Aboriginal Newspapers: Their Contribution to the Emergence of an Alternative Public Sphere in Canada

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the contribution of the regional Indian, Metis and Inuit newspapers to the development of an alternative political public sphere for Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It argues that although the development of the newspapers was an important aspect of the political and cultural development, these newspapers were, to use Habermas' terminology, "feudalized" by the political organizations that created them, the Canadian state that funded them and the marketplace that determines their fate today. Using Jurgen Habermas' concept of the public sphere, this thesis considers the contribution that these publications made to the process of public opinion at the regional and national levels in Canada. It concludes that the regional newspapers did contribute to the national Aboriginal public sphere, but that state policies and financial exigencies limited their contribution and prevented them from realizing their full potential in the lives of Aboriginal Canadians.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFN	Assembly of First Nations
AMMSA	Aboriginal Multimedia Society of Alberta
AMNSIS	Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan
ANCS	Alberta Native Communications Society
CYI	Council of Yukon Indians
DIAND	Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
DSOS	Department of Secretary of State
FSI/FSIN	Federation of Saskatchewan Indians/Indian Nations
INM	Indian News Media
JBCCS	James Bay Cree Communications Society
MSS	Metis Society of Saskatchewan
NACS	National Aboriginal Communications Society
NAN	Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
NCC	Native Council of Canada
NCP	Native Communications Program
NCS	Native Communications Society
NCSNS	Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia
NBBC	Native Brotherhood of British Columbia
NIB	National Indian Brotherhood
NNBAP	Northern Native Broadcast Access Program
SIFC	Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
UBCIC	Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs
UNN	United Native Nations
UNSI	Union of Nova Scotia Indians
UOI	Union of Ontario Indians
USI	Union of Saskatchewan Indians

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Toward a Critique of Histories of the Mass Media

As communications scholars interested in the history of media have observed:

> [P]ress histories are dominated by considerations of white, middle-class interests that tend to support the impression of a homogenous press, engaged in economic battles while ideologically united behind a specific notion of democracy. There has been little effort to correct this impression by recalling the cultural and political struggle in which numerous "alternative" publications and journalists expressed their commitment to different, if not oppositional, ideas about democracy (Hardt,1990: 350).

This observation is grounded in Hanno Hardt's research regarding the place (or lack of place) of newsworkers in journalism history; it is also true of Aboriginal journalism in Canada, which has been almost completely ignored by Canadian communications scholars. As Hardt points out, the general lack of interest in minority or alternative journalism is reflected in textbooks about media in society which provide:

> description and media statistics that lack historical grounding and, ultimately, result in the fragmentation of knowledge and the confusion of factual reporting with critical interpretation. These developments illustrate the continuing need for competing or oppositional interpretations of journalism history, based on gender or ethnicity (Hardt, 1990: 358).

In his study of freedom of expression in traditional Native American societies, Bruce E. Johansen suggests:

> we need to look at communication not only as an interdisciplinary field, but also as a multicultural one. It is a suggestion that seeks not to replace one tradition with another, but one which seeks to complement existing knowledge with new viewpoints and interpretations, so that we may gain a more complete understanding of historical forces at work during any given time, in any given place (Johansen, 1991: 67).

The Idea of the Public Sphere

Michael Schudson calls Jurgen Habermas' public sphere "the single most important model available for placing the media in a larger framework of modern world history" (Schudson, 1991: 184). Since Habermas' model of the public sphere provides the theoretical framework for this thesis, Chapter II presents a discussion of the published version of his postdoctoral dissertation Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1962 / 1989), a study of the rise and decline of bourgeois public spheres in England, France and Germany. It also refers to subsequent articles (1974; 1992) that continue his discussion and reflection on the public sphere. For Habermas, "A portion of the public sphere is constituted in every conversation in which private persons come together to form a public" (Habermas, 1989: 231). Thus, the existence of the public sphere is not an issue; rather, the

matters of the form, membership, institutions and characteristics of the public sphere are central issues.

In the Structural Transformation, Habermas described the development of sites at which the elite from the rising middle class (all white, propertied men) discussed ways that they could work together to influence the authorities to protect and enhance their business and social interests. An important determining factor in their interaction was that these men had enough in common that they were able to develop common positions, which Habermas referred to collectively as public opinion--legitimate positions that could be used to influence those who still exercised political, social and economic power.

Although Habermas' notion of the public sphere remains problematic, especially for feminists (see Fraser, 1993 and McLaughlin, 1993b for examples) and also for historians who find Habermas' account to be simplistic (see Landes, 1988 for example), his discussion is an example of a history of communication that "considers the relationship of the media to cultural, political, economic, or social history and addresses the question: how do changes in communication influence and how are they influenced by other aspects of social change?" (Schudson, 1991: 177). Like the macro-histories of Innis (1951; 1972) and McLuhan (1964), Habermas explored how communication media affect people; however, Habermas' approach to communication inquiry led him to focus on historically situated places and to ask "how media constitute and are constituted

by the self, the experience of time and space, the notion of the public, the concept and experience of politics and society, and the language through which people understand and experience any part of the world" (Schudson, 1991: 181). His intellectual heritage is clearly rooted in the work of the Frankfurt School; thus, his theoretical position and his approach to social science methodology reflect the positions of Adorno and Horkheimer, as well as incorporating aspects of "the pragmatist and hermeneutical heritage" (Holub, 1991: 30). Habermas saw theories as 'ordering schema' and believed that methodologically, the social science researcher had to understand their own position in relation to the object of their research to understand more completely the hermeneutical relationship involved in intuiting the presuppositions of knowledge that are rooted in, and used to inquire into, the objects of social science research.

Habermas' theoretical and methodological approaches as a social science researcher are explored in detail below and are reflected in the assessment of the history of the role of the Aboriginal print media in the emergence of an Aboriginal public sphere in Canada that follows.

Research Question

In a variety of disciplines, from history and political science to cultural and communication studies, the role and processes of public discourse are central issues. The public sphere, both as a theoretical model and as an historically

situated institution, is important to these discussions. According to Jurgen Habermas:

> If we are successful in gaining a [sic] historical understanding of the structures of this complex that... we subsume under the heading 'public sphere,' we can hope to attain thereby ...a systematic comprehension of our own society from the perspective of one of its central categories" (Habermas, 1989: 5).

Nancy Fraser (1993) and others also believe that the "idea of the public sphere is indispensable to critical social theory" and that it can provide "a category capable of theorizing the limits of actually existing democracy" (Fraser, 1993: 3). The value of the public sphere as a theoretical tool for evaluating the democratic operation of societies is suggested by the fact that:

> the idea of the public sphere has been vigorously examined in an impressive international body of literature, much of which seeks to situate Habermas' approach in the contemporary geopolitical context (Raboy, 1994: 304).

This literature includes studies of revolutionary France (Landes, 1988; Baker, 1992), seventeenth-century England (Zaret, 1992), colonial America (Schudson, 1992), the role of women in various public spheres (Ryan, 1992; Landes, 1988), the Black public sphere (Dawson, 1994), the European public sphere (Venturelli, 1993; Servaes, 1992) and the international public sphere (Hallin and Mancine, 1991). These examples of the operation of historically situated public spheres expand the model developed by Habermas and shed light on key issues, including the variety in the formation and operation of public spheres and the

relationships between public spheres. All of these studies bear witness to the versatility of the model of the public sphere and its capacity to aid in understanding the role of public discourse in democratic societies.

Although the model of the public sphere is used to evaluate the operation of democracy in a great variety of historical and contemporary settings, it is yet to be used as a theoretical tool for examining the discursive arenas in Aboriginal societies. This thesis performs such an examination. In order to provide an historical and cultural background for the discussion of the Indian, Metis and Inuit newspapers, this thesis presents a discussion of the operation and the decline of the "traditional" (a term which, in this context, denotes preliterate) Aboriginal public spheres. It then provides a brief history of the rise of modern (which, in this thesis, is taken to mean "mass mediated") Aboriginal public spheres including the early regional and national political organizations that started to take shape late in the 1800s, but which did not start to realize their full potential until the 1960s. As this thesis argues, economic and political conditions required the development of mass mediated public spheres, such as the Aboriginal newspapers. This thesis attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

- What factors affect the development of the Aboriginal newspapers as sites of discursive activity?

- What constitutes the historically situated characteristics of the newspapers as public spheres, that emerge when Aboriginal people themselves establish regional publications?
- What is the contribution of the newspapers produced by Indian, Metis and Inuit political organizations and communications societies to the development of a national Aboriginal public sphere?

These questions and others are answered through the development of an historical account of the emergence of the newspapers, and an analysis of that account that utilizes the concept of the public sphere to explore the role of the newspapers as public spheres. The contribution of the newpapers to the process of public opinion formation at the national level is also considered. This thesis focuses on the decisions of the emergent political organizations to use newspapers to provide their constituents with information and resources needed for deliberation, as well as providing sites where discussion and debate regarding issues of common concern take place. It provides a review of the various government programs that supported the Aboriginal newspapers and makes suggestions regarding the impact of government intervention on the operation of the newspapers as political public spheres.

Although this thesis argues that the intervention of the Canadian state had a negative impact on the capacity of the newspapers to contribute to the

politicization of the Aboriginal public sphere, it also explores the ways in which the newspapers were useful as arenas where Aboriginal people were able to discuss issues related to the activities of the state and to formulate public opinion to influence the policies of the Canadian government that affected Aboriginal people. As a normative ideal, the most important aspects of the public sphere are its accessibility and participatory parity within the discursive arenas (Fraser, 1993). However, historians and critics have argued that in actually existing democracies, social, economic, cultural and political conditions limit the realization of normative ideal of the public sphere. This thesis situates the Aboriginal public sphere in its historical context and provides an analysis that brings to light its unique characteristics.

Parameters of the Research Project

This thesis provides an account of the publications that were produced by Indian, Metis and Inuit organizations and societies in Canada. From the late 1800s, when Indian people were moved onto reserves and economic and political conditions restricted the movement of Aboriginal people, there was evidently little communication among Aboriginal communities at the regional or national levels. My research uncovered very limited use of the print media by Aboriginal people prior to the first World War, other than the surviving records, publications and correspondences of religious orders and federal government departments.

Although these religious and governmental communiqués are an interesting subject of study, time and resources restrict this study to the publications that were produced by Aboriginal peoples themselves. Nor does this thesis deal with the Aboriginal broadcast undertakings which have been the subject of other extensive studies (see Valaskakis, 1981; Roth, 1983 and 1994; Roth and Valaskakis, 1989 for the main examples).

Since I cannot read an Aboriginal language, I was not able to evaluate directly the Aboriginal language content of the various newspapers. However, this limitation did not prevent me from carrying out a detailed survey of each of the newspapers included in this study: Wawatay News [1974 - 1996], Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk [1972 - 1993] and Tusaayaksat [1983 - 1996] are bilingual with most content in their languages and English, the Native Voice [1946 - 1996], Native People/Windspeaker [1968 - 1983 / 1983 - 1996], Kainai News [1968 - 1991], New Breed [1969 - 1996], Micmac News [1965 - 1992], the Native Press [1971 - 1990] and Katou [1983 - 1996] were published almost completely in English, and the Saskatchewan Indian [1970 - 1996], Cree Ajemoon [1976 - 1986] and Yukon Indian News/Dan Sha [1972 - 1974 / 1974 - 1989] contained only occasional Native language editorials and advertising content.

Significance and Contribution

The role of the Aboriginal mass media in Canada has received limited attention from scholars and, as pointed out earlier, the attention it has received has been reserved almost entirely for northern broadcasting. The few articles that have attempted to chronicle the history of the Aboriginal print media (see Price, 1972; Raudsepp, 1986) have provided incomplete, even misleading, pictures. This thesis presents a more comprehensive and detailed account of the print media based on extensive library and archival research. It also introduces the use of a critical theoretical framework--the model of the public sphere developed by Jurgen Habermas and utilized by a variety of post-Habermasian scholars--as a critical tool for examining the contribution of Aboriginal print media to the development and operation of an alternative Aboriginal public sphere in Canada.

Subjectivity in the Research

A review of the literature on historical research raises the issue of the central interpretive role of the researcher:

> the empirical historial asks an open-ended question about past events and answers it with selected facts which are arranged in the form of an explanatory paradigm. These questions and answers are fitted to each other by a complex process of mutual adjustment (Fischer,1970: xv).

The researcher, of course, is responsible for the formulation of the question, the selection and arrangement of facts within the explanatory paradigm, and the decision-making about how the process of adjustment is carried out. Her biases, preconceived ideas, goals and agendas--none of which can be factored out of even the most scientifically designed research projects--have an impact upon the interpretation of the researcher. In order to disclose some of these biases and agendas, the subjectivity of the researcher insofar as it impacts on this thesis is presented below:

I am a Canadian citizen of English-Irish ancestry, female and in my mid-30s. My academic background includes an undergraduate degree in Philosophy (1983), a post-graduate certificate in Indian Communication Arts (1988) and an honours degree in Indian Studies (1994).

In 1986, having accepted a tutoring position at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), I also enrolled in the Indian Communication Arts (INCA) program, an introductory program targeted for Indian people interested in journalism and communications. After I completed the program two years later, I was employed on a contract basis with various Saskatchewan government departments (especially the Northern Affairs Secretariat) and on a freelance basis with Native publications like the Saskatchewan Indian and Windspeaker. In 1989, I was hired as a lecturer in the Indian Communication Arts program; in 1993, I became the program co-ordinator, and in 1994, became

an assistant professor. In the course of my work in the INCA program, I became involved with the National Aboriginal Communications Society (NACS), an organization created in 1986 to co-ordinate the lobbying and other efforts of the twenty-one regional Native Communications Societies funded under two Department of the Secretary of State (DSOS) programs: the Native Communications Program (NCP), which supported newspapers and trail radio from the early 1970s until 1990, and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) that was created in 1983 and still provides support to Aboriginal broadcasters today. I attended the NACS annual general meetings from 1990 until 1995 and gleaned from these meetings opportunities to assess the training and human resource needs of the Aboriginal print and broadcast organizations. I also collected information from these meetings that I incorporated into revisions of INCA program curricula. In the process of developing and delivering courses, e.g. "History of Indian/Native Media," I realized that the Aboriginal print media had received almost no attention from journalism historians; thus, I decided to devote this thesis research to this subject with the intention of gathering historical data and developing an account which can be viewed as an important element in the history of the democratic development and operation of Aboriginal institutions in Canada. In 1994, I was granted a two-year education leave to pursue graduate study and moved to Montreal to take courses in the communi-

cations programs at McGill and Concordia Universities. In 1995, I enrolled in the MA (Media Studies) program at Concordia University.

Research Methodology

An important consideration in the formulation of my research question was whether or not the operation of these newspapers as public spheres could be evaluated, and how their contribution to the development of an Aboriginal public sphere in Canada could be assessed. The answer proposed by this researcher was to use Jurgen Habermas' model of the public sphere. As the presentation and critique of Habermas' model of the public sphere illustrates, the public sphere never exists in its ideal form; however, certain characteristics of the public sphere are identifiable in actually existing democracies to greater and lesser degrees. Habermas' characterization of the normative, or ideal, public sphere is usable as a standard against which the Aboriginal public sphere is able to be judged.

Another consideration continues to be the methodological difficulty, if not impossibility, of evaluating the specific and unique impact of the print media on the development of the Aboriginal public sphere. Public spheres, as discursive arenas, are facilitated and sustained by a wide variety of communicative actions and media: meetings, social and cultural gatherings, libraries and research centres, universities, coffee shops, radio talk shows, television programs,

broadcast networks and newspapers are all sites of discourse that contribute to the constitution of a public sphere and are sites where the formation of public opinion takes place. Thus, the print media must be understood as one in a complex matrix of many institutions that facilitate public opinion formation. Although it is impossible to determine with quantitative exactness the impact of the mainstream media in helping Aboriginal people at the local and regional levels to become aware of and engage in discussion at a national level, it can be argued that the role of the mainstream media in the development of the Aboriginal public sphere is minimal due to its limited usefulness, in terms of providing relevant information or a discursive arena, for Aboriginal people (Demay, 1986). The unique contribution of the Aboriginal print media is surmisable but is not able to be established empirically. My goal is to document empirically grounded observations regarding the contribution of the publications to an Aboriginal public sphere, and situate those contributions within the wider complex of factors.

The most important contribution of my research is to relate the development of the individual newspapers to the larger historical movement toward the development of an Aboriginal public sphere in Canada. Although it is the nature of historical research that the data base is always incomplete (Smith, 1989: 317), my thesis provides an empirical study based on rigorous and systematic data gathering of documentary and interview evidence related to the Aboriginal print media movement in Canada in this century. From this empirical base, reliable

generalizations regarding the contribution of the print media to the development of the Aboriginal public sphere are postulated.

The historical research for this thesis was completed using documentary evidence in the form of the regional newspapers that have been published by Indian, Metis and Inuit political organizations and communications societies in Canada. My decision to focus on these particular newspapers was based on my need to select a manageable number of publications from among the hundreds of reserve-based, organization-based and special interest publications that have been produced for and by Aboriginal people since the mid-1800s in Canada. I was particularly interested in those newspapers that had a regional scope and discovered early in my research that the most influential of these newspapers were funded under the Native Communications Program, Department of the Secretary of State [1973 - 1990]. In the course of my research, it became clear that these papers were not simply the creations of a federal government program; rather, these papers had a history that could be traced back to the political movements that gained strength in the early part of this century. Thus, the decision was made to focus on the twelve newspapers that were funded under the NCP--to discover their political roots and their commercial viability, and more importantly, to assess their contribution as arenas of public discourse to the national Aboriginal public sphere in Canada.

