and some are trending down". He continues,

> The people who do research on this and work on it in academia say the biggest variable is leadership, as it is between countries, between provinces and between municipalities. Strong, committed leadership makes a difference; community involvement makes a difference. If parents do not care and do not bring their kids to school, there is nothing that government programs can do to push that. People are not widgets. You are dealing with human behaviour, education, income assistance, patterns of dependency that are deeply rooted in some communities, and these are not variables that respond. I can give you lots of widget-like examples of how many contaminated sites were remediated, how many water plants were built and how many acres of land were moved. We have rich performance management information.

[64] While Wernick does not cite which researchers and academics found that "the biggest variable [in determining socio-economic conditions] is leadership", having reviewed a wide swath of CWB studies, this finding most resembles the work of the right wing think tank researcher John Graham. Like Tom Flanagan, Graham serves as an outside expert whose work helps to normalize DIAND's agenda in presenting market-based solutions as the foundation of Indigenous development, including such policy initiatives as the First Nations Property Ownership Initiative. Graham produced two studies that deploy the CWB published by the Institute on Governance.

In other words, according to Wernick, Indigenous communities' poor conditions can be blamed on their poor leadership. In a universalizing move he parallels Indigenous leadership with governance processes at the scale of nation-states, provinces and municipalities and then jumps quickly across scales down to the minutia of a community and the individual—parents "who do not care". Communities are effectively painted as idiosyncratic and dysfunctional from their leadership to the family unit. Development inertia is seen as intrinsic to Indigenous communities, ascribed to "human behaviours"—'variables that do not respond'. In turn, government programs are framed as ill-equipped to correct such behaviours—one cannot reasonably expect programs to force a parent to care about their child's education (Wernick has something else in mind which is described below). This framing, undergirded by the CWB, naturalizes the settler gaze towards Indigenous peoples as deficient and the source of their own problems, and in doing so absolves the state and settler society from its role in producing the conditions of impoverishment that Indigenous peoples are subject to. Moreover, it omits and distracts from structural factors actively working to dispossess Indigenous communities.[65] Two infamous examples, among many, come to mind: first, the two per cent funding cap on most federal program expenditures, put in place by Paul Martin in the 1990s, which, among other things, has had a deeply detrimental effects on First Nations youth access to education; and second, the chronic and discriminatory underfunding of Indigenous child welfare services which the state fought to maintain the underfunded status quo for nine years, a fight that began under Wernick's tenure as Deputy Minister of INAC, in a Human Rights Tribunal court, and that the state eventually lost.[66]

[65] Wernick's explanation also neglects to raise the issue of trauma associated with residential schooling as a potential factor contributing to why one might hesitate to make their child go to school.

[66] As I write this, the Canadian government has received its seventh non-compliance order from the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on this matter. (see *First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada et al. V. Attorney General of Canada*, 2019).

Instead, the logic remains in keeping with the INAC's discourse of "empowerment" in which the department is there to help Indigenous peoples so that they might help themselves through behavioural changes, and so that individuals may one day be convinced to care about matters such as their children's education.

Wernick offers two examples of the type of help for communities that the department is considering, both of which employ coercion and feed into settler acrimony towards Indigenous peoples for their perceived dependency. For one, he expresses interest in applying neoliberal welfare reforms to reserves akin to those implemented on the general public in the 1980s and 1990s, explaining, "You do not get a welfare cheque if you are not signed up for a training program, if you are not re-skilling, if you are not involved in something to make you a participant in the labour force" (Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, 2012). However, Wernick laments that such reforms to reserves are proving to be a challenge for both the provincial programs and the federal Human Resources Skills Development program because, as he puts it: "Their reach into reserves is not good..."

Wernick's second example of a prospective policy initiative on reserves is the implementation of Bill-C21, the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA), a contentious legislation, framed by AANDC as emerging from the demands of First Nations members, but criticized and resisted by First Nations for increasing a communities' reporting burden to the settler public and the Canadian state while doing nothing to increase accountability of First Nations governments to their own communities (Wawzonek, 2015). Nonetheless, Wernick professes to his audience of senators,

> I think that it will be controversial, but I am a big fan of that piece of proposed legislation in that it will allow community members to see what money came in and what money went out,

> and if they are not happy, then they go to their own council and hold them to account for better results, which is what happens in any other kind of government. We built an elaborate machine where communities report to us, but that will not change things as effectively as reporting to their own communities.

While on the surface appearing as a progressive move that could facilitate greater democratic engagement, Wernick's interventions bring to mind Pasternak's (2016) argument that contemporary discourses of accountability and transparency demanded of Indigenous peoples by the settler public are cornerstones of a centuries old tension between demands for Indigenous peoples to be 'self-sufficient' and the concurrent investment of the state in the dispossession of Indigenous lands while settlers denounce Indigenous dependency on the state.[67] Thus what is an insidious, paternalistic, and racist policy position is framed as a 'natural' pillar of settler–Indigenous relations. Presented as the tough-love gift of welfare reform and accountability mechanisms bestowed upon First Nations by the caring state, Wernick's interventions feed into and cultivate settler disdain for Indigenous dependency. The CWB helps in this process by supplying him with a fast reference to scientific explanation, despite his avoidance of specific citations, which helps him to shift the burden of accountability and transparency off of the state and onto First Nations. Meanwhile, the meeting is peppered with derisive and racist flare-ups on the part of senators who claim to want solutions and whose queries work to tether the aims and failures of the government's longstanding policy agenda of "closing the gap" to individual behaviours, thus pathologizing Indigenous communities. Senator Runciman, for example, asks about potentially relocating communities because during a visit to a reserve he apparently saw

[67] Pasternak (2016) traces the emergence of these discourses, and the ensuing policy mechanisms, to the end of the War of 1812 when the Colonial office of London took the view that alliances and diplomatic relations between the English, the Haudenosaunee, and other nations were extraneous and expensive.

"significant numbers of males, for the most part, passed out on lawns at 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning". In this milieu, Wernick can come across as the voice of reason, pursuing stern solutions in defense of Indigenous well-being. Responding to Runciman's query, Wernick again points to "a diversity of conditions" revealed by census data and the CWB: "Some are trending up and some are trending down... There is a spread of communities where everyone is working and no one is on welfare and every kid finishes high school". Meanwhile, his focus on transparency and accountability mechanisms looks away from the role of state policy in producing the dependency that many First Nations experience, including the denial of economic rights, and the mechanisms he proposes are state-supplied solutions to problems the state has helped to create and maintain.[68] Yet again, Wernick pins the blame and responsibility to fix these conditions on Indigenous peoples.

Lastly, still drawing from the CWB, Wernick makes the case for intensifying extractivist economic development on Indigenous peoples' lands in the name of their well-being:

> There is another variable that seems to be making a big difference. This is a big generalization, but if you looked at the [CWB] map, in the North, in B.C. and through the Prairies, things are trending up because overall the economy is pulling people up. In Atlantic Canada, things are trending up. Where we have a huge problem is in the communities around James Bay, and Manitoba and northern Ontario, the old Rupert's Land sort of area. Until now, they do not have the connection to the economy that would really pull social conditions up. I think you can be more optimistic about northern Ontario because of the Ring of Fire development and there will be tens of billions of dollars of mining, railroads, electrification

[68] In chapter 4 of the book *The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land Rebuilding the Economy* Arthur Manuel and Grand Chief Ronald Derrickson (2017) describe economic dependency as a second pillar in structure of settler colonialism. Following dispossession from theft of land, dependency became a means through which settlers could control every aspect of Indigenous peoples lives.

> and that sort of thing, which will create some pull on those communities. On the other side of the bay, in Quebec, the James Bay Cree are doing quite well. They are quite entrepreneurial. They have a lot of businesses and much better indicators.

Thus, with a quick reference to the CWB map, Wernick justifies the broad national economic development strategy of industrial expansion on and near Indigenous lands as being in everyone's best interest. In addition to deploying the CWB to blame First Nations for governing themselves into poverty and dependency, Wernick argues for the status quo policy orientation by generating the narrative that the Canadian economy is the tide that lifts all boats, with the caveat that for the tide to reach boats in remote regions there must then be sufficient expansion of the industrial sector, "mining, railroads, electrification and that sort of thing". Entrepreneurialism is then off-handedly, without further elaboration or evidence, singled out as a trait to explain First Nations who achieve better indicator scores.[69]

Finally, beyond his role in proselytizing about CWB trends to the Standing Senate Committee, Wernick was responsible for cutting funding to First Nations programs and organizations and for introducing coercive mechanisms to gain compliance from First Nations in compliance with the DIAND development agenda. Wernick was also busy working with industry to access Indigenous resources. In 2011 Wernick, along with First Nations Cohesion Project founder Jerry White, traveled to Krasnoyarsk Russia to attend an International Conference on Siberian North and Arctic jointly organized by the Government of the Krasnoyarsk Krai, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada, Institute of Economics and Industrial Engineering (Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences), and the Siberian

[69] An increase in AANDC's budget does not amount to First Nations receiving greater funds. During his tenure as Deputy Minster, Wernick oversaw major funding cuts to Indigenous organizations, including for example, a ten percent cut to the core funding for all Aboriginal Representative Organizations and the elimination of funding for Tribal Councils' advisory services so as to exclude political advocacy for member bands (Diabo, 2012, p. 18).