Of critical importance to my reseach for this thesis was the availability of the newspapers. They were all available in the form of text and microform copies of the newspapers at the National Library of Canada.[1] The existence of the newspapers as well as their contents provide the physical evidence that contributed the basis of this history.

Since almost all of the selected publications were funded indirectly or directly by the federal government, the federal documents regarding policies and programs related to Aboriginal communication were reviewed. Prior to 1973, most of the support to the publications was provided indirectly--that is, as part of the financial packages that were being provided to the regional political organizations--and through ad hoc funding formulae from various government departments and agencies. In 1973, the Native Communications Program (NCP) was created, and funding was provided directly to the Native Communications Societies for the publication of newspapers and other communications projects. However, this funding was contingent on adherence to strict guidelines regarding what kind of organizations would be involved, as well as stipulating the nature of the relationships between those organizations and the Indian, Metis and Inuit political bodies, and the requirement that the organizations undertake to develop their commercial bases. Evaluations that were administered for the

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[1] Under the National Library Act, publishers are required to deposit two copies of each issue of a serial publication, and my preliminary review of the library holdings revealed that most of the newspapers that I needed were available at the National Library of Canada in Ottawa.

Secretary of State (DSOS), the department that was responsible for administering the NCP, as well as editorials in the newspapers themselves, provided insights into how federal policies affected the ability of the editors and publishers to develop and implement their own goals and agendas. These policies also directly affected their capacity to respond to the information needs, and to provide an accessible discursive arena where Aboriginal people could publicly deliberate issues of common concern.

Limitations of the Methodology

The information culled from government documents and from surveys carried out by the newspapers themselves was helpful for documenting the historical development of the newspapers. However, these methods did not allow a direct evaluation of the actual news information and opinion-editorial discussions that took place in the newspapers, since a content analysis or a discourse analysis was not performed. However, the methodology selected for this thesis was useful for determining in very broad terms who was participating directly in these discursive arenas-- by writing the articles, submitting letters to the editors, and contributing editorials and commentaries. This methodology, however, did not necessarily contribute to a good understanding of who was not participating. For example, in some traditional meetings, an individual could indicate that they did not support a proposal or a position by leaving the meeting

at which it was being discussed. To draw the parallel to the newspapers, one would have to be in a position to evaluate who was not engaging in the discussions in the pages of the papers as a statement of dissent. This points to the more general limitation of the method that it gives no indication how the newspapers were actually received and used. The only information on this subject was available through some very limited surveys, the "results" of which are referred to later in this thesis. Thus, many of the conclusions reached in this thesis were deduced by inference and remained only likely explanations of the phenomena being considered.

Review of the Literature and Documentary Sources

There is a vast body of literature related to the political, social, cultural and economic history of Aboriginal Canadians (selective references: Adams, 1989; Boldt, 1993; Cardinal, 1977; Dyck, 1991), but only a fraction of these articles, chapters and books address communication and communication history. The body of literature about the Aboriginal political organizations, while seldom referring specifically to the use of newspapers (Frideres, 1988 is the exception), provides accounts of the development of the political organizations that established most of the publications that are included in this thesis (Cardinal, 1991; Cuthand, 1991; Titley, 1984).

James Axtell (1987) identifies the first European description of the Indians' reaction to the printed word and explains the Indians' reverence for writing and literacy in relation to the oral cultures and shamanic religions of the people of the eastern woodlands. He reviews the strategies of missionaries that led to the translation of religious material into the languages of the Indians and Inuit, and the teaching of reading and writing. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis considers the impact of the shift from orality to literacy (Valaskakis, 1981), a shift described in Harold Innis' macro-historical model (1951; 1972) and developed and explained by many others (Beale, 1988; Crowley, 1981; Heyer, 1981; Carey, 1975b). Bruce E. Johansen (1991) reviews the operation of public opinion in Indian societies before contact and in the early period of contact with Europeans and evaluates "the ways in which native societies utilized freedom of expression to forge political consensus and preserve individual liberty" (Johansen, 1991: 48). Freedom of expression is also guaranteed by explicit discourse in a number of modern Native American constitutions, e.g., the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Muskogee tribes in the United States (Smith, 1991), and in the constitution of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation in Ontario (Kidd, 1990). This literature provides a link between the traditional political practices of Aboriginal peoples, and the concept of the public sphere.

There is a small selection of studies regarding the portrayal of Native people in non-Native newspapers. One surveys a large Canadian daily in the

early 1970s (Singer, 1991); another provides the results of a study of the portrayal of Native Canadians in the English-language Montreal Gazette in the period leading up to and during the "Oka Crisis" in the summer of 1990 (Grenier, 1994). Subsequently, a number of more specialized studies deal specifically with the portrayal of Native women (Green, 1976, 1988; Jaimes, 1993; Valaskakis, 1995) and with use of Native names and iconography in non-Native settings like mainstream sporting events (Jensen, 1994).

Studies of Native print media focusing on publications that are not addressed in my thesis include an organizational study of Toronto Native Times between 1968 and 1981, which focuses on the operating environment and organizational structure of that periodical, with the goal of providing information useful for policy makers (Riggins, 1983). An interesting study of the state supported indigenous print media in Siberia through the rise and fall of the Communist Party evaluates the success of these publications in spreading literacy, awakening the Native consciousness, and advancing Native culture and language (Yakimov and Morrison, 1995). In the United States, the work of James Emmett and Sharon Murphy (1981) surveys the history of American Indian Journalism from 1828 to 1978 and a related article provides a summary of the development of Native American newspapers since the Cherokee Phoenix was first published in 1828 (Murphy, 1983). Another very interesting study of the Native print media in America is a study of the Tundra Times newspaper

produced in Alaska starting in 1962, which situates this Native publication in the struggle to create "a unified front in the struggle for sovereignty" (Daley, 1986: 10). This study focuses on the role of Aboriginal newspapers in providing a site for public debate, and gives a positive evaluation of the Tundra Times in terms of achieving its goal of creating a region-wide Native opinion to counter the monopoly on public knowledge exercised by the mainstream newspapers (Daley, 1986).

In an article that incorporates a discussion of the epistemology and hermeneutics of Aboriginal people, Thomas Cooper presents the results of his very interesting ethnographic study that explores the "customs and ethical rules" of Canadian Shuswap communication, with the goal of searching for a communication ethic that reflects "both our common universal tendencies and our cultural differences" (Cooper, 1994: 327). This article expands the boundaries of critical studies and provides insights into the traditional Shuswap understanding of stories as "property" over which individuals and families own specific rights. It offers a unique perspective and a critique of the overall gaze of western journalists and communications scholars.

More closely related to my thesis project are a variety of articles that deal with media use and the historical development of the Native media in Canada. In 1972, J.A. Price published an article called "US and Canadian Indian Periodicals" which provides a survey and analysis of various publications. Although he

reports some interesting and important findings, his analysis of the Canadian scene is rather simplistic. A similar survey of publications was carried out by Enn Raudsepp and published in 1986. His research was limited to data provided by the Department of Indian Affairs and mail surveys. Based on 72 questionnaires mailed to publications, some of which "had only spurious claims to be 'Native' publications" (Raudsepp, 1986: 71), and only 37 of which were returned, he paints a rather dismal picture of the Native publishing scene in the early 1980s. This picture, I would argue, is based on insufficient information to make his sweeping claims about the state of Native print media.

In Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective, editor Stephen Riggins includes a chapter describing his own research project that uses discourse analysis to determine whether articles about environmental issues in Native papers reflect a Western or a Native understanding of humans' relation to the environment (Riggins, 1992c). This article, however, is subject to a serious critique for leaping "from data to theory with insufficient logic" (Alia, 1994: 245). It reflects an understanding of tradition that Alia calls "nostalgic" and of assimilation that is ethnocentric. For example, all survival-related activities, like employment in a Western economy, are treated as assimilationist strategies. Research such as Riggins' could have important implications for my project, suggesting that the existence of Native papers is not sufficient for the development of a public sphere, and that the ideology and discourse of the papers are as

important as their existence. However, Riggins' work is not sufficiently grounded to provide useful insights into the nature of the Aboriginal publications and their capacity to provide the facilitating conditions for a public sphere (Alia, 1994).

Joel Demay also assesses the role of mass communication in Native societies. His doctoral dissertation (1987) and related articles in which conclusions were developed from surveys regarding media use by Saskatchewan Indians (1983; 1991), provide interesting insights into the types of mass media that his treaty Indian respondents refer to for specific kinds of information. Demay's articles (1991; 1993) that review changes to the regional Native newspapers since their federal funding was discontinued in 1990 are revealing to the purposes of this thesis. His scholarship is consequently most closely related to my thesis and my goal is to extend what his historical and critical work begins.

Turning to the literature on the public sphere, prior to the English translation of The Structural Transformation: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1962/1989), the US. serial publication New German Critique included selections and summaries of Habermas' main arguments, including a 1974 article by Habermas "The public sphere: an encyclopedia article" (which was originally published in German in 1964). Peter Uwe Hohendahl, a German literary critic influenced by Habermas, in his work The Institution of Criticism (1982) summarized Habermas' position and elaborated on the "literary" aspects of his work.

Craig Calhoun (1992) points out that although the debates regarding the role of public discourse that inform his own democratic theory were greatly influenced by the various works of Jurgen Habermas, the discussions taking place in English did not include reference to "one of Habermas' most important and directly relevant early works," namely The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. Its translation into English in 1989 provided the occasion for a great deal of attention to be paid to the theoretical argument he initially developed from the examples of Britain, France and Germany from the seventeenth to the mid-twentieth centuries. Literally hundreds of commentaries, chapters and books have since critiqued, analysed, explored and extrapolated Habermas' work on the public sphere (see Dalhgren and Sparks,1991 and Calhoun, 1992 for recent examples), and Habermas has continued to contribute to the discussion regarding the postbourgeois public sphere in articles and book chapters (Habermas, 1992).

Organization of the Thesis

Chapter 2 presents a summary of Habermas' theory of the public sphere and a critique of his model including the introduction of Nancy Fraser's notion of alternative public spheres. It also provides a brief discussion of "traditional" Aboriginal public spheres and then uses that discussion and the Habermasian framework to develop an a priori model of a "modern" Aboriginal public sphere

that extrapolates the various aspects of the public sphere that are used in the rest of the thesis. Chapters 3 and 4 situate the Indian, Inuit and Metis newspapers in Canada in the wider political, social, economic and cultural milieu in which they developed. Issues that relate directly to the access to and participation of people in the publication of Aboriginal newspapers, such as language, literacy and education are also considered. Chapter 5 reviews the development of the newspapers that were turned over to Native Communications Societies and funded under the Native Communications Program between 1973 and 1990, and the decline of the Aboriginal public sphere after federal funding to the NCP was discontinued in 1990. Chapter 6 provides a summary and consolidation of the various arguments and analysis that are put forward in this thesis and provides reflections on the future contribution of the newspapers to the Aboriginal public sphere in Canada. [2]

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[2] Scholars dealing with Aboriginal issues inevitably encounter the problem of selecting from among the terms that have been used to identify the people and nations that are indigenous to Canada. In this thesis, I use the proper names of Aboriginal groups--such as Cree, Inuvialuit, Blood, and Micmac--when referring specifically to these groups. The term Indian is used to refer to the people that are considered to be Indian by the federal government and are included under the Indian Act. The term Metis refers to individuals and organizations like the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan, who identify themselves as Metis, and who are recognized by their own community. They are of mixed Indian and European ancestry. The expression Native refers to Indian, non-status Indian and Metis people collectively, following the expression Native Communications Society. The term Inuit refers to that group specifically unless they are being discussed collectively with Indian and Metis people, in which case the term Aboriginal is used. This follows the example of the National Aboriginal Communications Society that has member organizations that serve various Indian, Metis and Inuit groups.

Chapter II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Situating Habermas

Jurgen Habermas' Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society (1962 / 1989), and his subsequent discussions of the public sphere (1974; 1992), provide a useful theoretical framework for this discussion of the Aboriginal public sphere in Canada because he focuses attention on the role of historical sites of discursive activity in the democratization of societies. He sets out the principles that govern these sites and provides a normative standard by which concrete examples of public spheres from various historical and contemporary geopolitical contexts can be considered. Habermas then explores the formation of public opinion in these sites, and provides insights into the processes by which public opinion can become a force for influencing the state. Habermas also outlines the factors that can undermine the operation of a public sphere. Although his later writings provide more concise accounts (see Habermas, 1974), and even self-reflective work on the public sphere (see Habermas, 1992), the Structural Transformation is especially helpful because it uses the historical accounts of actually emerging democracies to develop the theoretical elements of the model. These historical accounts give concrete examples of public spheres in various stages of development (and

decline) and can be compared with the evolution of other historically situated public spheres, including the Aboriginal public sphere in Canada.

Habermas' theoretical approach to the concept of the public sphere reflects his intellectual and political experience. Intellectually, he was influenced by the Frankfurt School, especially the work of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. In The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, especially in his description of "the demise of authentic democratic discussion and . . . the role that the monopolized mass media play in keeping the general population uninformed and uncritical" (Holub, 1991: 80), Habermas extended the criticism of the mass media presented in Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1972).[3] Consequently, he sees a clear relationship between the shift in the role of the mass media from centres of rational-critical discursive activity to commercialized vehicles for advertising and public relations, and the decline of the liberal public sphere in the 19th century.

It has been suggested that Habermas was attracted to the notion of the public sphere because of its "potential as a foundation for a critique of society based on democratic principles" (Holub, 1991: 3):

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[3] Habermas' dissertation was rejected by Adorno and Horkheimer due in part to its "positive assessment of the European Enlightenment, particularly its insistence on the democratic potential of the Enlightenment" (Hohendahl: 1992: 99). He submitted it successfully to Wolfgang Abendroth at Marburg, and in later writing, acknowledged his debt to Abendroth even though he rejected his "Hegelian-Marxist style of thought, all wrapped up in notions of totality" (Habermas, 1992: 435).

> in all of its manifestations the principles of equality and accessibility are indispensable ingredients. In contrast to institutions that are controlled from without or determined by power relations, the public sphere promises democratic control and participation (Holub, 1991: 4).

Habermas' postdoctoral dissertation was prepared amidst the political context of the student movement in Germany in the 1960s. The Socialist German Students (SDS) organization had been expelled from the Social Democratic Party of German in 1959, and a movement called the" extra-parliamentary opposition" emerged and argued that progressive voices could not be heard within the official government structures and opposition had to take shape and locate itself outside of these structures (Holub, 1991: 79). Habermas used the Structural Transformation as an opportunity to point to the weakness and even dangers inherent in the political system of the Federal Republic and to the negative impact of monopolistic commercial mass media on the public sphere. His critique of the mass media provided inspiration to students who organized a campaign against one of the largest publishing houses in the Federal Republic. The Springer Publishing House, which produced a sensationalist newspaper that was the most widely read in the country, was characterized as having "the double function of excluding the public from real issue-oriented discussions and of mobilizing the public against those who, like the protesters, try to engender public debate" (Holub, 1991: 88).

Habermas was also active in the movement for educational reforms and supported students in their criticism of the elitist and oppressive university system which "threatened to prolong, rather than eliminate the social and educational inequities that existed in the Federal Republic" (Holub, 1991: 80). At a congress called "University and Democracy," Habermas condemned the role of the anti-intellectual press and the authoritarian political parties and outlined the role students could play in the extra-parliamentary opposition and the democratization of universities. He encouraged students to focus on the goal of "enlightenment through argumentation, not the provocation of violence" (Holub, 1991: 83) and warned the students about the dangers of anarchy and even "leftist Fascism."[4] Habermas continued to support the student movement, even during the 1968 occupation by students of the university at Frankfurt where he taught. He outlined the proper aims of the student movement in an article published in a liberal Frankfurt newspaper: "the immediate goal of the student protest is the politicization of the public sphere" (quoted in Holub, 1991: 87). The main arguments in the article, that "the liberal public sphere in which ideals were freely discussed had degenerated under the conditions of modern capitalism" and "the collapse of the public and private realms leads to deformations that are exploited by the mass media, advertising and parliamentary governance" (Holub,

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[4] This admonition was taken as a direct challenge by one of the leaders of the student movement who accused Habermas of suggesting a course of enlightenment without action.

1991: 87), were drawn from his dissertation, the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.

Habermas' idea of the public sphere had both practical and theoretical possibilities. He used it to think and talk about actual social movements--like the movement toward the politicization of the public sphere by German students--which is an approach that can be extended to other oppressed and marginalized groups, including the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. Just as Habermas encouraged students to carry out the project of repoliticizing the German public sphere, Aboriginal groups can use the model of the public sphere to develop arguments for changes to conditions that undermine their participation in emergent, ever-widening, political public spheres and for the increased protection of the democratic institutions that contribute to the operation of the Aboriginal public sphere.

Habermas' Liberal Model of the Bourgeois Public Sphere

The concept of the public sphere is often used as "a synonym for the processes of public opinion or for the news media themselves"; however, Habermas finds the public sphere to be most useful as an analytical category: "a conceptual device which, while pointing to a specific social phenomenon can also aid us in analysing and researching the phenomenon" (Dahlgren, 1991: 2). The phenomenon of the public sphere is described by Habermas as "a realm of

our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1974: 29). "Public opinion" refers to "the tasks of criticism and control which a public body of citizens informally--and, in periodic elections, formally as well--practices vis-à-vis the ruling structure organized in the form of a state" (Habermas, 1974: 29). It is explicitly distinguished from "mere opinions" including "cultural assumptions, normative attitudes, collective prejudices and values" in that "public opinion can by definition only come into existence when a reasoning public is presupposed" (Habermas, 1974: 30).