Federal University. Wernick's role was as a co-chair along with Russia's Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Regional Development on the Russian Federation, and the Canada-Russian Program on Sharing Best Practices in Northern Governance. White's presentation *Canada's Experience: Oil and Gas Development on Indigenous Lands: Laws, Regulations and Case Studies* was based on a draft of a paper that informs industry on how to best engage with Indigenous communities within the legal bounds so that their development projects could proceed with greater certainty (see Wright & White, 2012). Considered in conjunction with a suite of other initiatives designed to undermine Indigenous self-determination overseen by Wernick during his tenure as Deputy Minister of AANDC,[70] the quest for Indigenous "empowerment" and "support", in which the CWB plays a role, appears narrowly circumscribed if not altogether disingenuous. The CWB contributes to a larger performance, providing key narratives about development that are readily woven into arguments for the expansion of the settler economy. It contributes to the creation of deficient Indigenous subjects, and in turn, lays the foundation for the state to justify strategizing how best to transform Indigenous subjects into self-sufficient, entrepreneurial citizen subjects.[71]

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[70] In 2016, when Wernick was appointed the Clerk of the Privy Council after serving as the Deputy Minister of AANDC for eight years, Indigenous policy analyst and activist Russ Diabo (2016) published an extensive list of the various initiatives supported by Wernick to undermine Indigenous self determination and criminalize Indigenous dissent. Among the list was the formation of a spying network comprising AANDC and a number of other federal departments, as well as the RCMP, designed to identify First Nations leaders, participants and outside supporters during occupations and protests, including Idle No More. He also supported the Harper government's refusal to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and his decision to spy on renowned Indigenous children's advocate Cindy Blackstock in retaliation for her filing a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal against the Canadian government for systemic discrimination and chronic underfunding of Indigenous child welfare. For the full list and explanations of Wernick's record of attempting to subvert self-determination struggles, see Diabo, (2016).

[71] Finally, I don't wish to give the impression that Wernick's interventions encompasses *all* CWB interventions made by politicians. Some use the index to leverage for more equitable land claims—"modern treaty"—processes, and for the government to make Indigenous peoples' economic outcomes a central focus of the budget. For example, on a number of occasions between 2006 and 2013, New Democratic Party (NDP) Member of Parliament for Naniamo/Cowichan Jean Crowder and her colleague Robert Morales, the lawyer and chief negotiator for the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group comprising six First Nations in B.C., drew on the CWB during House of Commons debates to advocate for a treaty process (i.e. land claims) that would no longer require First Nations to extinguish their inherent rights and title, nor fix them with unwieldy loans for engaging in the process. They also pointed to the gap in CWB scores to urge the government to negotiate in good faith and allow for self-determined development decisions. In addition to using the CWB to advocate for Indigenous rights, another closely related and crucial

4.3 Free-Market Expertise in Everyday Performances of Well-Being

Making white settler experts on Aboriginal futures

In recent years the CWB has been leveraged by experts in right wing think tanks seeking to "free" Indigenous peoples (First Nations in particular) from their reserve lands by opening them to markets and encouraging intensified market-based governance. This section examines the uptake of the CWB in these networks and interrogates the mundane and everyday processes and practices in the production of these market-oriented truths. I begin by briefly reviewing the work of Flanagan at the Fraser Institute and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy (FCPP). I then examine the spacial and relational character of Flanagan's meaning making practices as he uses the CWB in a presentation during a one-day symposium entitled "Law and Property" hosted by the Institute for Liberal Studies in Ottawa in 2016. This analysis is based on my observation of this presentation and event, and is organized around excerpts of my research journal written during and shortly after the event. Before turning to these materials I now introduce some of the key actors in this network, its underpinning discourses and narratives, the principle arguments it generates, and its relations with the CWB.

Since 2013 well known and well connected right wing pundit and political strategist Tom Flanagan, along with a collection of co-authors, has repeatedly spotlighted the CWB as a definitive definition of development for Indigenous peoples, using it as the foundation for a string of explanatory studies that prescribe neoliberal solutions to improve the socio-economic

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difference between the aforementioned interventions from numerous other examples is the use of the index to allocate responsibility to the state, rather than prescribing the Hul'qumi'num communities with a set of governance interventions drawn from "successful" First Nations, for example. Instead, Crowder and Morales point to the government's conduct and seek to influence fellow politicians to engage in more just relations with Indigenous nations.

conditions of First Nations communities.[72] Flanagan is a former political science professor at the University of Calgary and has played a number of key roles within political institutions including as a senior advisor and national campaign chair to Stephan Harper in the lead up to his 2006 election as the Prime Minister. He also managed the 2012 provincial election campaign of the right wing/libertarian Wildrose party in Alberta and was a founding member and president of the mysterious and influential, membership-based, libertarian Civitas Society (Morton, 2013; Wells, 2016). Flanagan is afforded a national platform as the go-to expert on Indigenous issues through his involvement in think tanks and as a regular columnist for a selection of prominent Canadian media outlets, including *The Globe and Mail*, the *National Post* and the *Calgary Herald*.[73] He is a Senior Fellow at the influential right wing think tank the Fraser Institute and, despite the noticeably awkward optics as a white settler with a body of academic work opposing Indigenous peoples' hereditary, treaty and constitutional rights, Flanagan is also the Chair of the "Aboriginal Futures" program at the far-right / libertarian Frontier Centre for Public Policy (FCPP).[74] Given Flanagan's influential position and that his intellectual output through the think tanks has relied nearly exclusively on the CWB from 2013 to date, the index's role in contributing to Flanagan's

[72] Flanagan is not alone in deploying the CWB to produce neoliberal facts and prescribe "best practices" in market-based governance to First Nations. For example, he follows, John Graham (2010) a Senior Associate of the *Institute of Governance* who argues that "a highly dysfunctional First Nation governance system is a significant brake on achieving better [CWB] results for First Nation communities" (p. 1). However, whereas Flanagan uses the CWB to generate new statistical models and brings in additional variables that he deems significant, Graham only uses the CWB to frame his argument. Graham also appears before the Senate Standing Committee on Aboriginal Peoples on May 6th 2009 and uses the CWB to advise the Committee on reforms to Indian Act elections.

[73] Searching the archives of the Canada's national newspapers, *The Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, and Toronto's two major dailies, the *Toronto Sun* and *Toronto Star*, reporter Jennifer Yang (2018) found that (not counting the 32 news articles that he authored) in one decade Flanagan's name was mentioned in 112 news articles that contained the words "Indigenous," "First Nations" or "Aboriginal". Using the same criteria and searching the same newspaper archives, she found that collectively, 16 Indigenous researchers were only cited 82 times. Indigenous child welfare activist, Cindy Blackstock, was the only Indigenous researcher who was cited more frequently than Flanagan.

[74] The Fraser Institute's describes itself as an "independent, non-partisan research and educational organization" that has charitable status in Canada and the USA. However, investigative reporter Beth Hong (2012) and academic/activist Sharron Batt (2019) have shown that it receives millions of dollars from corporate donors in the pharmaceutical and oil and gas lobbies, including the Koch Brothers, and the Aurea Foundation.

neoliberal political projects is worthy of scrutiny. What are the characteristics of the CWB that endear Flanagan to adopt it as his primary tool of preference in producing knowledge to propel the free market projects? How does it contribute to the performance of neoliberal governance?

The dominant narrative underpinning Flanagan's work, and that of the intellectual output of the right-wing think tank network more broadly, is that the Indian Act stifles the natural evolution of capitalism on reserves, thus resulting in poverty and related social ills. This narrative holds that the advancement of markets—and the implementation of individualized private property holdings on reserves—is the ready-made antidote to the problems generated by the Indian Act. For example, the FCPP (n.d.) website proposes its *Aboriginal Futures* program as a way to "...break through the inertia of the Indian Act and special interests to propose policies that allow First Nations people to leverage their inherent land assets by proposing a workable regime of ownership on reserve".[75] Over the years, Flanagan has contributed significantly to constructing and circulating this narrative. His more recent work intervenes in Indigenous self-determination struggles by injecting his own narrowly conceived definition of self-determination that focuses intently on "effective governance":

> ... [measurable progress] comes from self-determination: [First Nations] taking control of their own affairs and making the most out of their assets. The most effective [federal] government intervention has been legislation to remove roadblocks and create opportunities that First Nations can exploit under their own initiative. (Flanagan, 2016)

Whether highlighting that "First Nations are the most disadvantaged" or focusing on the success stories, Flanagan relies on CWB scores to justify his interventions.

[75] Based on a review of Flanagan's work, I understand "special interests" named in this quote from the FCPP to be code for First Nations leadership, which the Fraser Institute and the FCPP commonly target and characterize as corrupt and nepotistic, often referred to by this group of experts disparagingly as the "Aboriginal Industry".