The model of the public sphere was developed with attention to a strict separation between the public and private realms of a society. The public sphere was part of the private realm constructed by private people gathered together to deliberate regarding issues of concern. Although the state authority was often also referred to as the public authority, the state was not properly a part of the public sphere. It became public only insofar as it was the executor of the will of the public, as it was developed and expressed through the political public sphere.

For Habermas, unrestricted access to the public sphere is a defining characteristic, and the role of the mass media is central:

> Citizens behave as a public body when they confer in an unrestricted fashion--that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions--about matters of general interest. In a large public body this kind of communication requires specific means for transmitting information and influencing those who

> receive it. Today newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the public sphere (Habermas, 1974: 29).

The Structural Transformation explores what Habermas considers to be the first examples of public spheres, the bourgeois public spheres that emerged with the rise of capitalism and the emergence of the bourgeois class in Britain, France and Germany. "It is no coincidence that these concepts of the public sphere and public opinion arose for the first time only in the eighteenth century. They acquire their specific meaning from a concrete historical situation" (Habermas, 1974: 30). As Nicholas Garnham notes, one of the strengths of Jurgen Habermas' articulation of the theory of the public sphere is that it stresses the "materiality" of public spheres as places where public opinion takes shape:

> [J]ust as the participatory democracy of the Athenian agora depended upon the material base of slavery, so it was the development of competitive market capitalism that provided the conditions, initially in eighteenth-century Britain, for the development of both the theory and practice of liberal democracy. It did so by making available to a new political class, the bourgeois, both the time and material resources to create a network of institutions within civil society, such as newspapers, learned and debating societies, publishing enterprises, libraries, universities and polytechnics and museums, within which a new political power, public opinion, could come into existence (Garnham, 1986: 40).

Habermas was later criticized for ignoring the role and function of other public spheres, which he referred to as nondominant, derivative variations that were "oriented ... to the intentions of the bourgeois public sphere" (Calhoun, 1992:

38).[5] However, Habermas found in the bourgeois public sphere a model which linked "a variety of actors, factors and contexts together in a cohesive theoretical framework" (Dahlgren, 1991: 2). The rise of the bourgeois class occurred concurrently with the disintegration of the institutions of the feudal authorities, including the church, princes and nobility, which had functioned as representatives of the people and the land for centuries. However, their "re-presentation" was derived from a pre-bourgeois social structure which was characterized as "the *medieval representative* public sphere" (Habermas, 1974: 31). The feudal lords were not deputies of the land and its citizens, but were figureheads that "re-presented" the land and demonstrated their power before the people rather than serving the people. At the end of the eighteenth century, this representation had broken down and the public and private elements of church and nobility were separated. Following the reformation, religion became a private matter for individuals; the legal, military and bureaucratic institutions of the state authority became independent of the princely court, and the nobility started to function as "organs of the public authority, parliament and legal institutions" (Habermas, 1974: 31).

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[5] In his later writing, Habermas points out that "Apart from introducing a greater internal differentiation of the bourgeois public, which by means of a more detail-oriented focus could also be accommodated within my model, a different picture emerges if from the very beginning one admits the coexistence of competing public spheres and takes account of the dynamics of those processes of communication that are excluded from the dominant public sphere" (Habermas, 1992: 425).

In the same period, the equation of the intimate family sphere of private life with the economy broke down, and private individuals found that "society had become a concern of public interest to the degree that the reproduction of life in the wake of the developing market economy had grown beyond the bounds of private domestic authority" (Habermas, 1974: 32). In this period of the early development of the bourgeois public sphere, members of the bourgeois society who had established corporations and territorial organizations began to operate with private autonomy separate from the state. However, the private individuals who held no elected office were excluded from public authority and found themselves in opposition to it. These bourgeois individuals deliberated regarding their collective positions relative to the state at salons and cafes, in voluntary societies and associations, and used newspapers and journals to debate issues of public concern. Habermas says:

> they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labour (Habermas, 1989: 27).

They used the force of public opinion to demand that government representatives protect the institutions that provided them with information that they needed to deliberate and make decisions regarding public issues. Habermas argues that the operation of democracy requires that information be available:

> Only when the exercise of political control is effectively subordinated to the democratic demand that information be

> accessible to the public does the political public sphere win an institutionalized influence over the government through the instrument of law-making bodies (Habermas, 1974: 29).

Along with access to information relating to the activity of the state, the bourgeois achieved concessions from the state that guaranteed citizens the right to express their interests to the state "via forms of legally guaranteed free speech, free press, and free assembly, and eventually though the parliamentary institutions of representative government" (Fraser, 1993: 4). These concessions, many of them codified with the creation of the various state constitutions, suggest that the public sphere is both "an institutional mechanism for 'rationaliz-ing' political domination by rendering states accountable to (some of) the citizenry" and "an ideal of unrestricted rational discussion of public matters . . . open and accessible to all" (Fraser, 1993: 4).

Habermas' dissertation focused on the fact that the bourgeois participants in the liberal public sphere were able to "bracket" their social differences in their deliberations and reach a consensus regarding the public good. Bracketing involved engaging in "a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether" (Habermas, 1989: 36). However, critics pointed out that in the bourgeois public sphere this was possible:

> not because the Public Sphere had escaped determination by the private interests that rule the civil society, but because the bourgeois who participated in this Public Sphere did so on the basis of a tacit prior acceptance of bourgeois class interests

> as coterminous with the public good and as not themselves open to the scrutiny of public rational argument that was supposed to rule within the Public Sphere (Garnham, 1986: 44).

Thus, their self-understanding did not reflect the reality, which many have pointed out since, that the bourgeois public sphere was highly exclusionary.

Tied in with the notion of bracketing, Habermas argued that "rational argument was the sole arbiter of any issue" (Calhoun, 1992: 13). Thus, the power of the better argument was central to the idea of public opinion, as opposed to the relative social power of the participants in the public sphere. And finally, Habermas suggested that in the bourgeois public sphere, topics which had once been considered the exclusive domain of the church or the state, and over which they monopolized interpretation, were discussed. Therefore, discussion in the public sphere "presupposed the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned" (Habermas, 1989: 36).

The structural transformation of the public sphere occurred when, from one side, private organizations began to take public power, and, from the other side, the state entered the private realm. The realm of private life (made up of family and economy) that had originally created "autonomous, relatively equal persons who, in public discourse, might address the general or public interest" (Calhoun, 1992: 21) grew in size with the movement to mass democracy, which broadened the membership within the public sphere, to include people with disparate interests rooted in class and other struggles. The development of

large corporations heightened the inequalities in the private realm. According to Habermas, the admission of nonbourgeois people into what was once an exclusive domain, and the formation of large private corporations, caused the public sphere to fragment into competing groups.

As the state intervened to mediate in the inevitable disputes, according to Habermas, the civil public sphere was diminished in size and effectiveness. He called this process the "refeudalization" of the public sphere:

> as private organizations began increasingly to assume public power on the one hand, while the state penetrated the private realm on the other . . . . The public sphere was necessarily transformed as the distinction between public and private realms blurred" (Calhoun, 1992: 21).

The increased involvement of the state in the affairs of society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the decline of the liberal public sphere that was premised on the differentiation of the state and the market economy, ended with the emergence of welfare state mass democracies in which "society and state became mutually intertwined; publicity in the sense of critical scrutiny of the state gave way to public relations, mass-mediated staged displays, and the manufacture and manipulation of public opinion" (Fraser, 1993: 5). The public spheres in Habermas' "welfare state mass democracies" are characterized by competition among various interest groups, "in which organizations representing diverse constituencies negotiate and compromise among themselves and with government officials, while excluding the public from the

proceedings" (Habermas, 1989). Although public opinion was still an issue, its form changed from "unrestricted public discussion" to something that was manipulated through things like "publicity," "public relations work" and "public opinion research." The mass media in this environment changed from their role as sites and facilitators of the exchange of public information and public debate to "technologies for managing consensus and promoting consumer culture" (Habermas, 1989).

Habermas argues that in mass welfare-state democracies, the consensus that was reached in the liberal public sphere is replaced by compromises between private interests, and private individuals are replaced by social organizations that interact with the state through political parties and public administrations. This structural transformation retains the vestiges of the bourgeois public sphere only insofar as the social organizations are influenced by internal public spheres and insofar as the debate between organizations, and between organizations and the state, are carried out publicly.

The commercialization of the public sphere by private interests was also an important factor in the decline of the liberal public sphere. In the Structural Transformation, he described the shift in the function of the public sphere through the example of the press:

> On the one hand, to the extent that the press became commercialized, the threshold between the circulation of a commodity and the exchange of communications among the

> members of the public was levelled: within the private domain the clear line separating the public sphere from the private became blurred. On the other hand, however, to the extent that only certain political guarantees could safeguard the continued independence of its institutions, the public sphere ceased altogether to be exclusively a part of the private domain" (Habermas, 1989: 181).

Thus, the press changed from being a forum for rational critical debate among private citizens assembled to form a public to a privately controlled institution that could be manipulated by publishers. According to Habermas:

> the press itself became manipulated to the extent that it became commercialized. Ever since the marketing of the editorial section became interdependent with that of the advertising section, the press . . . became an institution of certain participants in the public sphere in their capacity as private individuals; that is, it became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere (Habermas, 1989: 185).

The ramifications of this shift were suggested by the research of a variety of scholars. This research suggested, for example, that political debate was not the goal of the commercial press and even that the mainstream press prevented political activity insofar as it failed to provide "mobilizing information" that allowed citizens to engage in political activities that challenged state authority and capitalistic enterprise. The commercial press did not seek to create associations of citizens, as did the reform journals of the mid-1800s described by Tocqueville (and operational today in the newsletters of voluntary associations). Journalism today, according to critics, "seeks markets, not an association or a community" (Schudson, 1992: 153; see also Lemert, 1984). Had this invasion of commercial

media into the public sphere included a differentiation between advertising and editorial, the public sphere might have retained its function as a sphere for rational-critical debate of private people assembled as a public. However, in the same period that advertising by private commodity owners entered the public sphere, the competition between the economic and class interests that were reflected by political parties also entered the public arena in the form of opinion management:

> Opinion management is distinguished from advertising by the fact that it expressly lays claim to the public sphere as one that plays a role in the political realm. Private advertisements are always directed to other private people insofar as they are consumers; the addressee of public relations is "public opinion," or the private citizen as the public and not directly as consumers. The sender of the message hides his business intentions in the role of someone interested in the public welfare. The influencing of consumers borrows its connotations from the classic ideal of a public of private people putting their reason to use and exploits its legitimation for its own ends. The accepted functions of the public sphere are integrated into the competition of organized private interests (Habermas, 1989: 193).

The decline of the public sphere as a discursive arena for rational-critical debate, which provides all citizens the information they needed to deliberate, as well as open access to the debate, occurs under the variety of influences, and raises serious issues about the operation of democracy. In contemporary societies, access to the public sphere is restricted to those with the economic resources to pay for the attention of the masses, and who operate, not on the

basis of the public good, but of economic interest. However, as critics argue, "Some new form of public sphere is required to salvage that arena's critical function and to institutionalize democracy" (Fraser, 1993: 3). However, in the late twentieth century, the liberal model of the public sphere is no longer feasible; so the question is 'what kind of public sphere can operate in late capitalist societies?' Habermas did not answer this question in the Structural Transformation; however, in subsequent writing, he and various critics seize the challenge of theorizing about the nature of the public sphere in late capitalist societies.

Alternative Models of the Public Sphere

Nancy Fraser (1993) provides a detailed feminist critique of Habermas' idea of the liberal public sphere and then uses it as a point of departure for her own discussion, which extends the idea and provides "the fullest reconceptualization of its possibilities" (McLaughlin, 1993b: 601). Her goal is to theorize the limits of democracy in late capitalist societies, for which she finds Habermas' work on the public sphere "an indispensable resource," both theoretically and practically. Fraser understands Habermas' notion of the public sphere to be:

> a theatre in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it [is] a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. The public sphere in Habermas's (sic)

> sense is also conceptually distinct from the official economy; it is not an arena of market relations but rather one of discursive relations, a theatre for debating and deliberating rather than for buying and selling (Fraser, 1993: 2).

Her definition makes clear the important distinction between the state, the economy and civil society, which is "essential to democratic theory" (Fraser, 1993: 3).[6] However, she also finds that the liberal bourgeois model of the public sphere that Habermas constructs and uses in his analysis is in need of "critical interrogation and reconstruction if it is to yield a category capable of theorizing the limits of actually existing democracy" (Fraser, 1993: 3).

Habermas' description of the bourgeois public sphere is problematic, especially in light of the better researched, more detailed accounts of revisionist historians like Landes (1988) and Ryan (1992), to which Fraser refers as she attempts to develop a broader understanding of the historical period that Habermas says gave rise to the bourgeois public sphere. However, Habermas later explains that "to derive the ideal type of the bourgeois public sphere . . . requires that a social reality of great complexity be stylised to give prominence to its peculiar characteristics" (Habermas, 1992: 422). And a more sympathetic critic acknowledges that in fact "it is striking to see how securely and even imaginatively the argument is historically grounded, given the thinness of the literature available at the time" (Eley, 1992: 294).

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[6] The separation of the public space from the domination of the market and the state is also used as the basis for arguments for public service media (Garnham, 1990).

Fraser's critique (1992) raised a number of important theoretical questions about assumptions that underlie Habermas' conception of the bourgeois public sphere. From her critique of these underlying assumptions, she was able to identify corresponding elements that are used in her construction of a postbourgeois conception of the public sphere. Habermas characterized the public sphere as open and accessible to everyone, which Fraser identified as "one of the meanings of the norm of publicity" (Fraser, 1993: 9). However, although the bourgeois public sphere rested on "the rhetoric of publicity and accessibility," in fact, women were excluded from the bourgeois public sphere, as were plebeian men and all people of colour (Fraser, 1993: 10). Thus, we must recognize that the claim to publicity in the bourgeois public sphere is fallacious since it does not actually give access to all citizens, and therefore, violates the central principle of the idea public sphere.

Even when the formal restrictions to access were lifted, there remained important informal barriers to participation in public arenas. As Fraser argued, they "consist in culturally specific institutions [that] . . . may be understood as culturally specific rhetorical lenses that filter and alter the utterances they frame; they accommodated some expressive modes and not others" (Fraser, 1993: 17). Although Habermas referred to the practice of "bracketing inequalities of status" so that all participants in the public sphere were treated as equals and their words were judged on their merit and their arguments on their rationality,

"discursive interaction within the bourgeois public sphere was governed by protocols of style and decorum that were themselves correlates and markets of status inequality" (Fraser, 1993: 10). Although Habermas assumed that the liberal public sphere could accommodate "any and every cultural ethos," this observation is not borne out by critics like Pierre Bourdieu (1984) who theorized the phenomena he called "class habitus" in which the cultural styles of subordinate groups were typically marginalized and undervalued by members of the dominant class. These protocols served to reproduce the relationships of dominance and subordination in informal ways that restricted participatory parity. They also tended to mask the unequal relationships which, feminists noted, left the impression that deliberation was equal when in fact it was "infected" with subtle forms of control based on gender, class or ethnicity (Fraser, 1993: 11; Mansbridge, 1990: 127).

Another point Fraser raises in her critique of public spheres as spaces of "zero-degree culture" is that public spheres are also "arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities" (Fraser, 1993: 16). For Fraser, "participation means being able to speak 'in one's own voice,' thereby simultaneously constructing and expressing one's cultural identity through idiom and style" (Fraser, 1993: 16). However, in a multicultural public sphere, participants who can employ dominant forms of expression have an advantage while those who cannot, find that their input does not carry the same weight. The whole idea of

bracketing social and cultural differences reflects the political-theoretical orientation of liberalism, which suggests that a democratic form of political life can operate even where the underlying socio-economic and socio-sexual structures reveal the continuities of systemic inequalities; however, evidence and experience shows this to be problematic. For Fraser, the important theoretical task is "to render visible the ways in which societal inequality infects formally exclusive existing public spheres and taints discursive interactions within them" (Fraser, 1993: 13). Thus, in the model developed by Fraser and others, each public sphere is understood to provide a space where participants with similar cultural backgrounds can engage in discussions about issues and interests important to them, using their own discursive styles, and formulating their positions on issues that are then brought to the wider public sphere in which "members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity" (Fraser, 1993: 17). Important for the members that engage in discussion in more than one public sphere is some degree of "multicultural literacy" (Fraser, 1993: 18). Those whose education and experience provide them with the tools needed to communicate effectively within both the dominant public sphere and the alternative public spheres have an advantage when they are considered as representatives or spokespeople.

In addition to the problematic claims around with "bracketing," Fraser calls attention to the "political economy of the bourgeois public sphere" in which "the

media that constitute the material support for the circulation of views are privately owned and operated for profit . . . [and] subordinated social groups usually lack equal access to the material means of equal participation" (Fraser, 1993: 12). The combination of cultural and political economy factors seriously undermines the notion that bracketing social inequalities is sufficient to facilitate real participatory parity in a public sphere, and suggests for Fraser that some level of real social equality is a condition of participatory parity.

Equality is also an issue when Fraser discusses what she calls "interpublic" relations (as opposed to "intrapublic" relations that refers to discursive relations within a single public sphere). Although Habermas treats the bourgeois public sphere as the only public sphere, and considers the rise of other public spheres to be "symptomatic of fragmentation and decline" (Fraser, 1993: 13), critics challenge the validity of the normative assumption that "the institutional confinement of public life to a single, overarching public sphere is a positive and desirable state of affairs, whereas the proliferation of a multiplicity of publics represent a departure from, rather than an advance toward, democracy" (Fraser, 1993: 13). Clearly, Fraser sees things differently, suggesting that in stratified societies, in which "full parity of participation in public debate and deliberation is not within the reach of possibility" (Fraser, 1993: 13), the operation of multiple public spheres provides valuable opportunities for members of society who are subordinated or ignored in the mainstream public sphere to deliberate among

themselves. Fraser calls these alternative public spheres "subaltern counterpublics" and defines them as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses, so as to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser, 1993: 14). For example, the feminist subaltern counterpublic that emerges in the United States in the twentieth century relies on a wide variety of venues to disseminate information and facilitate discussion--including conferences, journals, lecture series, research centers and video distribution networks--all of which serve as sites from which to challenge assumptions and expand the range of issues that are discussed publicly. Since these counterpublics have the dual function of providing private spaces for "regroupment" and "training . . . for agitational activities directed toward wider publics" on the one hand, and disseminating their discourse into the wider public on the other, they represent opportunities for individuals and groups who are marginalized and subordinated within the mainstream public sphere to have their voices heard.

Habermas arrived at a position closer to Fraser in his later writing, in which he suggested that "The idea of the public sphere . . . could only be realized today, on an altered basis, as a rational reorganization of social and political power under the mutual control of rival organizations committed to the public sphere in their internal structure as well as in their relations with the state

and each other" (Habermas, 1974: 35). Kenneth Baynes (1994) also highlighted this idea of multiplicity inherent in the idea of the public sphere:

> the public sphere must be broadly conceived as a vast array of institutions in which a wide variety of practical discourses overlap. It ranges from the more or less informal movements and associations in civil society where solidarities are formed, through the various institutions of the public mass media, to the more formal institutions of parliamentary debate and legal argumentation. Although the idea of a practical discourse in which the entire citizenry participate as free and equal persons is not directly realized within any one of these forums, the total network of institutions should be designed in such a way that this ideal is appropriately mirrored in them (Baynes, 1994: 322).

Fraser also makes the case that a greater degree of participatory parity is possible through "contestation among a plurality of competing publics" (Fraser, 1993: 16). In this model, with a variety of public spheres, the interaction between the publics needs to be understood. One formulation of this interaction describes the public sphere as "the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place" (Eley, 1992), which reflects the understanding that the relationship between the various public spheres mirrors the relations of domination and subordination that prevail in stratified societies, and that they also reflect the "contestatory" nature of deliberation. From this understanding comes a call for:

> a critical political sociology of a form of public life in which multiple but unequal publics participate . . . theorizing the contestatory interaction of different publics and identifying the mechanisms that render some of them subordinate to others (Fraser, 1993: 18).

Fraser also challenges Habermas' idea that the public sphere is a discursive arena where only public, not private matters, could be debated. For Fraser and others, the restriction of the scope of matters that can properly be brought to the public sphere covertly undermines the operation of a public sphere as "an arena of collective self-determination" in which public matters, or matters of common concern, cannot be predetermined or determined by some form of gatekeeper who sits at the doorway of the public sphere. In fact, as the case of the American feminist public sphere shows, the members of a public sphere can introduce issues, like the issue of domestic violence raised by feminists, in their own public sphere and then succeed in disseminating information and using "sustained discursive contestation" for the purpose of "making it a common concern" (Fraser, 1993: 20). An important characteristic of democratic publicity is that issues of concern to specific groups can be introduced into the discursive arena of the wider public sphere. This introduction of issues occurs regardless of the relations of subordination and domination, insofar as the process disallows restrictions that limit debate on issues of importance to subordinated individuals and groups. For Fraser, the ideal of the public sphere in a postbourgeois society ultimately must not exclude issues or topics.

Finally, Fraser challenges Habermas' idea that the ideal of the democratic public sphere can only be realized with the total separation of civil society and the state, which restricts the intervention of governments in the economy. This

argument for classical liberalism and laissez-faire capitalism is countered by the observation that "laissez-faire capitalism does not foster socioeconomic equality and that some form of politically regulated economic reorganization and redistribution is needed to achieve that end" (Fraser, 1993: 23). Again, her argument rests on the position that some measure of social equality is necessary for participatory parity, and that this equality of access to information and to the public sphere itself can only be enhanced through the role of government in the regulation of the marketplace in which the information system operates.

For Fraser, the suggestion that there should be a strict separation of state and civil society also relegates public spheres to engaging in discourse that "does not eventuate in binding, sovereign decisions authorizing the use of state power" but to "critical commentary on authorized decision making that transpires elsewhere" (Fraser, 1993: 24). Thus, the norm of state-society separation that Habermas derives from his bourgeois model functions in the postbourgeois environment to legitimize only weak publics, "whose deliberative practices consist exclusively in opinion formation and does not also encompass decision making" (Fraser, 1993: 24). Habermas even goes so far as to suggest that if the discursive authority of non-governmental or associational organizations, for example, is expanded to decision making as well as opinion making, the public would become the state and the "critical discursive check" on the state would be lost. This conception is complicated by the existence of sovereign parliaments

which function as strong publics, "whose discourse encompasses both opinion formation and decision making" (Fraser, 1993: 24). The question of the relationships and the accountability of strong and weak publics needs to be considered and accounted for. Fraser suggests the development of self-managing institutions as a way of building numerous strong publics in which direct or quasi-direct democracy would operate, but points out that questions regarding representative democratic arrangements still exist. Although Fraser does not provide an answer, she does conclude that:

> any conception of the public sphere that requires a hard separation between (association) civil society and the state will be unable to imagine the forms of self-management, interpublic co-ordination, and political accountability that are essential to a democratic and egalitarian society (Fraser, 1993: 26).

The postbourgeois public sphere must allow for some public spheres that have the functions of opinion formation as well as authoritative decision making and should theorize the contours of relations between all forms of public spheres.

Traditional Aboriginal Public Spheres

Some scholars (Johansen, 1991) have made a case that the public spheres in Native societies in North America gave all citizens access to opportunities for debate regarding the activities of their societies, and provided for participatory parity and the level of social equality that Fraser (1993) argued was necessary if deliberation was to occur in the public sphere. In the small

hunter-gatherer societies, access to the decision-making forums was a function of participation in the daily affairs of the group. Participatory parity in decision-making forums reflected the reality that each individual had a role within the society that was equally valued and the understanding that the co-operation of every individual was vital to the survival of the community. In the larger and more complex societies of the eastern woodlands like that of the Cherokee, the commitment to providing each citizen access to the public sphere was indicated by the fact that "The Cherokees . . . usually split their villages when they became too large to permit each adult a voice in council" (Johansen, 1991: 58). This pattern was repeated, although for different reasons, in the fur trade era in at least one of the geographic areas under consideration in this thesis. In the territory of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) in Northern Ontario, when communities grew too large to support their population, they sent people out to start up satellite communities. The connections between these satellite communities and the reserves have continued to play a role in the regional systems of government and communications to this day (Kidd, 1990: 91).

Both the historic Huron and Iroquois polities were rooted in family structure and the leaders of the various clans used public opinion and consensus to shape decisions:

> governed in all Publick affairs of War and Peace by the Sachems of Old Men, whose Authority and Power is gained by and consists wholly in the opinions of the rest of the Nation in their Wisdom and Integrity . . . They never execute their

> Resolutions by Compulsion or Force Upon any of their People" (Colden 1747, xviii - xx quoted in Johansen, 1991: 54).

Unlike the public sphere of the Greek agora that relied on the institution of slavery (Garnham, 1986), and the bourgeois public sphere that included only propertied men, "The Iroquois and other native confederacies did not hold slaves . . . and they did not restrict political expression and participation to propertied white males" (Johansen, 1991: 59). In the often-cited example of the matriarchal Iroquois political system, the contribution of women to the operation of the public sphere began with their role in selecting and training children for leadership roles within the clans and as representatives in community deliberations. When the League of Iroquois was formed in 1540, it was the "clan mothers" who were responsible for appointing (and removing) the "Peace Chiefs" who represented them in deliberations regarding issues of the confederacy including war, peace and treaty-making (Johansen, 1991: 57). Thus, the relationship between strong and weak publics that was problematic, according to Fraser, was mitigated by institutionalized systems of accountability seated in the structure and organizational orientation that gave clans, communities and even individuals the sanctions to hold the councils accountable. It was observed that:

> The crucial practice that enabled the Iroquois confederacy to achieve consensus among formerly antagonistic nations . . . was the importance of public access and participation in decision. As the procedures of its Grand Council illustrate, public opinion is of great importance within the League of the

> Iroquois. Iroquois people can have a direct say in the formulation of government policy (Johansen, 1991: 56).

The women also nominated the leaders with whom the colonial representatives negotiated; however, "Since the male colonials did not see the women's power exercised, they often missed its importance" (Johansen, 1991: 59). This level of gender equality and access to the public sphere may not have occurred in all Aboriginal societies; however, accounts of the Iroquois and Huron, and also the Ojibwa societies (Castellano, 1989: 46) indicated that the traditional roles and political freedoms of the Aboriginal women surpassed that of most European women in the same period.

The requirement of participatory parity in Habermas' model of the public sphere relied on the practice of "bracketing" social differences, or interacting as if there were no inequality of social status. However, as Fraser pointed out, in a society in which "substantive social inequality" existed, this bracketing worked to the advantage of the dominant group and to the disadvantage of subordinates. For Fraser (1993), what was necessary was real social equality of the kind that scholars have found in traditional societies:

> Although societal status structures existed (that is, some persons occupied honoured positions such as chief, medicine man, or elder), there was no significant 'wealth hierarchy.' In most traditional Indian societies, leaders achieved status and influence, not by possession of wealth, but by the distribution of it. They shared generously because this was their obligation--the structure of beliefs, values, traditions, and customs required this behaviour. In the 'potlatch,' for instance, material possessions, songs, dances, and legends

> were shared once a year. The hosts in a potlatch enhanced their status and influence as they shared their wealth" (Boldt, 1993: 119)

Therefore, in these societies the impact of "systemic social inequalities" (which Nancy Fraser said must be eliminated as a condition for participatory parity in the public sphere) was actually relatively small. Another observation that indicated that the cultural values and practices of Aboriginal communities contributed to participatory parity was that:

> it [was] incompatible for any particular descriptions of men to monopolise honours and property, to the exclusion of the rest [and]... it [was] a part despicable [sic] and unworthy of one freeman to stoop to the will and caprice of another on account of his wealth and titles (Cameron, 1967: 37-38) (Johansen, 1991: 52).

Bracketing private interests was necessary, according to Habermas, for the deliberation to be carried out with the goal of furthering the common good of the participants. As one critic pointed out, this had been possible in the bourgeois public sphere, because the participants had relatively similar goals since they all came from the same social and economic class. Those from the plebeian class, women and racial minorities were not allowed to participate in the bourgeois public sphere, and thus, their needs were not taken into account. However, in the Aboriginal societies considered here, the access of all adults to the public sphere, either directly or through their selected and informed representatives, increased the chance that their individual interests would be represented in the decisions reached in the public sphere. In fact, those whose views were

clearly not represented in the decision were not bound by a decision to which they had not given their "conscious consent" (Trigger 1976, 1: 54, quoted in Johansen, 1991: 57), a factor that heightened the need for commitment to deliberation so that some social norms and political cohesion would be maintained in the community.

Fraser (1993) also challenged Habermas' position that the formal bracketing of status inequalities compensated for the more subtle discrimination that can take place because of the fact that each public sphere operates with its own set of communication protocols and styles. This inability of the practice of "bracketing" to provide participatory parity was overcome in representative democracies, to the degree to which participants were actually able to have access to and influence their representatives. The observation has been recorded that the kind of deliberation that Habermas envisioned in his normative ideal occurred in the Aboriginal public spheres:

> Indian "kings" . . . gather to debate issues very deliberately ... with all the integrity imaginable, never looking toward their own interest before the Publick Good. After every man has given his Opinion, that which has the most voices, or, in summing up, is found the most reasonable, they . . . put into execution" (Lefler 1967, 114, 204 - 205, 240, 257) (Johansen, 1991: 51).

The cases of Aboriginal communities surveyed briefly here suggest that the smaller a public sphere, the more easily access to the discursive arenas can be achieved by a group of participants. The values and institutions of oral

societies also seem to lend themselves to access to and participatory parity in the early public spheres. All of these factors also bear a relationship to the commitment to the process of deliberations in the public sphere, and may result in public opinion that truly reflects the various interests of the participants and the collective good for the community.

An A Priori Model of a Modern Aboriginal Public Sphere

Drawing from Habermas characterization of the liberal bourgeois public sphere, as well as the accounts of the discursive arenas in traditional Aboriginal societies, this section provides an a priori model (that is, a model that is developed prior to considering the empirical evidence) of the modern Aboriginal public sphere in Canada. The advantage of providing this model is that it sets out a theoretical framework that is tailored to the discussion that follows, and it provides an opportunity to explain the researcher's own perspective on the model of the public sphere that is used in the discussion.

First, the Aboriginal model of the public sphere cannot be understood to be a nondominant variant of the mainstream public sphere. Although it can be argued that it develops in close proximity to and with a great deal of influence from the mainstream society, the Aboriginal public sphere is a discrete public sphere that develops in a unique context, and is a product of a contestatory relationship with the Canadian public sphere. That is not to say that the

Aboriginal public sphere does not also operate in a Canadian context; only that its "Aboriginalness" rather than its "Canadianness" is its defining orientation. In this regard, this model follows the argument of Nancy Fraser that there are multiple public sphere (Fraser,1993). It sees the operation of Aboriginal public spheres, as both concrete sites like newspapers and processes of public opinion formation at the regional and national levels, as providing opportunities for people who are regularly subordinated and ignored in the mainstream public sphere. It allows them to deliberate together, develop their own counter discourses and interpret their own identities and experiences.

The Aboriginal public sphere is describable in a number of ways: as sites of discursive activity like political meetings and newspapers, as the processes of public opinion, and as a conceptual focussing on the analysis of the phenomenon of the public sphere. Aboriginal public spheres are frames to be understood as existing on a variety of levels: clan, community/reserve, provincial/territorial, regional, national and international. They are also constituted in some measure through the mainstream media. At the national level, the public sphere is a range of phenomena substantive in every discursive interaction in face-to-face situations and representation in the mass media, where the topics of discussion are of concern to Aboriginal people, and especially their relationship to the Canadian state.

The Aboriginal public sphere is the site where Indian, Metis, Non-status Indian and Inuit individuals and communities find the information and resources they need to deliberate regarding issues of concern to them. In keeping with Habermas' principle of publicity, it is accessible to all citizens and, ideally, it is where the views of participants are judged on their acceptability and "reasonability" to the Aboriginal community, rather than the social status of the individual making the argument or their position of the community. The reference to acceptability represents and acknowledges that although Aboriginal people are perfectly capable of constructing rational arguments, there are also other ways to communicate and argue for a position. Storytelling, art and music, and even silence, are important ways in which people make their positions known. In keeping with Fraser's assessment that an important aspect of a public sphere is its role as a place where people formulate and enact their social identities, an ideal Aboriginal public sphere accommocates these communicative styles.

Its raison d'être are understood to be cultural preservation, self-determination and integration with the wider society. These terms serve to focus of attention on the fact that public spheres accommodate non-mainstream discursive styles and non-traditional perspectives. They are sites where collective self-determination can take place. There should also be an awareness that in relationships between dominant and subordinate public spheres, access is often denied to less powerful constituencies, like women and children. In fact,

an ideal public sphere would promote the realization of social equality as the basis of ensuring that self-determination includes all community members. Finally, the Aboriginal public sphere engages in interpublic interaction in which the cultural values, political aspirations and social concerns of its participants are introduced into the larger public spheres where they can have an influence on the discussions that take place there.

As this thesis suggests, some "traditional" public spheres of Aboriginal peoples in Canada conformed to the principles of the public sphere set out by Habermas more closely than the bourgeois society that he used as an ideal type in the Structural Transformation. However, following contact with the Europeans and the many influences that started with that meeting, the Aboriginal public spheres went into decline. A discussion of this period is presented in the next chapter, which suggests that Aboriginal people were marginalized and disenfranchised through their lack of access to information, and the authoritarian control and manipulation of their discursive arenas by the Canadian state. Then, Chapter IV presents an account of the rise of Inuit, Indian, Metis newspapers by the regional political organizations that were being established throughout Canada. It suggests that the control of the traditional public spheres (which were constituted when people met physically) that occurred with legislation that isolated Indian people and restricted these meetings, was also exercised in relation to the mediated public spheres that were the newspapers. These

mediated public spheres were controlled and regulated by policies and objectives of the federal departments that administered their funding, and after 1990, by the commercial imperative. Throughout this discussion, this thesis raises the question of whether these policies were developed with the goal of providing support only to a non-political Aboriginal public sphere that was, to use Habermas' terminology, "feudalized" by private and public institutions.