Crucially, Flanagan, along with think tank and academic associates, has had a critical role in formulating and lobbying for the implementation of government interventions that he references in the above quote—namely the First Nations Property Ownership Act (FNPOA), a legal "off ramp" (Flanagan's terminology) from the Indian Act that would permit First Nations bands and individuals on reserve to hold their lands in fee simple title. His 2010 co-authored book *Beyond the Indian Act* introduced the FNPOA to the public. While one might assume that Flanagan's work on the FNPOA would be abandoned following the 2015 election of The Liberal Party under the leadership of Justine Trudeau which promised a new era of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to govern according to the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Jeremy Schmidt (2018) shows this not to be the case. Rather, Schmidt details the many ways in which bureaucrats kept the FNPOA alive and circulating by "realign[ing] the program to fit the priorities and rhetoric of the incoming government and to strategically introduce new ministers to [...] the First Nations Property Ownership Initiative" (p. 2).

Flanagan's efforts to employ the CWB hold particular sway thanks to his public status, yet the CWB is also employed in seemingly far more mundane and everyday practices, whose end result is still that of enrolling the CWB in networks of neoliberal and free-market truths. The following excerpt draws from my research journal written following my visit to a 2016 *Law and Property* symposium in Ottawa hosted by the Institute of Liberal Studies,[76] where Tom Flanagan presented findings from his recent CWB studies to a group of colleagues. His presentation primarily deployed the CWB to assess the performance of First Nations governments in

[76] The Institute of Liberal Studies is an NGO with a mission to advance classic liberalism and free market capitalist thought and practice in Canada ("The Institute for Liberal Studies," n.d.). Among its projects, the Institute of Liberal Studies hosts "Freedom Week", a five-day camp where students and faculty convene for seminars and social events designed to spur enthusiasm for neoliberal and free-market principles.

Saskatchewan in generating income through relatively recently introduced legislative mechanisms termed Treaty Land Entitlements (TLE) and urban reserves (explained in more detail below).

Observing the CWB at a liberal studies law and property symposium

I received an invitation to the symposium from Flanagan after having called the Frontier Centre for Public Policy to ask about any upcoming presentations of his latest work using the CWB. Flanagan called me back that night to tell me that he would be presenting on more recent work. He then put me in touch with his intern who had been involved with creating variables from the raw data of the FNFTA, as well as with Matt Bufton, the executive director and co-founder of the Institute for Liberal Studies. I registered for the symposium free of charge as a "student observer":

> I arrived in Ottawa the night before the symposium and stayed on a friend's couch. A quick bus ride to the Rideau Centre in the morning gets me within a few blocks of the symposium. There are no other pedestrians and very few cars. I have trouble finding the address and worry I am at the wrong place. Finally find the door tucked away. It is an attached grey stone building. I climb the stairs to the third floor and go through the door into a large open space with florescent lights set in a drop-down ceiling. I am one of the first people to arrive. Matt Bufton and a student assistant welcome me. Bufton has a big voice and a firm handshake. He tells me that the space used to be a bookstore. Seemingly to make me feel comfortable, he discusses the work of a geographer he knows named Pierre Desrochers. He points me to a table with pastries and coffee and tea. The student assistant is busy warming up the projector, positioning the screen against the front wall with windows and testing the technology. Others start to arrive. I mingle a bit awkwardly with two other early arrivals, one who is there to

present, the other (Stacey) who will provide technical support for one of the presentations if needed. A large bookshelf at the back of the room is stocked entirely with Ayn Rand books. There is a black and white poster on the wall that has an image of a clean-cut looking white man, libertarian and founder of the Foundation of Economic Education, Leonard E. Read. He is smoking a cigarette looking up pensively from a page. The poster has a long quote that ends in the words in bold print "leave all else to the FREE UNFETTERED MARKET!" and a URL for *LibertyForKids.com* at the bottom.

Flanagan arrives. We shake hands and stand near the table with coffee and begin to make small talk. After only a short conversation he catches me off guard by suggesting that he could be my external supervisor on my thesis committee. I thank him for the offer and tell him I will look into the possibility. Bufton interjects to introduce Flanagan to another presenter. Bufton plays host, running around attending to the last minutes needs of guests. As more people arrive it seems that they are mostly already aquatinted with one another. There are handshakes and smiles and the coffee pot requires refilling. I overhear Bufton crack a joke that Flanagan waived his speaker's fee but that the money saved went to buying him an expensive security detail. I stand and sip coffee and talk with Stacey until we are all called to sit down and the first of three sessions of presentations begin.

Bufton introduces the event and mentions that this year's symposium is deliberately pared down to make for a more productive discussion. I count nineteen attendees (including myself), mostly white, mostly men, three women. He shares the wifi password: Hayek1974 and explains it is in honor of liberal economist F.A. Hayek who argues for the reduction of the

state and a return to classic liberalism. 1974 is the date Hayek received a Nobel prize. I use the complimentary notepaper on my table to map the room layout (see Figure 4).

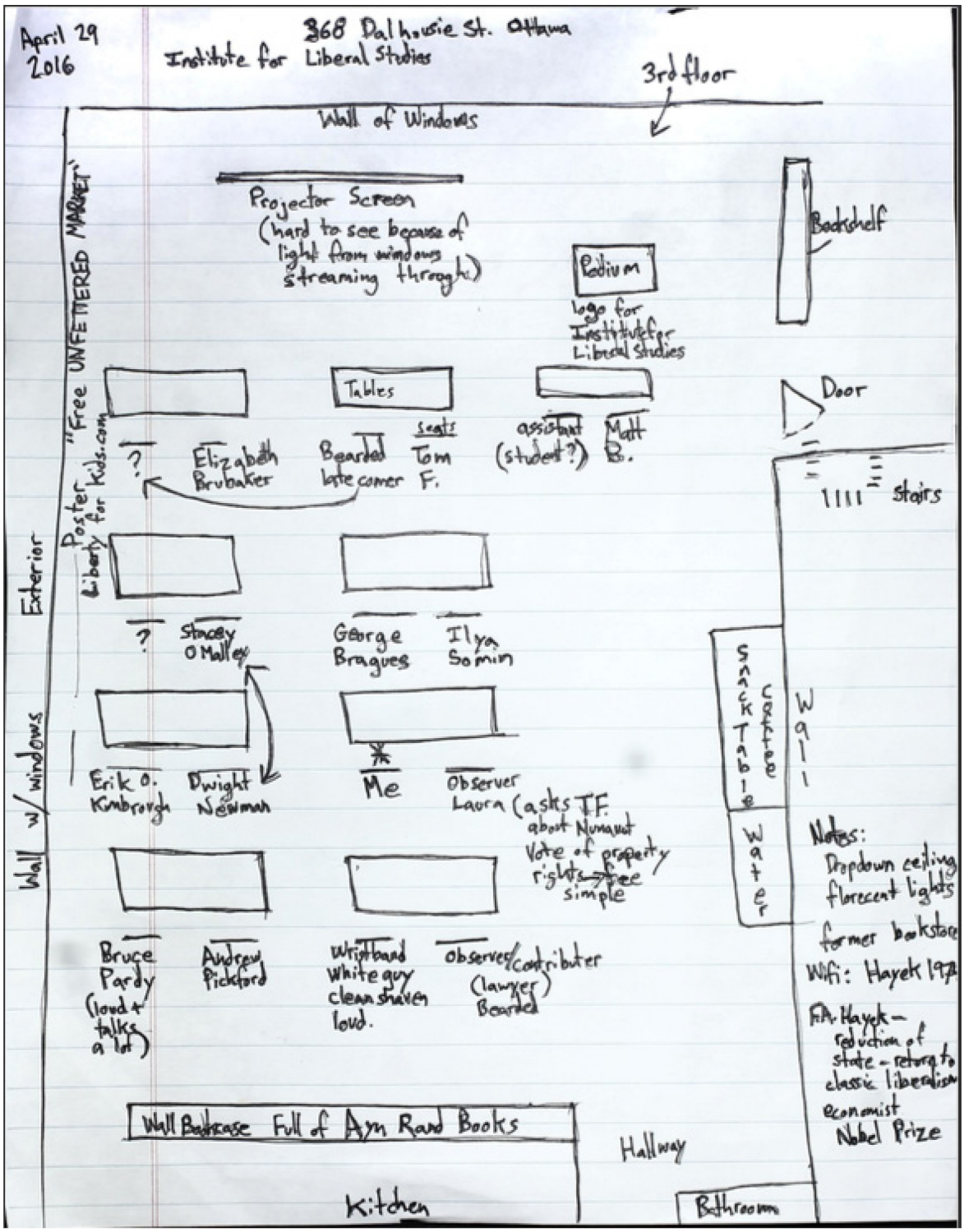

Figure 4. Hand sketched map of room layout at Law and Property symposium in Ottawa

The first presentations of the day set the tone of the conference. They concern: securing the status of private property rights in Canada through the constitution, by elevating "activist" judges in the supreme courts—a suggested strategy that stirs some controversy; defending the rights of individual property owners from state expropriation; using popular culture mediums to advance discourses of property; and finally, providing proof that, to quote the presenter, "property is inevitable [...] not a preference [...] a thing that *must* exist if we start from the proposition that the use of force between people is wrong". Questions after presentations are generally friendly. I get the sense of being part of a free-market libertarian brainstorming session, or perhaps indoctrination.