Chapter III

SITUATING THE RISE OF THE ABORIGINAL PUBLIC SPHERE

Introduction

When the communication styles and protocols of various Aboriginal peoples prior to contact are considered using the theoretical model of the public sphere developed by Jurgen Habermas, it becomes evident that in these societies the communication practices and protocols contribute to wide access to political discussions. Both directly and through representatives, this exchange of discourse reflects participatory parity based on social equality within a variety of political forums. Within the camps and villages, communicative protocols provide for wide access to the public sphere, while social values have a grounding upon equality ensuring that social inequalities do not unduely influence deliberative processes. However, as this chapter illustrates, the ability of the various Aboriginal nations to maintain their communicative styles and protocols, including the public spheres that are constituted through these practices, are compromised by the introduction of new modes of communication, and political and economic dependencies after contact. The effect of legislation that isolates Indian people on reserves and then restricts travel and communication between reserves (Dyck, 1991; Goodwill, 1984; Miller, 1991), also makes direct and simple communication at the regional and national levels almost impossible. As one Eskimo [sic] scholar states, "We had better communications with Siberia and

Greenland before the Europeans came, with their high technology, than we have today" (quoted in Murphy, 1981: v). This chapter provides an account of the changes that occurred with the introduction of print technology, including the emergence of the elite group of educated Aboriginal people who assume roles as leaders and innovators through use of the new media of writing and printing. It also chronicles the rise of regional and national Aboriginal political organizations of which members of the educated Indian elite, in their agendas, provide the forums in which new kinds of public spheres take shape.

The Introduction of Print Among the Indians

The introduction of mediated communication in the Aboriginal sphere began with the introduction of phonetic and syllabic writing systems in North America. In some societies, these writing systems supplanted pictographic and mnemonic "writing" (representative symbols with associative meanings meant to be read) e.g., the winter counts of the Dakota people and the drawings on birch bark that were used by Ojibwa shamans of the Midewiwin medicine society (Gelb, 1963: 41). However, these "limited systems" bore little resemblance to the flexible phonetic writing system that was imported from Europe (or even to the syllabic writing systems that were developed for Aboriginal people), and less to the printed books that Europeans brought with them to the New World. One of the earliest descriptions of the Indians' reaction to the printed word was a

reference by the ethnographer Thomas Harriot, from the second voyage of the Roanoke (which landed in North Carolina in 1585):

> The Indians' reaction to his printed Bible was especially noteworthy. Although Harriot tried to tell them that "the booke materially & of it self was not of anie such vertue...but onely the doctrine therein contained," many of them were "glad to touch it, to embrace it, to kisse it, to hold it to their brests and heades, and stroke over all their bodie with it" (quoted in Axtell, 1987: 302).

The Recollects and Jesuits, who travelled to Canada in the early 1600s to work among the Huron and Algonquin people, took advantage of the Indians' respect for the mystery of the written word and the writer's mantle of spiritual power in their missionizing work. The reverence for writing and literacy was understandable within the context of the oral cultures and shamanic religions of Indian people in the Eastern woodlands:

> The ability to read and write was awe-inspiring to the Indians largely because it duplicated a spiritual feat that only the greatest shamans could perform, namely, that of reading the mind of a person at a distance and thereby, in an oral context, foretelling the future (Axtell, 1987: 305).

The association between literacy and religion, in the minds of Indian people, became a means used in the conversion of Indian people to Christianity. The Jesuits, according to Axtell, were more successful in their proselytising than the Recollects order or the Protestants, because the Jesuits exploited the Indians' respect for the printed word to argue insidiously for the superiority of the Catholic Christian religious traditions. For example, they contrasted the immutability of

the Christian tradition, due to its preservation in print, with the recitations aided by mnemonic straws of the Hurons. The Protestant missionaries, on the other hand, believed in "the priesthood of all believers and the need for each Christian to confront the scriptural message directly" (Axtell, 1987: 309) which led them to translate religious writing into Indian languages and teach Indian people to read and write. This strategy conformed to their "civilizing" mission, but demystified reading and writing and closed the gap between the literate clergy and their initially unlettered Christian flocks.

The earliest documented crossover from the Indian oral tradition to writing occurred in the seventeenth century when Jesuit missionaries collected and published portions of the oral traditions of the people of Georgian Bay in the Jesuit Relations (Petrone, 1990: 17). This was followed by the publication of various Indian stories in the accounts of Euro-Canadian traders, missionaries and government representatives. However, most interesting for the purpose of this thesis was the range of uses of writing and printing among Aboriginal people themselves. The oldest indigenous syllabic writing system developed by an Aboriginal person in North America was the one developed by the Cherokee silversmith Sequoyah (also known as George Guest) for his people in the territory that later became North Carolina (Gelb, 1963: 206).[7] Thousands of

[7] Although Sequoyah was not literate, he had examined printed books. His first attempt used a system of pictographic signs, each of which stood for a word in the Cherokee language; however, he soon gave up on the pictographic system in favour of a syllabic writing system that used the signs he found in English, Greek and Hebrew books. His first syllabic writing system, with about

Cherokees learned to read and write in Sequoyah's syllabic system and, in 1828, the Cherokee Phoenix newspaper, printed in Cherokee and English, was established. The Phoenix, which became "a focal point of the Cherokee nation," was supported by missionaries who believed that the use of the printed word would "civilize" and "uplift" the Cherokees. The Cherokee National Council was also aware of "the role which an accelerated educational program could play in its fight for survival":

> To counter non-Indian encroachment on their homelands, the Cherokee needed to learn to use the non-Indian weapons. Through the medium of a newspaper, the Cherokee National Council hoped to unify opinion in the Cherokee nation and to gain outside support for Cherokee rights to their homelands (Murphy, 1983: 25).

Therefore, the dual role of the newspaper, as a forum in which public opinion could be formulated and also as a vehicle to disseminate the position of the Aboriginal people into the dominant public sphere, corresponded to the range of roles outlined in Habermas' description about the use of newspapers by the bourgeois classes in England, France and Germany; Nancy Fraser's discussion of the role of alternative public spheres within capitalist societies also applied. However, as Fraser noted, in mediated public spheres, the media that provided the material support for the circulation of news also can be manipulated in a way that was not possible within preliterate discussions in which the individuals were given direct access to the public sphere through the medium of talk. This

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200 signs, was simplified to 86 signs by 1824.

manipulation became a factor in the publication of the Cherokee Phoenix when the editor came into conflict with the Cherokee political leadership, and the newspaper was suspended amidst the rising controversy surrounding the U.S. government's planned removal of the Cherokee from their ancestral homeland to "Indian territory" in Oklahoma. In 1838, sixteen thousand Cherokees were "herded" across the Mississippi River in the disastrous "Trail of Tears," along which as many as four thousand people died (Viola, 1990: 139). However, they brought their printing press with them and in 1843, another Cherokee national newspaper, the Cherokee Advocate, was created.[8]

In Upper Canada, the Six Nations people in the area of Grand River and the Bay of Quinte learned to read and write from teachers associated with the Anglican Church; while the Ojibway learned from Wesleyan Methodists. Between 1820 and 1850, several young Ojibway men were selected for training as Christian missionaries, teachers and interpreters, and became "the first literary coterie of Indians in Canada" (Petrone, 1990: 35). The parallels between this early Aboriginal literary group and the men who formed the literary public sphere described by Habermas, and their roles as precursors to the development of a political public sphere, would be an interesting case study to explore but is

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[8] Three of the other "five civilized tribes" of the American Southeast also published newspapers at various times, including the Choctaw Telegraph established in 1848, and the Chickasaw Intelligencer in 1854. These publications were suspended during the American Civil War and reactivated along with many new publications after 1875 (Murphy, 1983: 26).

outside the scope of this thesis. It is clear, however, that their written expression, in the form of journals, autobiographies, travelogues and sermons that were published in newspapers, missionary publications and books, encompassed the earliest writing by Aboriginal peoples themselves in Canada (Petrone, 1990: 36). In fact, one of these men, George Copway, became the first Canadian Indian to write a book, and in 1851, after travelling extensively on lecturing and fund-raising tours in Canada, the United States and Europe, he returned to the U.S. where he launched a weekly newspaper to generate support for his dream of an Indian homeland. Copway's American Indian survived for just three months (Petrone, 1990: 45).

Another young Ojibway boy from Upper Canada, Sowengisik, was sent on a tour of the United States with a group of children who were sponsored by the Methodist Church to perform Indian hymns and give addresses "in order to show their audiences the Indians' capabilities" (Petrone, 1990: 56). While in Philadelphia, Sowengisik was selected to receive financial support for his education by a gentleman called Henry Steinhauer. Sowengisik changed his name to Henry Bird Steinhauer and was educated at a seminary in New York and at Upper Canada Academy "where he was a first-class student and a proficient Greek and Hebrew scholar" (Petrone, 1990: 56). He became a teacher and taught at various mission schools until 1840 when he was sent to work with the Methodist minister James Evans, who had developed a Cree syllabary and was translating

large sections of the bible into Cree syllabics (Petrone, 1990: 56). James Evans' syllabic writing system was used in the first book printed in western Canada in 1841, with the type cast from the lead salvaged from tea boxes (Tawow, 1970: 28). Evans travelled for six years, as far as the Rocky Mountains, teaching Indians to use his syllabic system and his system was also adapted for the Eskimos of the Eastern Arctic (Tawow, 1970: 28). The Evans system of syllabic writing was also introduced in the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation in Northern Ontario (Kidd, 1990: 92) and is used in Wawatay News, which is one of the publications that is included in this thesis. Steinhauer was transferred to Alberta in the 1860s, and established a mission at White Fish Lake. Although the specific relationship between Henry Bird Steinhauer and the more contemporary Steinhauers who played leadership roles in the formation of the political and media organizations in Alberta that are included in this thesis (including Augustine Steinhauer who became the provincial leader of Alberta branch of the League of Indians of Western Canada in 1931, Eugene Steinhauer who created the Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS) in the late 1960s and became a member of the executive of the Indian Association of Alberta in the early 1970s, and Ralph Steinhauer who became the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta in 1974) is not clear, the connection of the family name lends some measure of support to the notion that literacy and education contributed to the development of an elite

group of individuals who have had prominent roles in the modern Aboriginal public spheres.

On the prairies, prior to the settling of Indian people on reserves and the establishment of schools for Indian children, few Indian people became proficient readers or writers. However, by the late 1880s, they began to utilize these new means of communication with the help of intermediaries. A striking example of this is Big Bear, a Cree leader who was eventually imprisoned for his role in the rebellion of 1885 in what was then the Northwest Territory (including portions of contemporary Saskatchewan). While he was in self-imposed exile in the vicinity of the far northern Missouri River, an exile that lasted four years during which he evaluated the impact of reserve life on other Indian bands, he was able to receive information about the bands that had taken treaty and been placed on reserves in Saskatchewan by having the Saskatchewan Herald read to him when copies could be obtained (Dempsey, 1984: 100). Confirming what Innis states in his observations about this dynamic, "Reading in contrast with writing implies a passive recognition of the power of writing" (Innis, 1951: 4). In 1882, Big Bear submitted a statement for publication in the Saskatchewan Herald, by which he responded to counter the bad press that he had received from the published comments of government officials (Dempsey, 1984: 108). The publication in a mainstream newspaper in Western Canada of a submission by an Indian person was extremely rare, but Big Bear's comment indicated that Indian leaders

perceived the importance of writing for the Euro-Canadians and saw the published word as a potential vehicle for their participation in discussions in the wider public sphere.

The Indians on the prairies and the Northwest coast continued to hold their traditional gatherings, including Sun Dances, Potlatches and Give Away ceremonies, at which traditional communications patterns and protocols, and relational ties were received and strengthened, until 1884 when these seasonal gatherings were banned; many of these practices continued in camera from the gaze of government officials and missionaries (Pettipas, 1994). Following the Riel Rebellion in 1885, the remaining Indian people who had signed treaties in the 1870s were rounded up and forced to select reserve lands according to the terms of their treaties. Menno Boldt (1993) made a compelling argument that placing Indians on reserves was equivalent to placing them in forced isolation:

> For more than one hundred years, the Indian Act segregated and isolated Indians geographically (by the reserve system), socially (by prejudice and discrimination), politically (by a colonial system of administration), and legally (by the constitution and the Indian Act) from the world external to their reserves (Boldt, 1993: 171).

Instead of allowing Indians to adapt to their new environment gradually and to integrate their communities into the wider Canadian social, political and economic environment, Indians were "incarcerated" on reserves and their enforced isolation prevented them from adapting their traditional cultures to serve as "effective designs for living and surviving in a changing world around

them" (Boldt, 1993:171). Clearly, the process that Aboriginal people were undergoing was removed from the dynamic of "cultural development" in the sense that Marc Raboy defined the term: "the process by which human beings acquire the individual and collective resources necessary to participate in public life (Raboy, 1994: 292).

The Introduction of Literacy Among the Inuit

The experience of the Indian people in Canada has a parallel in the Canadian Arctic, which Gail Valaskakis documented in her research regarding the Inuit of Baffin Island. For the Inuit, the earliest influences of contact were experienced in the context of the whaling industry. This encounter altered communication patterns about what information was communicated, what symbols were used, and who were considered to be the authority figures in the Inuit communities (Valaskakis, 1981). Many of the Inuit shamans, or angagok, became "whaling bosses" who were designated as the representatives of the whaling ship captains. Through this early contact, the values and social organization shifted as the whalers established hierarchies in which an elite class of Inuit exercised centralized authority. However, it was the missionaries who introduced syllabic writing systems who had the greatest influence on the communication patterns of the Inuit people of Baffin Island: "As Innis would suspect, the immediate impact of the new communication mode followed the pattern of earlier

interaction and authority transferred to European missionaries" (Valaskakis, 1981: 215). The acceptance of the authority of the written word undermined the authority of traditional oral forms of communication. The leadership of the angakok, which had been reinforced by the whalers because the angakok organized the Inuit to provide goods and services to the whalers, was challenged as the introduction of literacy transferred authority to individuals who could read and interpret the Bible (Valaskakis, 1981: 218). The arrival of missionaries and writing forced the traditional angakok out of their leadership roles and replaced them with "Christian bosses" (Valaskakis, 1981: 219). The introduction of writing and religion shifted communication patterns in Inuit communities away from discussions in which all Inuit could participate in making decisions about community issues to communication that centered around the churches. Access to these discussions was limited to those who had converted to Christianity. Those who could read and interpret the Bible assumed the dominant position in the discussions and participatory parity (referred to extensively in Fraser's 1993 article), which was so important to the operation of an ideal public sphere, was undermined. Further to this disruption, the wider Inuit public sphere that was maintained through travel and trade between camps in a previous time was affected by the shift to a settled lifestyle in centers that had trading posts. Although writing facilitated communication through the exchange of letters and other printed material, literacy in the Arctic was introduced by representatives of

a variety of Christian denominations, each of which introduced a different syllabic writing system. In the end, six writing systems emerged across the Arctic, which did not facilitate the traditional intergroup communications patterns among the Inuit across the Canadian Arctic, Alaska and Greenland (Valaskakis, 1981: 215). Ultimately, the socio-political shifts that accompanied whaling, literacy and Christianity gave rise to two classes of Inuit: those that maintained their traditional connection to the land, and those who preferred the lifestyle associated with the settlements and became more proficient in Euro-Canadian language and customs (Valaskakis, 1981: 220). However, complete acculturation of the Inuit people was limited by the fact that literacy in syllabic writing systems was not a skill that could be transferred to reading and writing in the English language.

Canadian Indian Policy

In the 1830s, the British colonial government initiated a system of isolated reserves, "conceived as a social laboratory, where the Indians could be prepared for coping with the European" (Tobias, 1991: 129). By the 1850s, the experiment was judged a failure and new efforts to lure the Indians from the reserves so they could be assimilated into European society were carried out. There was an emphasis on English language literacy as a means of "freeing" qualified individuals from their Indian status and leading to their assimilation into the

mainstream Canadian society, as witnessed by legislation like the Gradual Civilization Act that was passed by the colonial government in 1857:

> Indians who were judged to be literate, free of debt, and of good moral character would be entitled to become members of Euro-Canadian society. Indians were to be required to satisfy a set of ideals of citizenship which at that time only a small proportion of the existing colonial population would have met (Dyck, 1991: 51).

The fact that literacy was required for citizenship reflected more than the desire to have citizenry with the ability to read and make a personal identification mark on a legal document (which was as much as most European immigrants were required to do). Among the government officials, literacy was considered to be a sign of assimilation to Western values. However, between 1857 and 1920, only about 250 Indian people were enfranchised (Tobias, 1991: 137).