Flanagan's presentation is in the second session (see Appendix C for symposium schedule). He is directly before Dwight Newman, the only other presenter addressing issues directly relating to Indigenous rights and property. Flanagan's talk is about measuring the socio-economic performance of First Nations who have used Treaty Land Entitlements (TLE) to create urban reserves. There is slippage in his explanation between whether he is measuring the contribution of the TLE and urban reserves to First Nations' well-being or measuring how well First Nations governments do in turning them into an economic engine. The presentation starts with background information about these TLE's. They were designed to compensate First Nations in Saskatchewan to purchase land for "shortfalls in the size of Indian reserves as originally surveyed". In this regard, Flanagan explains that the program is meant "to rectify[...] a historical injustice, not having fully lived up to the terms of the treaty". However, the compensation is also meant to support economic development—this is the entrance point for Flanagan's calculative intervention. First Nations may use the funding to purchase lands in

urban areas, which can be transferred to reserve status (land held collectively for First Nations by the Crown) and become urban reserves.

Flanagan introduces the CWB, describes its component indicators and jokes “it has to be reliable and good, it is produced by the government of Canada”. The slide with a CWB chart showing the average scores for communities across Canada is poorly formatted and too small to read. Bufton's technical assistant steps in to help resize the image. He mistakenly makes it even smaller and then expands it way beyond the size of the projector screen. When he gets the slide to the right size Flanagan quips, “There you go. Now stop there. It's like government intervention: it never stops". The audience laughs. He compares the longitudinal trend lines and the gaps in average scores for First Nations vs. non-Indigenous communities: “There's a twenty point gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada at the start of the period in 1981 [the point at which the CWB starts to be calculated], and there's still a twenty point gap thirty years later in 2011. So there has been a tide lifting all boats, but some boats are higher than others.” Next he compares the scores of First Nations nationally versus those in Saskatchewan, moving to an increasingly finer scale of comparison First Nations communities in Saskatchewan with TLE agreements and urban reserves versus those without them. Of those with TLEs and urban reserves he concludes, “their rate of improvement in CWB [scores]... is really not that much different from anybody else's”. Finally, he compares the trends in average scores within a group of twenty-one First Nations with urban reserves. Of the twenty-one, Flanagan is interested in a “sub-group of eight” who “have gotten into business in a fairly big way [by building] casinos... shopping centers, office blocks, golf courses, hotels.” This sub-group achieved higher CWB scores than the others. Here, Flanagan

concludes: “Merely transferring property rights to a different group of owners [i.e. from the government to First Nations bands] does not in-itself produce any dramatic result, but if you combine a transfer of property rights with some other [employment related] factors…” To validate his findings he mentions another CWB-related study that he just produced, “*Seven Habits of Highly Effective First Nations.*” The audience laughs recognizing the reference to a popular business and self-help book published in the late 1980s *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. The study is not related to urban reserves, but Flanagan believes that the lessons are applicable all the same. He runs through a list of characteristics that “successful First Nations” show including: “economic opportunism”, a willingness to take advantage of location to use land for development, to lease lands, to develop natural resources, to engage in transactions with the surrounding communities, to “invite people in to stay in their hotels to party on their land”, have long-term leadership, and a respect for the rule of law. Flanagan contends that combining these behaviors and “the right kind of attitude” with the transfer of property rights “can yield demonstrable improvements”. If urban reserves are approached with an “entrepreneurial spirit” they can become an “income generator” for First Nations.

Flanagan then takes question. Someone asks if the sub-group of eight communities are near more successful urban centers and if that is behind their higher scores reflecting again “a tide that lifts all boats”. The next string of questions sets aside the CWB and focus on the issue of Indigenous “collectivism”, seen as a persistent barrier to private property. Andrew Pickford asks, “... in Australia there was a push to inject more individual rights within the collective group, in terms of federal government [being] leveraged through particular mechanisms, is [sic] there any attempts at that within the Saskatchewan or prairie provinces”? Flanagan

points to his book *Beyond the Indian Act* as his "proposal for introducing individual rights [to reserves]". Then he jokes, "like most of what I've done in my life [this] has ended in failure... It's not going to happen. And so, I've stopped agitating". He later elaborates that the ideal political configuration for introducing (voluntary or "opt-in") private property rights through legislation had been in place during Stephan Harper's majority conservative government and during which "a minority group of First Nations headed by Manny Jules from British Columbia […] were asking for [private property legislation]". In a resigned tone, Flanagan continues "But um, Idle No More caused them to pull back and so they just dropped it. And so... I don't see it happening in our lifetimes. Not in mine anyways. Maybe in Laura's lifetime [Flanagan jokes, referring to the younger person sitting to my right]". Laura chimes in, "I'll just counter the point that Nunavut is having that vote on May 9th about whether municipalities will decide to move to a fee simple partnership". Laura seems hopeful that this vote will mean that municipal governments in Nunavut may soon be able to sell the lands that they are currently only allowed to lease to occupants.

The final questions return to the subject of controlling for outside variables—"degree of corruption", accountability, and location, are the examples given—when measuring the effectiveness of urban reserves. Flanagan points to another one of his CWB-derivative studies, the First Nations Governance Index, to conclude that although these factors were not included in the study of Saskatchewan urban reserves, "I think I can demonstrate that there are specific governmental practices that correlate quite strongly with higher levels of the CWB".

> Newman follows Flanagan to make a case that conservative political theory offers better defense of Indigenous rights than left-liberal and liberal egalitarian theories. Then we break for lunch and walk two blocks to the Novatel Hotel where we join a much larger crowd to eat a pricey-looking buffet (folded cloth napkins and hot plates) while Ilya Somin delivers the keynote address about a supreme court case surrounding land expropriation in Connecticut, which he describes as the empowerment of "the grasping hand of the state at the expense of the invisible hand of the market". As the people I am seated with discuss one of them having a new academic job and feeling hesitant to let his new colleagues know about his libertarianism, I eat crème brulée and quietly ponder if I have anything to add to the conversation that would help me feel less like a spy.

While Flanagan deploys the CWB in similar fashion to the performances of politicians and social scientists (i.e. examining the "diversity of conditions", exploiting the easily taken for granted hierarchical ranking of communities to compare and highlight the "success stories" in the quest for best practices and so on) his performance also differs in that he comes to the index with an overt free-market ideological position that he seeks to support. The CWB is used to corroborate neoliberal theories, which are generally not named as theories, but instead presented as development prescriptions—e.g. 'communities will have higher well-being if they adhere to the rule of law and respect property rights'. Of course, there is a certain amount of implicit buy-in. For instance, no one in the audience asks for clarification or definitions of these highly abstract concepts—"rule of law" is taken as a given stand-alone "fact". However, they are drawn from and resonate with sources that are well-known to the other symposium participants and serve to align with the "truths" that Flanagan produces using the CWB. This includes reports from think

tank colleagues at the Fraser Institute and FCPP; studies from well-known neo-institutionalist economists such as Douglass North and neo-conservative political scientists, such as Francis Fukuyama; or, occasionally findings cherry-picked from academic work such as the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.[77]

In combination with the circular reasoning that his neoliberal development prescriptions work within—i.e. if a community engages intensively in an array of economic development exploitations, it will attain higher scores on a predominantly economic metric—he also simultaneously obfuscates and reinforces his statements by layering them one on top of another. For example, while presenting specifically about measuring the economic growth of a small sample of communities in Saskatchewan—in Flanagan's words, "we have such a small group [eight "successful" communities with urban reserves] that you can't reach any kind of statistical demonstration"—he was quick to enroll findings from two of his other CWB studies that measured disparate phenomena in widely different contexts, in order to substantiate his assumptions about which factors ought to be most important in considering creating more urban reserves. These assumptions were then used to substantiate truths of free-market economic theory. On the one hand, working at the level of the province makes it possible for Flanagan to test his hypotheses. On the other hand, it challenges him to transpose the findings from his other studies, undertaken at different political scales, in order for them to have nation-wide implications. His solution at the symposium is to simply tack the studies on at the end of his presentation and highlight their findings to imply a correlation between the studies and across scales.