The Indian policy of the Canadian government had the goals of "protection, civilization, and assimilation" (Tobias, 1991: 127). Section 91(24) of the British North America Act of 1867 gave the federal government exclusive jurisdiction over "Indians and lands reserved for Indians," a continuation of the policy laid out in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 that protected Indian lands from encroachment by British colonials (Tobias, 1991: 128). In 1876, the Act to amend and consolidate the laws respecting Indians, also called the Indian Act, was passed. Its impact was felt by the eastern Indians more profoundly than the Indians living west of Lake Superior, especially after a new branch of the civil service called the Department of Indian Affairs was created in 1880. The Indian

policy developed by the Dominion of Canada was extended to the prairies with the treaty system.[9] Under the 1880 Indian Act, the superintendent general of Indian Affairs was given the power "to impose an elective system of band government wherever he thought a band ready for it" (Tobias, 1991: 133). This deprived the traditional leaders of recognition as spokespeople, and created a political structure that was no longer accountable to the public opinion of the citizens of the society. The imposition of this non-traditional system of government served to create a series of weak publics, as Nancy Fraser has referred to private associations with only opinion-making powers. In the relationship between these weak publics and the strong public that was made up of the

[9] The major treaties since 1850 include the Robinson Superior Treaty with the Ojibway of Lake Superior and the Robinson Huron Treaty with the Ojibway of Lake Huron in 1850; Douglas Treaties with the Native people of Vancouver Island between 1850 and 1854; Treaties 1 and 2 with the Chippewa and Cree in southern Manitoba and Southeast Saskatchewan in 1871; Treaty 3 with the Ojibway in Northwest Ontario and Southeast Manitoba in 1873; Treaty 4 with the Cree and Saulteaux of southern Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta in 1874; Treaty 5 with the Saulteaux and Swampy Cree of central and northern Manitoba in 1875; Treaty 6 with Plains and Woodland Cree of central Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1876; Treaty 7 with the Blackfeet and others in southern Alberta in 1877; Treaty 8 with Cree, Beaver and Chipewyan of northern Alberta, Northwest Saskatchewan, Northeast British Columbia and Southeast Mackenzie Valley in 1899; Treaty 9 with the Cree and Ojibway in northern Ontario and the James Bay in 1905-1906; Treaty 10 with the Slave, Dogrib, Loucheux, Hare and others in the Mackenzie Valley and Southeast Yukon in 1921; Chippewa Treaty and Mississauga Treaty with the people in eastern Ontario and south of Georgian Bay in 1923. In 1956 the last "adhesion" to a treaty was signed; in 1975 the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement with the Cree and Inuit of Quebec was signed; in 1978 the Northeastern Quebec Agreement with the Naskapi of Schefferville was signed; and in 1984, the Inuvialuit Final Agreement with the Inuit of Western Arctic, NWT was signed (Meadows and Brown, 1995: Appendix 1).

parliamentary government of Canada, there was no mechanism for ensuring accountability of the strong public to the weak, so the decision-making powers of the Canadian government were carried out without any regard for the wishes of the members of the Indian communities who were directly affected.

In 1884, legislation called An Act for conferring certain privileges on the more advanced bands of Indians of Canada with the view of training them for exercise [sic] of Municipal Affairs, also called the Indian Advancement Act, expanded the powers of the Indian Act-empowered band councils. It created a hierarchically organized administrative structure which systematically destroyed traditional practices that effectively guaranteed accountability to the community:

> Traditionally, Indian societies had emphasised the precepts of equality, accountability of leaders to the people, a participatory-consensual form of decision making, and the integration of spiritual and governing elements. But the imposed elective system of government and the hierarchical administrative structure gave rise to an indigenous/elite social class; it redirected accountability of Indian leaders to the DIAND; the people were pushed to the periphery of decision making; and the spiritual dimension was replaced by a legalistic approach in the governing function (Boldt, 1993: 169).

In Habermasian terms, this shift corresponded to a shift away from the ideals of democracy that are associated with the Enlightenment tradition, in which forms of communication contributed to deliberation rather than procedural democracy (Habermas, 1992, 1989, and Venturelli, 1993: 494).

The 1884 Indian Act amendments also authorized the removal of Indian children from their families and their placement in boarding and industrial schools, where the pressure to adopt the technology of literacy and abandon the oral tradition and traditional practices was great (Tobias, 1991: 136). As children learned to read and write, they lost touch with the time-bound oral tradition practised by their parents and elders:

> In the 1930s the older generations came into conflict with the new generation who had been to school. Family-arranged marriages were opposed by the youths, and they often ran away to be married elsewhere. The younger generation refused to accept the traditional role of submitting to the wishes of their fathers and tended to question such traditional customs as giving away horses to visitors. The more educated Indians scoffed at Indian rituals and refused to participate (Cuthand, 1991: 389).

Increasing numbers of children were learning to read and write, rather than learning the skills of listening and remembering associated with oral cultures, which distanced them from the older people in Indian societies, who were still rooted in the oral tradition:

> in spite of opposition for the Indian Affairs policies, the elders continued to renew themselves at the sweat lodges and feasts. They restored relationships and kinship ties at sun dances. When sun dances were completely suppressed by the government, Indians met at exhibitions and fairs to meet each other and renew friendships and strengthen kinship (Cuthand, 1991: 389).

Throughout this period, there was emerging a clear distinction between the Indian people who were becoming literate in English and who were relying more

and more on literate forms of communication and the older people in the communities who continued to renew relationships and exchange information at traditional gatherings. The traditional leaders of the Indian communities were being supplanted by younger, literate and educated leaders, and it was these leaders who started to form a new elite class of Indian men (and very few women), who eventually became the political leaders of the emerging political organizations, and the editors and publishers of Aboriginal newspapers.

The Grand General Indian Council and The Indian

In 1840, Methodist missionaries helped the Ojibway in Ontario establish the General Council of the Ojibway Nations of Indians (which became the General Council of Indian Chiefs in 1846). Another Indian political organization created in the new Dominion of Canada was the Grand General Indian Council of Ontario and Quebec, which was formed with Iroquois and Ojibway membership in 1870 to address the issue of the Canadian government's implementation of Indian policy (Frideres, 1988: 265).[10] The Grand General Council was the publisher of The Indian from December 1885 to December 1886. It was

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[10] James S. Frideres explains that the demise of this organization was due to competition from the League of Indians of Canada which , he says, was established in the late nineteenth century. This account does not correspond to the accounts of John Tootoosis (Sluman and Goodwill, 1984), Stan Cuthand (1991) or Harold Cardinal (1991). This discrepancy and others in his book led me to rely on Frideres as little as possible and to verify information from his books with other sources.

published fortnightly under the editorship of Head Chief Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by (Dr. P. E. Jones), and was one of a number of publications produced between 1850 and 1914:

> As more and more Indians learned to read and write, newspapers, newsletters, and periodicals of all sorts appeared to inform, instruct, and entertain their native and non-native readers. These were frequently initiated and sponsored by local missionaries and Indian interest groups who recognized the power of the written word and the educational usefulness of print (Petrone, 1990: 84).

The first edition of The Indian outlined the goals of the publication:

> We are well aware that the white population has the advantage over us of many centuries in the march of progress and civilization. We appreciate the example set by them to us in their many proper habits and customs. The principal changes they have introduced are Christian Religion, Agriculture and Industry. These, then, will be strongly advocated and urged by THE INDIAN (The Indian, Wednesday, December 30, 1885, 1 (1): 1)

Although it claimed to be non-sectarian, reflecting the fact that in 1882 the Council had expanded to include non-Christian membership, a strong Christian bias is evident in its editorial content:

> we acknowledge that all christian [sic] denominations have had our future and present welfare deeply at heart, and that it is through the teaching of their missionaries that we are now able to worship the "Great Spirit," not directly as before, but through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (The Indian, 1 (1): 1)

The first issue outlined the intention of the publishers to provide readers with news from all of the "principle Reserves in North America and especially

Canada": "For this purpose we will endeavour to get educated Indians throughout the country to send us letters, telling us what is going on in their neighbourhood" (The Indian, December 30, 1885, 1 (1): 1). Thus, as a public sphere, The Indian gave a clearly acknowledged forum for access and participation targeted to those educated Indians in each region who were literate in English and, indeed, who were able to read and correspond with the newspaper.[11] As a public sphere, The Indian, as many newspapers that followed it, made formal statements and provided for access by Indian people for reflection and response. However, it was a written document that reflected high literary and journalistic standards which made it inaccessible to most Indian people. Further, the question can be raised of whether all the Indian people who had access to it were inclined to engage in a discussion that was monitored by readers outside the direct dialogue and which usually reflected Christian values and the prevailing European perspective of the day on the most proper course of political and social developments for Indian people. Only twenty-four issues of The Indian were published before it was discontinued at the end of 1886.[12] The Council

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[11] The Indian also provided legal explanations of the "full and true meaning of the laws of this country in regard to Indians," profiles of Indian leaders including Chief Joseph Brant and the Metis leader Louis Riel (who had been recently executed), news from around the world and excerpts from James Fenimore Coopers' novel Last of the Mohicans.

[12] The only hint as to why it was discontinued was found in one of the last editions: "The advertising department has been neglected owing to all our efforts being put forth to create a large subscription list and circulation . . . . THE INDIAN is a first class medium for advertisers, being widely circulated having 15,000 readers [sic]" (The Indian, December 15, 1885, 1 (22): 244).

continued to operate until 1938 when it was dismantled; however, it did provide the foundation for the Union of Ontario Indians that was created in 1946 (Frideres, 1988: 265).

Although traditional societies relied upon face-to-face communication and direct democracy, mediated forms of communication have brought with them new ways of engaging as citizens in political deliberations. This passage from a traditional era of communication to a mediated one was one of the "markers of modernity" (Raboy, 1994:303; see also Innis, 1972; Williams, 1973; Eisenstein, 1979): The early context of Native newspapers was vastly different from that of the development of newspapers in the West (Skogerbod, 1990). Whereas societies in the West evolved and adapted print technology over the last five hundred years (Illich and Sanders, 1988), Aboriginal people in Canada have utilized print technology for only one hundred years. Further, its specific introduction in Indian and Inuit communities was controlled by religious orders and denominations and by government authorities, and the use of print technology by Aboriginal peoples for their own, autonomous purposes did not occur until about fifty years ago. However, even with the relatively recent use of print technology by Aboriginal people, the technology was not neutral since the "cultural meaning of printedness" determined its intelligibility for the individuals who engaged in reading and writing: "The assumptions that make printed works intelligible as publications also help determine how the political arena operates. They are the basis for

deciding who speaks, to whom, with what constraints, and with what legitimacy" (Warner, 1993: 9).

Post World War I Attempts to Create a National Public Sphere

The national Aboriginal organizations that have emerged in the last half of the twentieth century have their historical roots in the regional alliances and confederacies that developed in the early period of contact with Europeans. One of the best known is the League of Iroquois, which played an important role during the height of the fur trade, but went into decline after the American Revolution. In the late 1700s, the Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant attempted to establish another confederacy and in the early 1800s, the Shawnee leader Tecumseh tried to create a united Indian confederacy in the Northwest in order to stop the European expansion into the region (Jennings, 1984; Richter, 1992; Snow, 1996; White, 1991). Both attempts ended in failure, as did the later resistance efforts of Indian leaders in the Western Canada including Crowfoot, Piapot, Peguis and Big Bear in the 1800s (Frideres, 1988: 263).

Arguably, the next opportunity for exchange and networking did not arrive until the advent of the First World War, when between 3,500 and 4,000 Indian people enlisted in the armed services (Titley, 1984: 53). These Native warriors were exposed to a wide range of new experiences in their military service in Canada and overseas and returned to become leaders in the movement of

Aboriginal people seeking an audible voice within the public sphere of the wider Canadian democracy:

> Following the First World War, new social and political trends began to appear in Canadian society. The Indian people of Western Canada shared in the new political protest movements of the 1920s. The Indians' insight into what was happening and the leaders of their movement for self-determination came from native volunteers who had been in the armed forces (Cuthand, 1991: 381).

Their experience changed their way of thinking and especially how they saw themselves in the context of the Canadian society:

> when Indian soldiers who had fought beside other Canadians returned to the reserves, they did not find it easy to resume the segregated and disadvantaged life they had known before the war. They were no longer so mute and passive (Petrone, 1990: 99).

Encouraged also by their awareness of the success of labour unions and organizations of farmers (Loft, 1919 quoted in Petrone, 1990: 100), the returning veterans set out to organize an effective, collective voice that could agitate for reforms for their communities and for the democratization of the relationship between Canada and her Native people (Cuthand, 1991; Titley 1984; Sluman and Goodwill, 1984):

> Grievances which affected most Indians included the gradual alienation of reserve lands, restrictions on traditional hunting and fishing rights, the suppression of native customs, the debilitating effects of boarding school education, the inadequacy of health services, lack of economic opportunities, and the paternalistic overlordship of Indian Affairs. An organization of Indians that transcended tribal boundaries

> was deemed essential to combat this interrelated collage of injustices" (Titley, 1984: 54).

As alluded to earlier, there was a parallel between the bourgeois class of men characterized in Habermas' discussion in Structural Transformation and the new class of Aboriginal people who became leaders in Indian communities after World War I. These emergent leaders were, by virtue of education, experience and inclination, distinct from many of the members of their community because of their experience outside reserves. They had, in the terminology of Nancy Fraser, "multicultural literacy." From their education in residential and mainstream schools, they learned the tools of English literacy; from their experiences as veterans, they had gained perspectives about the mainstream society and some understanding of its institutions and values. Their role as veterans also contributed to their acceptance as community leaders in their own Aboriginal communities, since veterans, or warriors, continue to be revered and celebrated in many Aboriginal communities because of this important traditional role which sorted out authentic leaders in pre-reserve times (Davison, 1992; Dempsey, 1987; Gaffen, 1985; Summerby, 1993; also see discussions in Opikokew 1980: 33-36).[13]

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[13] This observation is also supported by personal experience as a spectator at Indian powwows across Canada, at which veterans of all nations are included in the honour guard that carries the various flags and the Indian eagle staff into the powwow arena, and are addressed in "honour songs" throughout the events.

One veteran, who played an important role in the post-World War I effort to create a national Native organization, exemplified this new class of Indian leader. Frederick Ogilvie Loft (1862 - 1935) was born on the Tuscarora Reserve near Brantford, Ontario. He attended high school and business college, and in 1885, he became a reporter at the Brantford Expositor. He campaigned on behalf of a Liberal candidate, who won a federal seat in the first election in which the Indians of the Six Nations were able to exercise their newly won franchise (Petrone, 1990: 99). He took a position as an accountant-clerk at the Ontario Hospital, but continued to use newspapers to advocate for various causes, including the creation of an Indian battalion of the Canadian Forestry Corps which he led overseas in 1917. While he was in England, he was granted a private audience with King George V (Petrone, 1990: 100), and an audience with the Privy Council, the members of which advised him that there was little he could do as an individual to effect change in government policies toward Indians. He was told that he should "work toward organizing a sizeable body of Indians right across the country and then he could legitimately appear on their behalf as a spokesman" (Goodwill and Sluman, 1984: 129). This advice considered in light of Habermas' model of the public sphere (1974, 1989) referred explicitly to the need for Loft and his contemporaries to form a public prior to informing them and then representing them. This meant that Loft had to bring citizens together in a public space, and provide them with the resources they would need for a

reasoned discussion of the central issues facing them. Loft would then be legitimately able to claim to be representing the public opinion of Aboriginal people in his meetings with representatives of the Canadian state.

Loft accepted the responsibility for the creation of such an Aboriginal public which was a key element in the struggle of Native people to have their voices heard by the dominant larger public and the government of Canada. Judging his actions over the next decades, Loft sought to focus upon an agenda of issues of national scope, and to be able to address such issues, he had to involve participants and their representatives from all regions of Canada. When he returned to Canada, he organized a meeting that was held on December 20, 1918 at the Six Nations reserve, at which the League of Indians of Canada was formed and Loft was elected as president. In order to expand the membership of the organization, Lieutenant Loft began corresponding with the Chiefs, bands and educated Indians from reserves across Canada to tell them about the League and its aims:

> ...the first aim of the League was to claim and to protect the rights of all Indians in Canada by legitimate and just means; second, absolute control in retaining possession or disposition of Indian land; third, that questions and matters relative to individual and national well-being of Indians should rest with the people; and fourth, that they should be consulted and their wishes respected in their dealings with the government (Goodwill and Sluman, 1984: 129).

When Loft received few responses, he wrote to Indian agents to request the names of local leaders who could read and write English (Cuthand, 1991: 382).

The agents, however, were instructed by Ottawa not to provide him with the names he requested (Titley, 1984: 56). Lack of co-operation from the Indian Affairs Department was only one of many obstacles faced by Loft and the League members:

> The transportation system of their day made it almost impossible for them to gather people from across the country. No matter where a meeting was held in this vast land, days of travel by horse and wagon were required of some of the delegates. Poor communication made it extremely difficult even to get word to all areas about a proposed meeting . . . . But perhaps the most difficult task was simply that of convincing the ordinary Indian that such an organization was worth the bother. Such social structures were alien to the Indian way. The older Indians, often those with influence in their communities, saw such organizations as a waste of time. The majority were illiterate and could not be convinced with printed material (Cardinal, 1991: 395).

The organizational difficulties that Loft encountered as he attempted to communicate with and organize Indian leaders across Canada were compounded by the extraordinary social control, dating back to the Riel Rebellion in Saskatchewan, that Indian agents had over the mobility of the Indian people within their jurisdiction:

> . . . in 1885 department regulations instituted a 'pass system' designed to control movement. In western Canada, Indians who wished to travel off their reserve were expected to obtain a pass signed by the agent. The pass system was designed to inhibit the movements of Indian diplomats, to discourage parental visits to residential schools, and to provide the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) and Indian agents with the authority to stop Plains Indians from participating in ceremonies such as the Sun Dance or the Thirst Dance on distant reserves (Miller, 1991: 326).

Clearly, the conditions during the early attempts to establish a national Aboriginal public sphere in Canada did not meet the requirement set out by Habermas that in order to behave as a public body citizens had to be free to assemble, associate and express themselves. In fact, the conditions of Aboriginal people in this period were reminiscent of the conditions in the pre-bourgeois, absolutist states of Europe prior to the various campaigns for democratic reforms--a fact that surprises Canadians not familiar with the history of oppression of Indian people. As Menno Boldt explained this dynamic:

> unlike political and bureaucratic structures in Canadian society, which have evolved within the framework of democratic principles of government and administration (i.e., with checks and balances), the political and bureaucratic structures on Indian reserves have evolved according to the DIAND's rigid, oppressive, authoritarian, colonial design for controlling Indians. These political and bureaucratic structures are a creation of the DIAND, and they conform to the colonial Indian Act. As recently as a decade ago the DIAND ran all Indian affairs through these structures like a colonial autocracy. Enlightened liberal-democratic principles, philosophies, norms, and attitudes had little place in this regime (Boldt, 1993:128)

Still, when the first congress of the League was held in September 1919 at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario it drew delegates from as far west as Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Titley, 1984: 54). It was the first of many congresses organized by Loft, all of which "were publicized well in advance, ensuring both satisfactory levels of attendance and adequate press coverage" (Titley, 1984: 54). The fact that the League's activities managed to generate positive press coverage

demonstrated the capacity of its organizers to engage the attention and the sympathy of some non-Aboriginal Canadians. For example, a report in the London Free Press regarding the first congress of the League observed that the Indians in attendance were:

> all deeply interested and enthusiastic in the new movement to see what the Indian can do towards formulating higher planes of social, moral, political, and industrial economies, also to advance the cause of better and higher educational facilities for the native race in general . . . The delegates are composed of men who speak splendid English and are fully qualified to understand the needs of the people (London Free Press, September 4, 1919 quoted in Titley, 1984: 55)

This coverage constituted evidence that Loft, with his knowledge of the operating and journalistic styles of the mainstream print media, knew how to engage in opinion management. He was able to invade what Habermas described as "the process of 'public opinion' by systematically creating news events or exploiting events that attract attention" (Habermas, 1989: 193). Even at this early state of development, the League began to be seen by opinion leaders (e.g., editors and journalists) within the dominant Canadian public sphere, as a legitimate forum for Indian public opinion regarding the activities of the Canadian state.

Rather than respond to the public opinion that was taking shape in both the Aboriginal and mainstream public spheres, the Department of Indian Affairs continued to oppose the development of the League of Indians of Canada. Requests that moneys held in trust by the Department be made available for delegates to travel to functions of the League were consistently denied. Loft's

reputation was continuously attacked. In November 1919, he distributed a circular that criticized the Department's plan to amend the Indian Act to enfranchise returned soldiers, which Loft believed would result in the "disintegration" of Indian bands (Cuthand, 1991: 382). A copy of the circular was forwarded to Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Superintendent General of Indians Affairs, by an Indian agent with the warning that Loft and the other members of the league were "Bolsheviks" (Titley, 1984: 56). Following the first meeting of the League in western Canada, in Elphinstone, Manitoba in the summer of 1920, a controversial amendment to the Indian Act called Bill 14 was passed. It gave the Indian Affairs Department the power to enfranchise Indians without their consent and was used to attempt to deal with the problem case of Fred Loft: "Once deprived of his status, the Indian leader would lose all credibility as a spokesman for his people, and his movement would therefore crumble" (Titley, 1984: 57). Early in 1921, Loft wrote a letter to the Interior Minister and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in which he equated enfranchisement with "denationalization" (Titley, 1984: 57). In a lucky turn of events, the Meighen government was defeated in 1921 and the Liberals who took power repealed the amendment the following year. Still, it is possible to see the parallel between the struggle that Habermas describes (1962 / 1989) of the bourgeoisie in their fight against the "arcane policies of monarchies" and the struggle of Aboriginal people to influence the arbitrary authority of the federal government. The Department of Indian

Affairs was working to undermine the movement to develop an Aboriginal public sphere because if such a sphere was successfully constituted and sustained, the capacity to bring public opinion to bear on the departmental policies was therefore enabled, effectively challenging the authoritarian system of control that the department exclusively exercised over Indian people.

The League of Indians was growing increasingly popular in the west, where a western branch had been established in 1920, and "Western bands increasingly took their grievances to the League which acted on their behalf in confronting Indian Affairs" (Titley, 1984: 58). In 1921, a meeting was held at Thunderchild Reserve, Saskatchewan, and the following summer, over 1,500 Blackfoot, Stoney, Cree and Assiniboine delegates attended the League's conference at Sampson Reserve, Alberta to discuss issues including religious freedom and the right to travel without passes (Cuthand, 1991: 382). The leadership of the League was composed of its president Fred Loft, who was called "Natowew-Kimaw" or "One who speaks for other" and Ojibway vice-president Reverend Bingham from Walpole Islands, Ontario. From Saskatchewan, the first provincial president was Reverend Edward Ahenakew, who was a graduate of the Church of England theological college in Saskatoon, and the provincial treasurer was James Wuttunee from Red Pheasant Reserve, and from Alberta, the main representative was veteran and Chief Mike Mountain House of the Blood tribe (Cuthand, 1991: 382). When Lieutenant Loft's wife became ill in

the early 1920s, he was forced to postpone his plan of expanding the League into areas that were not represented while he cared for her. Although the League declined in his absence, annual meetings were held in Saskatchewan under the leadership of Reverend Ahenakew who wrote:

> The principal aim of the League, I would say, is equality for the Indian as citizen--equality, that is, in the two-fold meaning of privileges and responsibility; and to achieve this objective, our emphasis must be upon improved education and health programs... More particularly, the Indians of Canada should have a voice in the character of legislation that is passed in Parliament when it concerns ourselves, for that is the privilege of all under our flag--personal freedom (Ahenakew, 1973: 124).

In 1929, the League of Indians of Western Canada was created and conferences were held in 1931 and 1932. The western bands continued to meet throughout the 1930s; however, in 1933, two provincial branches were formed (Frideres, 1988: 236; Titley, 1984: 61). Loft had returned to his project in the late 1920s, but he was unable to resurrect the League as a national organization; subsequently, he decided to pursue the issue of restriction of hunting and fishing rights (which had been guaranteed in the treaties) by provincial game laws (Titley, 1984: 60). In 1931, he distributed a circular asking for contributions to finance a trip to London for himself and a lawyer, a request that contravened Section 141 of the Indian Act (which had been introduced in 1927), forbidding "the soliciting or collecting of money from Indians for the pursuit of claims on their behalf" (Titley, 1984: 63). However, the limited support Loft received for his undertaking

was discouraging and the prospect of prosecution was daunting. He did not attend the League meeting at Saddle Lake in June 1931, at which he had agreed to speak, abandoning his political activities thereafter. He died a few years later.

There were 1,344 delegates at the 1931 meeting of the League of Indians of Western Canada, including chiefs and councillors from thirty (out of a total forty-two) Alberta reserves and thirteen (out of a total of thirty-seven) Saskatchewan reserves (Cuthand, 1991: 392). Augustine Steinhauer became the provincial leader of the Alberta branch of the League and took on the responsibility of organizing the League's yearly convention and maintaining communications with the chiefs and councillors (Cuthand, 1991: 383) As Stan Cuthand observed, "All the great Indian leaders, like Ahenakew and Steinhauer, were classically educated men and had read the government documents" (Cuthand, 1991: 387). In 1939, the Indian Association of Alberta was created and in 1946, the Union of Saskatchewan Indians was established (Frideres, 1988: 264; Pitsula, 1994a, 1994b).

The demise of the "national" organization, with its goal of creating a national Aboriginal public sphere that gave Indian people a rising voice in the development of national legislation that affected their lives, was perhaps inevitable. The federal government's interference alone had devastating effects. However, as Nancy Fraser observed, public spheres were not places of "zero

degree culture"; for the Indian organizations, the challenge of accommodating the communication styles of such a variety of cultural groups had remained tremendous. Even the practice of bracketing did not ensure that these public spheres accommodated the variety of cultural styles in a way that did not disadvantage some individuals. In fact, perhaps the only common communicative styles were those that were learned in mission and government schools. Thus, the older participants, those who held traditional leadership roles, were at the greatest disadvantage in these new political organizations already composed of their successors.

The decision to develop smaller provincial associations provided greater, even if not totally satisfactory, access for those older participants and allowed them to express their cultural identity through their own idiom and cultural styles. This inference was supported through the observation of Harold Cardinal, one of the later more contemporary leaders of the Indian Association of Alberta, who pointed out that it was the provincial organizations that were able to penetrate the isolation of the remote Indian communities, as well as encourage the efforts between reserves to help and learn from each other:

> They assisted and encouraged local people to begin looking beyond the boundaries of their own reserves and areas. Through this opening up, they began to discover common problems. This led naturally to cooperation [sic] in seeking solutions to their problems. The leaders from far-separated reserves were able to learn from each other . . . . The first efforts between reserves to help each other grew from such provincial meetings. Intertribal communication posed a major

> difficulty, but the use of interpreters and the commonly understood English language solved this problem (Cardinal, 1991: 396).

The development of Indian organizations did not occur in a uniform fashion across Canada, especially since the numbered treaties only extended to the Rocky Mountains. In British Columbia, three issues became the focus of Indian resistance to federal policies: the prohibition of the Potlatch, the absence of treaties and the issue of land claims (Dyck, 1991: 92). The Nishga Indians formed the Nishga Land Committee in the late 1890s to co-ordinate their campaign for recognition of their aboriginal land rights and, in 1906, one of their chiefs went to England and presented a land claims petition to King Edward. A second organization, the Allied Tribes of British Columbia, was created in 1915 and attempted to force the British Privy Council to make a judicial decision regarding the Nishga land claim; however, their claim was rejected in 1927 and the organization folded. To ensure that the Indians could not seek legal redress for their claims in the future, the Department amended the Indian Act in 1927:

> to make it an offence punishable by law to collect funds for he purpose of pursuing a claim of aboriginal title without the express permission of the Department of Indian Affairs. This measure, which remained in effect until 1951, made it extremely difficult for Indians to seek legal redress of their claims (Dyck, 1991: 94).

As discussed above, this same legislation had been used to stop Lieutenant Loft from raising funds for a similar trip to England in 1931.

Scholars have observed that the demise of these early organizations was often the result of suppression by the federal government and internal discord among the Aboriginal people themselves (Frideres, 1988: 260). However, the specific interest organizations often provided the basis of more general interest organizations to form in later years. This was clearly the case in British Columbia where the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia was created in 1931 and later expanded. Its focus was not primarily land claims but social and economic issues generally, especially those related to Native fishermen and their families. Membership in the Brotherhood was entirely Protestant and, in 1943, a Catholic organization called the North American Indian Brotherhood was established in British Columbia. The operation of these "rival" groups provided an interesting example of a situation in which discord between two divided alternative public spheres was used by the state authorities (the jurisdictions of federal and provincial governments) as a justification for ignoring the publicly formulated and presented positions of each of the groups (Frideres, 1988: 264).

In the generations before contact, public spheres in Indian communities operated according to traditional values that emphasized social equality, freedom of expression and accountability of leadership (Champagne, 1989). This resulted in high levels of access and participatory parity in their public discussions. With the creation of alliances and confederacies, there was greater reliance on individuals to represent the views and interests of other members of

their communities. Institutionalized mechanisms for ensuring that they carried out this role included the capacity of women to remove representatives from their positions. However, as settlement continued and the European colonial government asserted authority over the Aboriginal nations, and eventually imposed European-style governmental structures, the Aboriginal civil and political institutions were undermined and even dismantled. The imposition of an external authority made the operation of the Aboriginal public spheres redundant since the political authority of the Aboriginal leadership had been usurped and, apparently, public opinion was not decisively effective to influence the decision-making bodies of the new Canadian state.

As the Canadian state developed policies and programs regarding Aboriginal people, the need to exert influence over the decisions of the Canadian state regarding Aboriginal issues became more and more apparent to some Indian, Metis and Inuit leaders, as did their understanding of the exercise of political power in the Canadian society. This led them to continue to organize politically at the regional and national levels, and to provide discursive arenas in which to formulate public opinion that could be brought to bear on the state. From 1919 until the mid-1930s, the leaders of the League of Indians of Canada struggled to develop a base of support. Their inability to create a national public body was understandable in light of restrictions on speech and assembly. Besides which, as Habermas pointed out (1974), large publics today require

mass media. Consequently, the development of Aboriginal newspapers played an important role in the strengthening of the Aboriginal political public spheres at the regional levels. The impact of the regional newspapers on the national public sphere was one manifestation of this pattern.

Chapter IV

THE REGIONAL ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPERS

Introduction

In the last chapter, the attempt to establish a national Aboriginal political organization that would serve as an institutionalized arena of discursive activity was explored. However, the difficulty in bringing people together physically, combined with the perceived need to organize at the regional level, led to a shift of focus to regional (often provincial or territorial) political organizations. Even for the smaller organizations, however, there was a need to develop mediated discursive arenas in which peoples could come together to deliberate issues. For many of these organizations, the answer was the publication of regional newspapers. They were supported by a variety of government programs in their early years of operation and, in the period of the Native Communications Program (NCP) starting in 1973, most of the publications were turned over to Native Communications Societies that were independent of the political organizations that had created them. However, as argued in this thesis, the limited and even unstable funding arrangements meant that many of the Societies were subject to manipulation by the political organizations as well as the federal department that administered the funding programs according to the objectives of the Canadian government. When, in 1990 the NCP was cancelled, the Aboriginal newspaper publishers were forced to find other sources of funding.

Most of the Societies turned to advertising to support their publications and the process of privatized commercialization had an impact on the operation of the newspapers. The detailed account of the evolution of the newspapers documented below provides a basis to show how they reflected specific characteristics of Habermas' model of the public sphere.

A Landmark Publication: The Native Voice

The Native Brotherhood of British Columbia (NBBC) was established in 1931 and was later amalgamated with the Pacific Coast Native Fishermen's Association, which gave it membership from the northern and southern coastal peoples (Frideres, 1988: 264). This organization carried out the first sustained effort to publish an Indian newspaper in Canada. The first issue of the Native Voice was produced by the Native Brotherhood in December 1946, and it was still being published 50 years later in 1996. Seven thousand copies of the first issue were sent to the B.C. tribes, and to Indian and non-Indian organizations and

individuals across Canada (Native Voice, January, 1947, 1 (2): 4). [14]

[14] The first edition of the eight-page tabloid newspaper was produced under the editorship of Tsimpshean World War I veteran Jack Beynon. It provided reports and editorials about the newly appointed joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons to examine the Indian Act, fishing news, a new hospital in Prince Rupert, "Canadian Indian girls" from Saskatchewan and Alberta attending nursing training in New Zealand, the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Kitsilano Indian Village at which the Governor-General of Canada was made an Honorary Life President of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia, news from the communities of the Northwest Coast and two full pages of advertisements

The first editorial in the Native Voice states:

> Our views are undenominational [sic] and non-political and all are welcome to use the freedom of the press within the pages of the NATIVE VOICE . . . . The NATIVE VOICE, while invading the privileged sanctuary of the press, heretofore not occupied by our people, does not find it necessary to apologize for its efforts which will be a long awaited stimulant leading toward a better way of life for all the Native people in Canada. News and views will be presented in our own way, catering always to the Native people, still, broad enough to realize that all people are human and are inclined to err, and with this thought in mind we would appreciate any comments from all races (Native Voice, December, 1946, 1 (1): 1).

This discourse represents an understanding on the part of the editor and publishers of the Native Voice that they were appropriating the free press model for their Aboriginal newspaper. This is interesting in light of Habermas' early view that the plebeian public sphere and other alternative public spheres are simply nondominant variations of the dominant bourgeois public sphere; however, as Habermas later admits, he could develop a model of the public sphere that focuses on the competition between multiple public spheres (Habermas, 1992: 425). Following Habermas' later thought, this discussion proceeds by focussing

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(eleven in total) most of them from fish packers and canneries. Its premiere issue also contained letters of congratulations (for the new newspaper) from the B.C. Premier, CCF party leader, Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, the B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society; the International Woodworkers of America; United Fisherman and Allied Workers' Union; Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Indian Agents of B.C. and the Anglican, First United and Roman Catholic churches, and even the "Prominent Columnist" Elmore Philpott who observed that "If the young men and women, especially, use the opportunities they can have to express themselves freely, the original inhabitants of this country can make a 'come back' that would have seemed impossible to some faint-hearts a few years ago" (Native Voice, December, 1946, 1 (1): 5).

upon the emancipatory potential of the Aboriginal newspapers as alternative discursive arenas for formulating public opinion in a range of unique social contexts, and documents evidence of the commitment to engaging in a contestatory relationship with the dominant public sphere.

The vision of the Native Voice as a site where Aboriginal public opinion could take shape is expressed in the "President's Message" from NBBC Chief William D. Scow:

> Through the NATIVE VOICE, we will blend the whole of our problems into a common meeting ground for the discussion of whatever action that is necessary to benefit the well-being of all natives in B.C.

Scow also suggests that the Native Voice had the potential to:

> form the basis of amalgamating the entire Native races of the Dominion into the powerful Brotherhood and Sisterhood that will finally talk with the solid expression of authority to all those whom we confront on native problems (Scow, 1946: 1).