The free-market agenda is further reinforced at the symposium through a network of

[77] (See "The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development", n.d.)

minute relations: the off-the-cuff quips that establish common ground among participants (about an overreaching interventionist state, for example), the curation of the space (book collection and posters) and presentation of disparate topics that come to be related through the challenges they pose to achieving an idealized free-market society (presented to an intimate crowd of familiar associates). While (re)establishing norms about market-based governance, Flanagan's status as an expert on Indigenous issues—"Aboriginal futures", no less—is also validated, at least within the setting of the symposium attended predominantly by white settlers. In turn, First Nations reserves are envisioned as the frontier for markets—spaces where stubborn cultural barriers such as "collectivism" and nepotism, must be corrected and social relations reorganized to facilitate the implementation of markets as best as possible.[78]

Flanagan also makes use of the CWB's subtle normative underpinnings—using the seven First Nations success stories to set a development standard and an ideal to be emulated by all other communities—to stabilize the common sense of his neoliberal vision. This further naturalizes a settler demand for Indigenous peoples self-reliance through entrepreneurial Indigenous-citizen subjects and assumes that First Nations communities across Canada need the same set of solutions.

4.4 Indigenous Leaders Engaging and Contesting Development Indices

"To govern means to act on the actions of subjects who retain the capacity to act otherwise" — Tania Li, 2007, p. 17

[78] During question period Flanagan was asked about introducing individual property rights on reserves. In his response he repeatedly characterized economic development on reserves as variations of a deviant form of capitalism, using the following descriptors "collective capitalism", "crony capitalism" and "red capitalism". He then stated "It's probably not my idea, or your idea of a free market economy, but it may be, under the circumstances, the only kind of free market activity that could possibly happen for First Nations, on the reserve" (personal communications, 2016). Against this backdrop, Flanagan's efforts to introduce markets are deeply evocative of the early colonial "civilizing mission" with a contemporary free-market bent. For discussion of the "civilizing mission" of the church and state see: RCAP, 1996; Stevenson, 1999; Tobias, 1991, among others.

"We are not only what we are, but what we might have been, and the possibilities for what we might have been are transformed." — Ian Hacking, 2004, p. 110

As can be expected, there are a variety of approaches to these development indicators coming from Indigenous people,[79] including different degrees and ways in which they embrace and resist the index's "truths". This final empirical section examines instances of Indigenous peoples' public engagement with and contestation of, these indexes. On the one hand we see that under particular conditions these indices have been effectively deployed by Indigenous rights advocates to advance arguments for self-determination. In other instances, Indigenous peoples' outright refusal to have their visions of well-being delimited by the "expert" discourses of development indices, has created openings for already-existing and self-determined definitions of well-being and knowledge practices to be more widely heard and acknowledged in the same networks in which the indices have gained traction.

Deploying indices to advocate for rights

In a 2016 lecture on Indigenous economic rights at the Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, the late Secwépemc leader and Indigenous rights activist Arthur Manuel explained to his audience, "Systematic impoverishment is what my people have suffered from since 1867 [when] the British North America Act was passed in Britain and Canada's first constitution [was created], where they divided up all the land in Canada between section 91 federal... jurisdiction [and] section 92 provincial or Crown jurisdiction." He then explained that the land base of all the

[79] In addition to the Community Well-Being Index, I also examine the use of the Registered Indian Human Development Index (RIHDI) in this section. As a measure of population rather than communities the RIHDI it offers different possibilities for advocacy and tends to be used to support collective demands for Indigenous rights.

reserves in Canada amounts to merely 0.2 percent of the country's entire land base, resulting in a scenario where, "the United Nations Human Development Index, when it is applied to the statistics of my people living on Indian reserves, [...] we're [ranked at] about level seventy-four and Canada is up at around five [out of a total of 175 countries]." As with most development index interventions, Manuel references the RIHDI only briefly to stage his larger arguments, which advocate for self-determination and expose some of the pernicious ways in which Canada continues to deny Indigenous rights and title despite a string of Supreme Court cases that pave the way for their implementation. However, some notable features set Manuel's interventions apart from previous examples explored in this thesis. For one, rather than draw a discursive line between a colonial past and the postcolonial present, he highlights continuity between historical violence and dispossession and contemporary dispossession and impoverishment. Manuel also interrogates the systemic nature of the poverty experienced by Indigenous peoples. That is to say that while others use the CWB to examine seemingly apolitical/ahistorical questions about issues such as the relationship between well-being and geographic proximity to urban centers, Manuel uses the RIHDI to highlight a relationship between settler wealth and Indigenous poverty, the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and exploitation of lands and resources by the settler state for the benefit of settler society. Further, Manuel is explicit about the politics of his work. Unlike the CWB authors who claim to work "not from an advocacy or political viewpoint, but from an empirical and scientific perspective" and then inject themselves into Indigenous struggles as somehow objective advisors (Beavon & White, 2007, p. 4),[80] or Flanagan, who treats his index studies as strictly technical exercises and uses Indigenous peoples' well-being as a cloak under which to smuggle free-market interests, there is no excavating necessary to understand the

[80] See discussion of a Beavon and White's suggestion for First Nations to adopt a "needs-based agenda" in section one of this chapter.

politics of Manuel's project. His work supports self-determination and the struggle for Indigenous rights and title, and he uses the RIHDI as a tool to unambiguously demonstrate what is at stake. Further, Manuel makes use of the RIHDI (a population measure) to give weight to Indigenous peoples' collective demands for rights and better living conditions, rather than using the "higher granularity" offered by the CWB to seek out the best practices of "successful" communities to apply across the board. Finally, the RIHDI and CWB are predominantly used in ways that contain their examinations of policy issues to those that are narrowly deemed relevant to Indigenous socio-economic conditions, thus bracketing out the examinations of the broader national policy agenda. In contrast, Manuel, along with co-author Nicole Schabus (2005) expands the parameters of what matters to Indigenous socio-economic conditions to include issues such as international trade. For example, they use the RIHDI to draw a relationship between a combination of the state's refusal to implement constitutional recognition of the rights of Indigenous peoples and the consolidation of international trade agreements giving corporations access to land and resources held by Indigenous peoples while simultaneously excluding Indigenous peoples from trade negotiations. This engagement with the index broadens the scope of the questions to be asked and the relations to be considered in efforts to improve socio-economic conditions in Indigenous communities.

Contesting indices

Nancy Karetak-Lindell, the Liberal member for Nunavut, in an exchange with SRAD demographer Eric Guimond during his 2006 research presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, gives us an excellent example of someone contesting the validity of Indigenous-specific development indices. During

question period at the end of the long presentation, Karetak-Lindell challenges the deficit-based narratives of INAC's latest index research and the conclusions that can be drawn from it while also pointing to its performative powers and potential unexpected consequences:

> I'm very pleased to hear that you're looking at different ways of analyzing the data you get because when you ask who defines 'well-being'... I was just telling Todd we like to say we didn't know we were poor until someone told us we were poor. We like to say that in the North because technically that's true. As long as we were healthy, happy, and the caribou didn't bypass us and we could get a good living off the land, that was okay, until someone came in and decided that because we didn't have grade 12 diplomas, because we didn't know how to do this, this, and that, and we didn't have social insurance numbers, we were like a third-world country. So you really need to be careful about what conclusions you come to because of data.

Karetak-Lindell challenges the imposition of forms of settler state knowledge production in the Northern context, and makes strange the state's efforts to define and measure Indigenous well-being according to settler standards, and she does so from within the same everyday state spaces in which the practices of politicians and experts routinely (re)produce and naturalize the subjects and spaces of Indigenous development. Pointing to earlier interventions intended to improve and render legible Inuit lives (Scott, 1998), such as diplomas and social insurance numbers, Karetak-Lindell situates the index project (the CWB and RIHDI) within a history and geography of colonialism and development in the North. This helps to disrupt the modern/primitive dualisms underwriting the Canadian state's development initiatives and to illuminate how quantitative technologies interweave with larger structures and patterns of relations as settler society extends not only into Indigenous territories, but into Indigenous epistemologies and identities as well.

Karetak-Lindell's intervention also subtly disrupts Guimond's methodological explanation made earlier in his presentation. Guimond explained:

> On that particular idea of why we picked these indicators, it's because these are indicators that you'll find in most indices around the world. We've done some literature review on that. So the components of the CWB are cohorts of almost all the indicators. Even if they have 50 components, you'll find in there the ones we have. (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, 2006)

The universality of development "common sense", built up through networks of international development institutions, such as the World Bank and OECD, provides an increasingly invulnerable foundation for the Indigenous-specific indicator project. Science Studies scholars see this as a form of rhetoric, not so much in the sense of an artful use of persuasive language, but rather as a process of accumulating a greater number of allies than competing performances (see Barnes, 1998; Latour, 1987). Guimond expedites credibility through his reference to networks of experts from far afield who stand in apparent agreement, thus constructing a wall of objectivity and isolating those who may seek to challenge the work. Even still, Karetak-Lindell, grounded in her knowledge of the Northern context, highlights the incommensurability of the universalizing categories such as "Third World" drawn from the international development context and then mapped over Northern peoples' specific experiences. This exposes power the imbalances that characterize the terrain of knowledge production in an (post)colonial state and which are often camouflaged by good intentions, the quest for improvement, and claims to objectivity, all as pre-existing Indigenous visions of well-being are overlooked to make room for the hegemonic settler vision of development.

Finally, Karetak-Lindell's cautioning—"to be careful about what conclusions you come

to because of data"—is more than a suggestion about taking a "balanced approach" in presenting information, which is Guimond's interpretation of Karetak-Lindell's critique (that he shares in his response). Rather, she is calling attention to the power of indicators (and statistical knowledge more generally) to define, and in so doing produce, particular subject positions and spaces of development. By stating, "we like to say we didn't know we were poor until someone told us we were poor", Karetak-Lindell describes the widespread internalization of an identity constituted through development discourses.[81] In this sense, Karetak-Lindell's intervention points not only to the performative power of development indices, but also to the need for self-determined methodological approaches to assessing well-being.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to demonstrate the discursive power and performative potential of the CWB as it is deployed within governing networks. It was organized into four sections according to the index's uptake within specific extensions of its network, each instance revealing different and at times contrasting politics. The first section examined how social scientists, technicians and academics developed strategies to secure legitimacy for the index research by distancing it from association with DIAND. I then showed how findings from a CWB study were used as a "black box" in an effort to foster forms of conduct in Indigenous struggles that were preferred by the state. The next two sections demonstrated patterns of engagement with the index by experts (politicians, bureaucrats, and free market think tank policy strategists) with differing capacities and agendas. Whether deployed by bureaucrats to leverage for departmental funding and blame Indigenous communities for their poor conditions, or to advocate for more just engagements between the Canadian government and Indigenous nations, the CWB bolstered the performances

[81] See introduction of *Chapter 3: Tracing the CWB's Emergence* in which I discuss Walter and Andersen's (2013) concept of the "deficit Indigene"

of these actors with objective scientific authority, elevating their own position as experts, as well as an underpinning of benevolence. The chapter's final section pointed to the ways in which Indigenous leadership's engagement with and rejection of the CWB and RIHDI disrupts index common sense. In the case of the RIHDI, I drew attention to Author Manuel's subversion of predominant index use by exposing the continuity between historical land dispossession and the contemporary conditions of poverty, and how this in turn reveals ongoing settler complicity in the maintenance of such conditions. Lastly, in a brief exchange with one of the CWB's authors, liberal politician Nancy Karetak-Lindell also drew attention to the continuity in this form of quantitative knowledge production, its entanglement with dispossession in the North, and the performative power of such statistical technologies to produce deficit Indigenous subjectivities, key to producing and maintaining power imbalances. Ultimately, this final section pointed to how Indigenous interventions in the index network open space for other ways of defining and knowing development and well-being. Having explored the role of the CWB in the production of subject positions, spaces and development norms, I now turn to share my closing reflections about the CWB and my research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions: How, Why, and to Whom Does Measuring Matter?

The first study I encountered that used the Community Well-Being Index was published by the Fraser Institute, and it opened with the think tank's motto—"If it matters, measure it". My research has pushed against the prescriptive and narrowing logic of this motto by exploring how, why and to whom measuring projects themselves—specifically the CWB—have come to matter, particularly within governing networks in Canada. This has led me to question what work the CWB accomplishes beyond simply measuring and ranking communities according to a set of socio-economic conditions. How have grids of power, in particular between social scientists, technicians, Indigenous communities and settler bureaucracies, shaped the CWB, and how has the index in turn enacted its own relations among these actors in the contest to define development? Drawing on theories of performativity, my work has rejected the taken-for-granted separation between representation and reality that undergirds the work of the CWB across the spectrum of its authors and users by showing that the experts and technicians are deeply embedded in the making and spread of the index. Further, postcolonial and settler colonial literatures have guided my exploration of the CWB's discursive power and its role in co-constituting Indigenous and settler expert subjectivities and spaces alike. This has helped to shed light on some of the ways in which the index connects into deeper histories of Indigenous-state relations, exercises power, normalizes particular development logics, and justifies development-based policy interventions. This final chapter revisits the major conclusions of my research, highlights some of its limits, reiterates what is at stake in the proliferation of these quantitative technologies, and points to future research possibilities**.**

My introductory chapter started by reviewing the postcolonial, settler colonial and critical development literatures to establish the broader contextual foundations of, and sketch the

historical and geographic entanglements of settler state governing rationales and practices, knowledge production, expertise, dispossession and concern for and about Indigenous peoples. I drew on a body of scholarship that traces the transition from the overt violence of early colonial rule to the contemporary and more insidious forms of colonial power enacted through a variety of techniques and technologies that, to use Rose's (1996b) terminology, seek to "govern from a distance". This literature helped me to make sense of the emergency of Indigenous-specific indicators and the role of the CWB in the context of neoliberalism. It also helped me to trouble the common practice within indicator knowledge production cultures to actively deny or leave unconsidered its own politics. The literature review also highlighted how settler state concern for Indigenous well-being has long been tethered to assimilationist efforts, how a variety of technologies (maps, statistics and legislation) have been central to the formation of governable subject positions, and how Indigenous peoples have also, at times, leveraged these technologies to resist colonial power. I then reviewed the literature on the history of social indicator research to outline the relationship between this form of knowledge production and modern/neoliberal governance processes and practices.

My first empirical chapter, *Chapter 3: Tracing the CWB's Emergence*, was a historical geography of the index, exploring some of the key political, intellectual and institutional conditions underpinning the CWB's emergence. Informed by the performativity literature—and Actor Network Theory's treatment of performance in particular, with its attention to the processes of assembling and stabilizing networks—the chapter examined the processes and politics of the CWB's ascendance to the status of a hegemonic proxy for Indigenous development, while its adjacent indices gradually either dissolved or, in the case of the RIHDI, assumed a much-diminished role. Beginning by investigating the practices, assumptions and

concepts that animated the earliest efforts to create Indigenous-specific quantitative development typologies in Canada, first Gerber (1979) and then Armstrong (Armstrong, 1994, 2001; Armstrong & Rogers, 1996), I detailed how Gerber's endeavour to define less-than-self-evident categories such as "institutional completeness" and "personal resources" rested on problematic assumptions about the degrees of a First Nations community's traditional nature and "purity", and concomitant perceived threats to a community's viability in the face of "modernity". I also discussed the murkiness of the discursive boundaries that Gerber drew between integration and assimilation in an effort to distance her project from advocating an assimilationist position. Decades later, Armstrong and Rogers (1996) demonstrated the extent of exclusions necessary when constructing development typologies capable of greater generalizability. Thus, despite initial aspirations to generate more comprehensive measures that would account for First Nations' perceptions of well-being, the end result of these development typologies was the production and naturalization of development realities grounded in and prioritizing the interests of the settler society and state. I then looked at the broader national level and institutional contexts in the formation of the CWB network in late 1990s and early 2000s, namely the First Nations Cohesion Project (FNCP) and the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate (SRAD) at DIAND in order to describe a number of instances in which indices played a role in constituting deficit-based Indigenous subjectivities and circumscribing a development vision to capture the "under-development" of Indigenous sub-populations relative to the settler population and those few Indigenous communities deemed development success stories. Ultimately, *Chapter 3* put forth two broad arguments: the first being that while the set of indicators produced through the FNCP are novel to Indigenous–state relations, they are in many respects constructed from fragments of previous social science and policy concerns and DIAND initiatives. The

performative effect here was one in which certain Indigenous-specific development discourses and subjectivities were naturalized reiteratively through the studies. For instance, the studies helped to concretize the "common sense" that Indigenous cultures are at risk from either too much or not enough migration between remote communities and urban centres, or that Indigenous peoples' well-being would improve if they adopted the language of the dominant culture. Despite shifts in social science concepts, assumptions and aims, in the quest for solutions to conditions of poverty, research orientations of previous eras that stubbornly targeted the "nature" of First Nations communities persisted—thus framing First Nations as the source of their own problems.

The second broad takeaway is that for the CWB to emerge as an authoritative measure of Indigenous well-being required an immense and sustained effort as well as a dose of opportunism and serendipity. This included privileged access to resources and powerful allies, such as international development and federal institutions, and the use of popularizing social science concepts such as social cohesion and social capital. This is significant because it disrupts the prevalent narrative that indicator science is a democratic, apolitical intellectual terrain for knowledge production, where most interests can ostensibly be pursued and where the knowledge produced is good in-itself and to everyone's benefit. Even while the indicators signal a focus on Indigenous peoples' well-being, or socio-economic conditions, or capacity, this chapter demonstrated that it is expertise and state imperatives that have predominantly driven index research agendas and design. These conditions make up the often-invisible politics of Indigenous-specific development index production and circulation.

The politics of the CWB's geographical proliferations were the focus of *Chapter 4: The CWB in the Wild*. Specifically, I examined instances of the CWB's mobilization within Canadian

governing networks and ended the chapter by exploring examples of Indigenous engagement with and contestation of the CWB and its closest relative, the RIHDI. The chapter's overarching theme was the tracing of relations of subject positions, spaces and norms, as index expertise and its targets were constituted through performative means. Through a series of examples, the chapter demonstrated the CWB's role in producing and normalizing reserves as "deficient" spaces and frontiers for markets, while Indigenous subjects in these spaces were discursively framed as either themselves "deficient" (i.e. in need of intervention) or industrious and self-reliant (i.e. ideal role models of development); simultaneously, white settlers with varying political agendas assumed positions of expertise on Indigenous well-being. The chapter detailed a range of efforts, with varying degrees of success, undertaken by these experts to build and extend the index network. For instance, it showed that while the index authors set out to bridge cultural barriers between academia and bureaucratic/policy work, they simultaneously developed discursive strategies to emphasize the differences between those two institutions in order to minimize scepticism about the state's role in the research design and findings and to secure legitimacy for their academic labour. Further, I drew attention to the slippage between the CWB authors' measuring of well-being and their use of the index to advise Indigenous peoples about the "best paths" to achieve well-being. The example I drew on demonstrated the way in which the less-than-definitive findings of an exploratory CWB study are used as a "black box" (Latour, 1987), abandoning nuance and appearing unambiguous while simultaneously being leveraged to steer Indigenous peoples' conduct away from rights-based actions and point them to preferred—less contentious—development pathways (i.e. a "needs-based agenda"). I also showed how politicians and bureaucrats used the CWB to deflect challenges from their colleagues, advance the settler state's development-based policy agenda, justify the pursuit of paternalistic governing

tactics, and allocate responsibility for the poor conditions experienced by many communities onto the communities themselves. Here, I also pointed to how some politicians used the CWB to advocate for First Nations' rights and for the government to engage in more just and meaningful negotiations. Meanwhile, powerful players like the Deputy Minister of AANDC point to the distribution and range of CWB scores as evidence that the majority of First Nations lack good governance and then try and justify budgetary increases to AANDC to support its ongoing interventions designed to reform Indigenous behaviours and governing practices in the name of the "national good". The CWB's ability to make visible a "diversity of conditions", hierarchically ordered, was key to naturalizing such interventions, as it furnished a normative framework that marks standards of development and points to an ideal to be replicated by all other communities, achieved through "appropriate" conduct and pursuit of development "best-practices". Finally, the chapter ended by highlighting examples of Indigenous engagement with and contestation of the CWB and RIHDI, demonstrating some of the ways in which Indigenous interventions within state spaces and networks have disrupted the hegemony of these indices and opened up space for other ways of defining well-being.

At its core this thesis has sought to establish how the CWB matters to the politics of Indigenous development in settler colonial Canada. I found that the index came to matter as a proxy for development not so much because it provided an objective assessment of Indigenous well-being, but because of an alignment of factors relating to the politics, processes and practices in the formation and stabilization of the index's network itself. Among these factors were: a rudimentary definition of well-being; utility to a wide variety of actors in neoliberal governing practices; the ease with which the index can be combined with other community-level data sets to produce a diverse array of meanings; access to resources and support from a wide range of

powerful institutional allies and alignment with the themes of their work; rhetorical overtones of benevolence and concern (i.e. who would be willing to argue against the need for improvements to "well-being"); a relationship to national anxieties over social cohesion; an alignment with Canada's pre-existing development-based policy orientations; the use of existing data and adoption/re-definition of popular social science concepts. Whereas the CWB categorization of well-being assumes universality, my research has worked to ground the CWB in a specific geographic and historical context and set of relations. As Barnes (2002) contends, performativity focuses attention on practice and "what people do rather than what they say they do" (p. 508). In the case of the CWB, its authors say their work sets out to expose "racialized and ethnicized understanding of differences in resources and resulting hierarchies and overlay this understanding with an appreciation of the integrated relative deprivation theory [so that they] can understand the import of the current situation" (Beavon & White, 2007, p. 7). What this actually involves is the social scientists not only spending countless hours at Statistics Canada's Research Data Centres sifting through and transforming micro-data into standardized scores for communities that can then be plugged into an array of charts and maps, but also traveling in a "road show" to communities to share research findings, and collaborating to develop academic journals tailored to Indigenous policy research that could help to distance indices from their association with "government research". While its authors are consistently forthcoming about the limits of the CWB's definition of well-being, they do not address the inequalities in access to resources that privilege their network and the index's authority in ways that may preclude other definitions of well-being. In part, my hope is that having examined its genealogy and explored a variety of its roles in the exercise and allocation of power, I have disrupted some of the CWB's consolidated power to make room for approaches to Indigenous well-being that do not amount to

a matter of technical and depoliticized prescription to Indigenous communities on the part of experts and politicians, and in which the quest for generalizable knowledge does not subjugate the value of local specificity.

Reflecting on this thesis' limits and future research possibilities

In reflecting on some of the silences and gaps in my research, a number relate to questions of methods and access. Firstly, a closer, more sustained study of the everyday work in the production and dissemination of the CWB would undoubtedly offer a more fine-grained and nuanced reading of the politics of such indices and the spaces in which they circulate. My relatively limited access to the group of social scientists that elaborate the CWB meant that I relied more heavily on textual analysis than I had initially hoped. Further, the texts I engaged with were often well honed for publication, which made it more challenging to access the politics underlying these texts. Similarly, despite engaging with the CWB authors and analyzing its presentation in governing networks, my account of the CWB's uses in policy and decision-making processes remains uncomplete. For instance, in what ways does the CWB , with its attention to the "diversity of conditions", shape the terrain of Indigenous-specific economic development policy? How does it inform funding allocations (if at all) or how policy makers engage with Indigenous communities? Some clues are offered in the CWB literature, which repeatedly touts the index as an essential policy tool and points to examples of its utility in this role, including in devising merit-based funding allocation strategies and in assessing a community's sustainability (e.g. whether or not to relocate certain communities with very poor CWB scores).[82] However, in contrast to the literature, one interviewee told me that despite all the talk of the CWB's policy relevance, "We [only] say that in our research, but basically when

[82] See Beavon & White, 2007; White, 2003

people work in the policy or program areas they do whatever they want. They only use research if it helps them further what they want to do" (2016). Future research that entails sustained access to policy makers/policy spaces, including observation of meetings and presentations in which the CWB is used to inform decisions, would potentially help to make sense of such contradictions. One final and related area that my research was unable to fully unpack within the scope of a Master's thesis involves the rise and fall of the CWB as a departmental performance measure at INAC. A future in-depth engagement in this area could help reveal closer understandings of indicators more broadly in neoliberal settler state practices.

In a 2015 interview regarding the connection between Indigenous and anti-capitalist struggles, scholar and activist Glen Coulthard describes colonialism as "a structure of dispossession that is fundamentally grounded in the theft of land and the usurpation of indigenous peoples' political authority in relationship to that land and their communities" (Epstine, 2015). While my research has helped to disrupt the narrative that the CWB is somehow in-itself a tool for advocacy of Indigenous peoples, it is limited in its contribution to understanding the relationship between development indicators and broader questions about land and control over political and economic systems that are fundamental to the operation of colonial power in the present.[83] In her analysis of Samuel Hearn's story of Bloody Falls Massacre, Emilie Cameron observes "... settlers long to believe that their occupation of Indigenous lands is both natural and consensual, and they continually produce knowledge to secure this belief" (p. 177). In my view, this insight is instructive for orienting future research that sets out to examine development indicators and colonial structures of dispossession. Cameron's intervention, if applied to studies of Indigenous-specific indicators of development, suggests the need to

[83] Perhaps the closest I get to questions of land and control are in sections of chapter four that highlight the use of the CWB by settler bureaucrats to assert the state's development agenda and its use by the CWB authors to direct Indigenous peoples in their struggles.

examine how settlers relate to the "truths" about Indigenous peoples that such knowledge technologies produce. Whose knowledge claims about development gain positions of authority and how do we account for the mechanisms and networks through which such authority is derived? How are the interests of state and non-state authorities served by quantitative knowledge that makes visible the socio-economic disparities between Indigenous and settler society as well as the gaps between Indigenous communities? What types of development interventions are legitimized by such technologies and how should we account for the persistent disavowal of politics or interests in their deployment? Even a quick glance at Tom Flanagan's latest CWB study points to the relevance of this line of questioning. In it he uses the CWB to myopically charge that oil and gas pipelines are "perhaps the only way [for remote Indigenous communities] to escape poverty". Flanagan masks underlying settler interests in extractive development projects with benevolence and scientific claims to knowing what is in the best interest of Indigenous peoples and Canadian society in turn. Insights from performativity scholarship reminds us that it is important not to get hung-up on whether or not Flanagan's claims are "true" or "false", but instead to pay attention to the ways that such knowledge matters to the (re)ordering of social relations. As Indigenous Services Canada moves to develop a "broad dashboard" of indicators meant to supplement the CWB and purportedly better reflect Indigenous concerns regarding efforts to measure and close socio-economic gaps, critical research exploring the terrain of knowledge claims and their discursive and affective power will be crucial. Such research provides an opportunity for a sustained examination of settlers' positioning in relationship to Indigenous peoples' well-being, including how settlers approach questions of their belonging on Indigenous land, their responsibility to Indigenous peoples, and

how this responsibility is acted upon. This could contribute towards disrupting narratives about settlers' natural entitlement to the land and the benevolence of their development interventions.

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Appendix A

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[redacted]

June 7th, 2016

Questions About the use of the Community Well-Being Index (CWB) in the Plans and Priorities Reports (PPR) and Departmental Performance Reports (DPR) of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada:

In the 2009-2010 PPR both the Aboriginal HDI and CWB are introduced as performance indicators for the Strategic Outcome: The People (see p. 6). Then, in the DPR from the same year the Aboriginal HDI is dropped (see p. 10, footnote a).

a) What made the CWB a better performance indicator than the HDI (or was this simply to eliminate any redundancy between the two indices)?

b) Am I correct in assuming that the "Aboriginal HDI" is a more recent version of the "Registered Indian HDI"?

In 2009-2010, the CWB became a key performance indicator used in the PPRs & DPRs. A variety of targets were proposed over the course of its use (and for a few years no targets were determined). For example, the 2009-2010 PPR target for "The People Strategic Outcome" is to "reduce the difference between the CWB scores of Aboriginal communities and those of the general Canadian population" (p. 6), but in the corresponding DPR (p. 10) the target is under review.

How are targets determined? Who is involved in the process (i.e. what types of expertise are drawn upon)? Where do these processes take place (i.e. do people meet to discuss, or is there discussion through some form of electronic communication platform)?

Of the various targets set using the CWB—1) reduce gap between Aboriginal and general Canadian populations 2) Increase the percentage of First Nation communities with positive change in rating in the CWB 3) positive change in indices—which produced the most useful results?

The 2010-2011 DPR (p. 22) states:
"As part of the Northern Strategy, AANDC moved forward a number of key initiatives to support the development of sustainable Northern communities and to improve the business climate while taking necessary steps to protect its fragile ecosystems and to provide Northerners with more control over their destinies."

a) How is sustainable defined?

b) Is the CWB an indicator of a community's sustainability?

By 2012-2013, the CWB is used only to assess the performance of Program Activities and seems to have dropped out as an indicator at the Strategic Outcomes level. Program Activities included: 2.2 Social Development (p. 39), and 3.3 Community Infrastructure (p. 51).

a) Are there different considerations that must be taken into account when assessing performance at different levels (i.e. Strategic Outcomes level vs. Program Activities)?

b) Has assessing performance at the level of Strategic Outcomes now stopped altogether (continuing without the CWB)? If so, what is the thinking behind this?

The 2012-2013 DPR (p. 49) lists the following challenges with using the CWB to support evidence-informed decisions: "the data is only available every five years; the four indicators of well-being pertain mainly to socioeconomic well-being; and the indicators used in the CWB do not fully capture the economic realities of some First Nation communities."

a) Are there any specific examples that can be given to demonstrate the final point: "the indicators used in the CWB do not fully capture the economic realities of some First Nation communities"?

To what extent did the change from the Census to the NHS add to the complexity of using the CWB as a performance indicator?

As programs shift—i.e. 3.3 Community Infrastructure of 2012-2013/2013-2014 become 3.4 Infrastructure and Capacity in the PPR 2014-2015—new sub-programs are incorporated. The CWB targets remain the same (for example, Index rating greater than 57—2006 baseline by March 31, 2016). Is the CWB affected by such program changes (or are there any anticipated effects)?

The 2014-2015 PPR (p. 59) states:
"Target [for Program 3.4 infrastructure and capacity] established by AANDC's Community Well-being Index group (Index rating of 57). Note that this indicator will be dropped by the 2015–2016 cycle because there is no evidence that the program has a direct impact on the Community Well-Being Index."

a) How do you assess whether a particular program has a direct impact on the CWB (without detecting impacts of other programs)? Are there specific examples of changes in the CWB that can be attributed to programming?

In the most recent (2015-2016 and 2016-2017) PPRs the CWB does not appear to be featured.

a) Is the move away from the CWB related to the previously listed challenges?

b) Will targets set for 2016 be abandoned?

How has the use of the CWB informed the process(es) of selecting/developing performance indicators?

Do you have any reflections that you could share about the overall trajectory in the CWB's use as a performance indicator?

Does the department ever get feedback from the general public regarding CWB results, or its applications in the PPRs or DPRs?

Additional points for clarification:

From 2010-2011 DPR (p.16)

Strategic Outcomes	**CWB Components**
The Government	Labour Force and Income
The People	Complete CWB Index and Education
The Land	Labour Force and Income
The Economy	Labour Force, Income and Housing
The North	Labour Force and Income
Office of the Federal Interlocutor	N/A

Given that Education is already a part of the CWB, why is it listed as an extra component here?

Where should I look to gain a better understanding of the relationship between funding and performance targets?

Appendix B

Canada's squalid secret: life on native reserves: Income, education, ...
Andersen, Erin
The Globe and Mail (1936-Current); Oct 12, 1998; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Globe and Mail
pg. A1

Canada's squalid secret: life on native reserves

Income, education, life expectancy worse than in 62 countries

ERIN ANDERSSEN
Parliamentary Bureau, Ottawa

Canada may top the United Nations list for the highest quality of life in the world, but a new government study shows what the ranking hides: Native Canadians living on reserves fall far down in the pack, ranking worse than countries such as Mexico and Thailand.

According to the study by the Department of Indian Affairs, the quality of life for on-reserve natives — about 380,000 people — is on a par with Brazil and countries considered to have only a medium level of human development.

For the more than 270,000 registered natives living off reserves, the quality of life is somewhat better. According to the UN ranking system, their living conditions are in line with Russia.

"This is not a surprise for us," said Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations. "We live this every day. People have to be cautious about using the fact that we're No. 1 that Canada is the best place in the world to live. It's tough to say that to a family living in abject poverty on a First Nation."

This is the first time Indian Affairs has applied native-specific statistics to the human-development index created by the UN to compare the world's countries. The index combines three factors: per capita income, education levels and life expectancy.

Canada has topped the list for the past six years. But among the 173 countries ranked in the 1994 UN report, the Indian Affairs study says off-reserve natives come in about 35th; on-reserve natives rank about 63rd.

Please see **NATIVES** *on page A4*

HOW CANADIAN NATIVES RANK ON THE UN'S HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

RANK Human Development Index ranking		LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (years) 1992	PER CAPITA INCOME 1991
1	Canada	77.2	19,320
:			
	Off-reserve natives	72.2	9,905
35	Trinidad and Tobago	70.9	8,380
:			
62	United Arab Emirates	70.8	17,000
	On-reserve natives	67.6	6,542
63	Brazil	65.8	5,240

Source: United Nations Human Development Report, Department of Indian Affairs — The Globe and Mail

Quality of life on reserves gets low ranking on UN list

NATIVES *from page A1*

Although disheartening, that is still relatively high on the world scale, well above nations with lower development. Ethiopia and Somalia, for example, appear at 161 and 165 on the list, respectively.

Broken down by province, the native scores fall fairly close together. But the study gives the lowest rating to on-reserve registered natives in Yukon and the Northwest Territories, where communities are typically more remote and costly to provide services for, and where residents often are less educated.

Reserves in British Columbia have the highest quality of life. For off-reserve natives, Ontario offers the highest living standard. The lowest rating goes to Saskatchewan, where the native population is booming and there are many young and single-parent families earning small incomes.

Although the federal government has increased funds for [redacted] programs by billions of dollars since the late 1980s and will spend about $6-billion in this fiscal year, Ottawa is often criticized for achieving few results.

However, the study did reveal concrete signs that although the gap still exists between non-native and native Canadians, life for aboriginal people in the country is improving slowly.

According to the 1996 statistics used by the study, native Canadians are living longer than they were in 1981, though still seven years less on average than their non-native counterparts. They are better educated, though still far below the Canadian standard.

And although the gap between natives and non-natives shrank between 1981 and 1991, they still earn less than half the national average.

Appendix C

Law & Property Symposium
April 29, 2016

8:30 a.m.	Coffee & Pastries
8:55 a.m.	Welcome
9:00 a.m.	**Panel 1**
	George Bragues – The Historical Ambiguity and Precariousness of Property Rights in Canada: Why Judicial Legislation is Needed to Rectify It
	Elizabeth Brubaker – Limiting Expropriation: What Can Canadian Provinces Learn from American States?
	Andrew Pickford - Property Rights and Australian Culture
10:45 a.m.	Break
11:00 a.m.	**Panel 2**
	Bruce Pardy – The Inevitability of Property
	Tom Flanagan – Treaty Land Entitlement and Urban Reserves in Saskatchewan
	Dwight Newman – Libertarian First Possession Theory and Indigenous Land Rights
1:00 p.m.	**Lunch (*Sunset Room, Novotel, 33 Nicholas Street*)**
	Ilya Somin – The Grasping Hand: "Kelo V. City of New London" and the Limits of Eminent Domain
2:30 p.m.	**Panel 3**
	Eran Kaplinsky and Stacey O'Malley – Private Rights on Public Lands: Compensation to Grazing Leaseholders for Disturbance by Oil and Gas Wells in Alberta
	Erik Kimbrough – The ecological determinants of property rights
3:45 p.m.	Closing comments
4:00 p.m.	Adjourn