The idea of benefiting the well-being of all Natives in B.C. invokes the sense of "public" as "pertaining to a common good or shared interest" (Fraser,1993: 20), which Habermas alludes to used when he characterizes the bourgeois public sphere as an arena where topics of discussion are restricted to the "common good," and "private interests" are not to be considered (Habermas, 1989). According to Nancy Fraser, this characterization reflects a "civic republican" understanding of the notion of the "public," rather than the "liberal-individualist" understanding which suggests that people reasoning together can arrive at a

conclusion that is "the mere sum of individual preferences." The civic republican model represents the desire to transcend this summing up of preferences and suggests that:

> in the process of their deliberations, participants are transformed from being a collective of self-seeking, private individuals into a public-spirited collectivity capable of acting together in the common interest (Fraser, 1993: 20).

A limitation of this model, however, is that it may conflate:

> the ideas or deliberations and the common good by assuming that deliberations must be about the common good . . . . [which] works against one of the principle aims of deliberation, namely, helping participants clarify their interest, even when those interests turn out to conflict (Fraser, 1993: 21).

This becomes increasingly critical when we consider the stated goal of the Native Voice: "amalgamating the entire Native races of the dominion."

In the national discussion, even more than in the deliberations among B.C. Natives themselves, it was not realistic to suggest that the deliberative process would result in the discovery of one "common good." What was possible, however, was deliberation that could identify issues regarding which there was common ground, as well as issues about which there were potential conflicts of interest among the regions. The possibility of identifying these issues was particularly important in light of the practice of federal government representatives (discussed in an earlier chapter) of focusing upon the conflicting positions of Aboriginal groups, and using that disagreement as the excuse for their decision to ignore all of their demands. In fact, the publication and circulation

among the various Aboriginal political and communications organizations of regional newspapers allowed the organizations to work together in areas of common interest and avoid presenting conflicting positions to the government's negotiators at national discussions.[15]

The Native Voice's role of disseminating information about the issues of concern to B.C. Natives to the dominant Canadian public sphere and simultaneously garnering support in the mainstream of public opinion was fulfilled through the wide distribution of the newspaper to the identified gatekeepers and opinion leaders of the dominant public sphere, including select newspaper journalists, columnists and editors, politicians, religious organizations, private societies and labour organizations, many of which wrote letters of support for the first edition of the publication. Arguably this offer of access to a forum for people "from all races" was made to encourage non-Aboriginal people to engage in discussion with Aboriginal people to help them understand the positions of Aboriginal peoples in relation to the Canadian state and society. These strategies had the potential to generate a group of allies who became advocates on behalf of Aboriginal people, while also helping to introduce Aboriginal issues into the dominant public sphere in a systematic fashion.

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[15] A very interesting project in this area could carry out an analysis of the use of the Aboriginal newspapers to this end in the context of the First Ministers' Conferences on Aboriginal constitutional matters that took place in the mid-1980s. Coverage of the FMC's by the Aboriginal media was extensive and occurred over a number of years, which would allow for a comparison of content in the different years.

Chief Scow appeals for support for the opinions that would be presented in the NBBC publication, from both Native and non-Native people: "The NATIVE VOICE will bring about a closer relationship between ourselves and our good white friends who we also appeal to at this time for the support in our struggle for advancement" (Scow, 1946: 1). This statement suggests that the public sphere taking shape around the Native Voice had a role similar to that of the feminist subaltern counterpublic in the 1960s (Fraser, 1993). In the same way that feminists were attempting through their "sustained discursive contestation" to move issues like domestic violence from the realm of the private to the realm of the public, the Native Voice could be used to bring discussion that had been prohibited (formally and informally) and shielded behind the constitutionally constructed barrier of legislative authority into the dominant public sphere--an effort central to the ideal of democratic publicity which "requires positive guarantees of opportunities from minorities to convince others that what in the past was not public in the sense of being a matter of common concern should now become so" (Fraser, 1993:20).

A statement of the importance of this early publication, and an acknowledgement of its capacity to raise solidarity among Aboriginal peoples, is provided in the "Saskatchewan Message" submitted by John B. Tootoosis, President of the Union of Saskatchewan Indians, and published in the March 1947 issue:

> The Native Voice has been a mighty voice out of British Columbia . . . . It is bringing the varied and divergent ideas of the Indian people of the far-flung places of Canada closer to all of us; it is showing that while distance divides us and differences exist among us, we possess the same ideals, and we work for the same purpose. The cause of Indian unity is being served well by this organ of Canadian native peoples (Tootoosis, Native Voice, 1947: 13).

Thirteen years later, another letter from Saskatchewan remarked on the continuing role of the Native Voice, as one of very few publications dedicated to collecting and disseminating the news and views of Indian people:

> It is a wonderful source of information to us about our brother Indians; it is also an encouragement in our organizations. Canada is rapidly becoming aware of the conditions of her Indian people. Organizations are preparing and sending briefs to Ottawa, Indians likewise are doing the same. This is the time all Indians should voice their opinion, we are like all other people and do not think alike and therefore through our various ideas can the situation be studied to form a reasonable solution (Mrs. A. H. Brass, Native Voice, November 1960, XIV (11): 23).

The Early Regional Organizations and Publications

The development of an Aboriginal public sphere that provided a site for public opinion formation was not supported by the federal bureaucrats who administered the Indian Act. In fact, after World War II, the Department of Indian Affairs maintained its opposition to Native political organization:

> Since Indian associations were not Departmental creations and since their very existence tended to contradict the government's official policy to extinguish 'Indianness,'

> Departmental officials were unstinting in their opposition to these bodies, unless they adopted a compliant posture in their dealings with the Department (Dyck, 1991: 93).

However, according to Harold Cardinal:

> The Indian organizations gained rapid strength [sic] until the mid-1950s. Their success came entirely from the determination and initiative shown by Indian leaders. They got no help from the government (Cardinal, 1991: 397).

In 1931, the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia had been formed. The first provincial Metis organization was established in Saskatchewan in 1937 (Frideres, 1988: 266). From the ashes of the League of Indians of Western Canada, the Indian Association of Alberta was established in 1939, and the Union of Saskatchewan Indians (which became the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and later the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) was formed in 1946. The Union of Ontario Indians was established in 1946 and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood was created in the late 1940s and then replaced by the Four Nations Confederacy (Frideres, 1988: 265) . However, without financial support, the capacity of these organizations to meet, exchange information, disseminate their positions and lobby effectively remained limited.[16]

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[16] The League of Indians as well as the various provincial organizations had benefited from the support from church leaders who encouraged their parishioners to support the organizations (Cardinal, 1991: 395); however, in the mid-1950s "the agitation for better educational facilities and opportunities had exposed the terrible inadequacies of the church-operated residential schools" (Cardinal, 1991: 397). In reaction, the churches withdrew their support and the Roman Catholic church established the Catholic Indian League which had the effect of weakening the base of the "legitimate" Indian organizations by drawing their Catholic members away.

A number of factors contributed to the emergence of new regional organizations and the strengthening of existing political organizations in the 1960s: increased opportunities for Aboriginal leaders to meet at regional and national conferences, changes in the federal government's funding policies that made Indian and Inuit organizations eligible for federal funds from departments other than DIAND, and the strategic reaction to the government's release of the White Paper on Indian Policy in 1969.

Beginning in the 1950s, the Indian Affairs Branch started holding a series of conferences "supposedly aimed at determining the needs of Indian people" (Cardinal, 1991: 398). Since they were sponsored by the DIAND, the delegates received support for their travel expenses and per diem allowances, which, according to later IAA President Harold Cardinal, had the effect of undermining the Native organizations by drawing their members to the government sponsored all-chiefs conferences at which the agenda items were set out by government officials (Cardinal, 1991: 398). However, this did not preclude the Indian leaders from taking the opportunity to meet privately to discuss issues and strategies not supported by DIAND officials.

By the mid-1960s, the Department of Indian Affairs organized another series of provincial and national advisory councils at which Indian leaders were consulted about matters pertaining to their communities. However, these

advisory meetings involved only the leaders selected under the Indian Act regulations:

> Their expenses were paid for going to meetings convened by the government, but no money was provided at all for them to travel on their own reserve or on reserves in their area. They were not to be paid one cent to circulate among their own people and find out what was wanted and needed or how the various schemes advanced by the government might be received (Cardinal, 1991: 399).

According to Habermas, this kind of communication was characteristic of "welfare state mass democracies" in which negotiations and compromises are carried out in a way that excludes the public from the proceedings (Habermas, 1989). These kinds of meetings also reinforce the position of dominance of these early Aboriginal representatives over other members of their communities. These representatives at the time, according to some accounts, served like employees of the Department of Indian Affairs.[17] In fact, this change in tactics represented the shift in the nature of the domination over Indian; that is, "the shift from a repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one,[18] from rule based

[17] An article published in the Union of BC Indian Chief's newspaper Nesika in June 1973 titled "Chiefs as DIA Employees?" responded to an article in the May/June issue of the Saskatchewan Indian announcing that 67 band chiefs were to be paid $10,000 per year (an up-dating of the annual payment of $25 that was stipulated in the treaties). The response from the BC correspondent was that "any hint of that happening here in BC must be rejected"

[18] In Geoff Eley's discussion of the notion of hegemony developed by Antonio Gramsci, he uses the definition developed by Gwyn A. Williams: "an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and

primarily on acquiescence to superior force to rule based primarily on consent supplemented with some measure of repression" (Fraser, 1993: 17).

Although, as Harold Cardinal pointed out, the leadership of Indian individuals provided the drive to organize, ultimately, there was a need for financial resources to house and staff the political organizations and to produce their publications. Support from federal and provincial government programs provided these resources. Although the provincial governments generally viewed Indian peoples as the responsibility of the federal government and refused to provide any support to their organizations, Saskatchewan's CCF government under Premier Tommy Douglas, was a noteworthy exception to this rule. From 1958 to 1962, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (FSI, renamed from the Union of Saskatchewan Indians in 1958) received provincial support for their conferences and executive meetings (Indian Outlook, May 1963); and in 1962-63, the FSI received a grant of $10,000 from the province. Between May 1960 and May 1963, four issues of the Indian Outlook were published by the FSI. They were designed to give Saskatchewan Indian people from at least five distinct cultural groupings and six different treaty areas information about the FSI's efforts on their behalf (Rupert, 1982: 2). The first three issues were four-page, tabloid-sized newspapers, including photographs and advertisements, and were published "In Co-operation with the Provincial Committee on Minority

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moral connotation" (quoted in Eley, 1992: 322)

Groups."[19] The fourth issue of the Indian Outlook was a mimeographed letter-sized news bulletin without pictures or advertising, with the explanation that the $7,500 grant they had received was insufficient to cover the costs of producing and distributing 8,000 copies of the publication and that the $10,000 provincial grant would be used to support the smaller monthly publication (Indian Outlook, May 1963: 1).

During 1963, the federal government's Centennial Commission provided Native groups with a total of about $150,000 for projects, and in 1964, the Secretary of State started to provide a small annual grant to support meetings of the National Indian Council (NIC), which had been established in 1954 and became the official organization for both status and non-status Indians in 1961 (Frideres, 1988: 270). In 1966, the Citizenship Branch of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, which was "originally formed to help immigrants integrate into

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[19] One of the issues addressed in the first edition was the federal vote, which had been granted by Diefenbaker in 1960. The question of whether to accept the provincial and federal votes had been a divisive one across the country, supported by those who saw it as an opportunity to exercise a democratic right of all citizens, opposed by those who saw it as a means of undermining the distinct status of Indian people in Canada. Interestingly, the FSI reported in the Indian Outlook that it had neither accepted nor rejected the vote : "We think that this was the wisest course of action. We need, first of all, a strong and united Indian organization within the province. It would have been foolish to split our ranks over any such major issue. As the matter now stands, both Mr. [Tommy] Douglas and Mr. Diefenbaker have taken upon themselves the responsibility for removing legislative clauses that discriminated against the Indian who wished to vote. No provincial or national Indian organization was forced to split its own ranks by demanding this government action--and this is as it should be" (Indian Outlook, May 1960, 1 (1): 2)

Canadian society" (DSOS, 1972, 5), and which administered programs designed to cultivate understanding between various groups and communities in Canada (DSOS, 1967: 7), was transferred to the Department of the Secretary of State. One of the nine program areas that was transferred with it was "Indian Integration" which had the mandate to "assist the transition [sic] of Indian population from reserves to urban communities" (DSOS, 1967: 8). For the most part, this was carried out through the provision of funding to Indian and Metis Friendship Centres, which provided programs to ease the transition of Indian people to urban life. The DSOS also provided support for the Indian, non-status Indian, Metis and Inuit organizations as part of a strategy of encouraging the participation of Aboriginal citizens in Canada's democratic institutions.

In 1968, the Department of Forestry and Rural Development started sending community development workers onto reserves as part of their "war on poverty" (Frideres, 1988: 280). Under this strategy, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians received over $50,000 to develop their organization so that they could represent themselves in "a systematic fashion" (Frideres, 1988: 281). In 1968-69, the Secretary of State provided thirteen grants of $20,000 to organizations that were providing leadership training, community organization and public education, including a grant to the Canadian Native Communications Society. This early funding of the various organizations raised an issue that was a central one for Habermas in relation to all forms of mediated communication,

namely how the material resources for communication are made available and to whom (see Habermas, 1989, and Garnham, 1986).

The injection of financial and human resources that occurred in the 1960s supported the development and strengthening of the regional organizations. The Indians of Quebec Association was established in the 1960s. The Metis also formed provincial political organizations in Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia in the late 1960s (Frideres, 1988: 266) and in 1971, the Native Council of Canada (NCC) was established to represent the 750,000 people of Native ancestry in Western Canada (New Breed, February/March 1975).[20] The Union of New Brunswick Indians (which also represented Indians from Prince Edward Island) was created in 1967. In 1968, the National Indian Council was split into two groups: the National Indian Brotherhood for status Indians and the Canadian Metis Society for non-status Natives (Frideres, 1988: 270). The Union of Nova Scotia Indians and the Union of BC Indian Chiefs were established in 1969.

The various programs related to Native people continued to be implemented by departments that undertook some level of co-ordination with the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.[21] One initiative that

[20] Although the NCC does not have a legislated basis for its collective representation, such as the Indian Act, it was one of the organizations invited to participated in the First Minister' Conference in 1982. Then, in 1983, the Metis National Council was established in a split from the NCC by Metis leaders who believed the NCC was not pursuing the Metis desire for land and self-government (Frideres, 1988: 266).

[21] In 1985, the study team on program delivery (the Neilson Task Force reviewed 106 programs, delivered by 11 federal departments that targeted

was undertaken by the DIAND, and later funded by the Department of the Secretary of State, was the support of a communications project undertaken by a Cree employee in the Department of Indian Affairs. In the late 1960s, Eugene Steinhauer, an employee of the DIAND branch in Edmonton, Alberta started producing Cree-language radio programs for broadcast on commercial stations throughout the province. This effort expanded with the creation of the Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS) in 1968 and the publication of the monthly newspaper, Native People, starting in July 1968. In its early days, Native People was produced in offices that were donated by the Department (Cuthand, 1995); then in 1970, the ANCS received $139,012 from the DSOS and became a model for the Aboriginal communications societies in Canada (Demay, 1991: 98).

In Southern Alberta, the Kainai News was published for the first time in February 1968 by the Communications Society of Indian News Media (INM) that was controlled by the Blood Indians of the Blood Indian Reserve in Southern Alberta. The INM had been involved with a Blackfoot Radio project and remained closely tied to the ANCS in terms of leadership and the development of the INM organization.

Indian and Native people (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1994: 91).

The 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy

The release of the White Paper on Indian Policy on June 25,1969 marked a turning point in Indian-White relations. On April 20, 1968, Pierre Elliot Trudeau and the liberals assumed leadership from Lester B Pearson and remained in power in Ottawa:

> Full of 'just society' idealism and fervour, Trudeau was determined to make a difference. As a liberal, he 'knew' what was right and good for Indians--to become 'Canadians as all other Canadians.' But, as a democrat, he was bound to consult Indians before implementing his solutions (Boldt, 1993: 65).

The style and level of consultations in the year leading up to the release of the White Paper were new for both the Indian Affairs bureaucrats and the Indians:

> Never before had the princely mandarins from Ottawa deigned to solicit their views in such a diligent fashion. The effect of the consultation process on Indian leaders was remarkable. It raised their expectation, inspired new ideas, charged their emotions, and unleashed a tremendous pan-Indian dynamic . . . . [I]t raised in Indian leaders a profound sense of individual and collective empowerment and political efficacy--something they had never experienced before (Boldt, 1993: 66)

However, when the White Paper was released, the Indians who had participated in the 'consultations' were shocked to find that it reflected none of the positions they had expressed. Rather, it essentially proposed the elimination of the special status of Indian people in Canada, including the repeal of the Indian Act and the dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs (White Paper, 1969: 6). As with one voice, the White Paper was condemned by the Indian leadership.

Many of the various associations produced written responses to it, including the Red Paper: Citizens Plus (1970) prepared by the Alberta Indian Association under the leadership of Harold Cardinal, Wahbung: Our Tomorrows (1971) prepared by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, and submissions by the National Indian Brotherhood. Although the White Paper was formally withdrawn on June 4, 1970, the experience of Indian leaders in the period leading up to its publication had heightened awareness about the national scope of the colonial experience. It also gave them an opportunity to identify their cultural, political and social commonalties--many of them due to the fact that the Canadian government had insisted on treating the culturally diverse Aboriginal groups as a single legal category, and had subjected so many of them to the mission and government school experience (which also gave Indians a common language). The reaction to the White Paper brought to an end "a century during which the Canadian government successfully fragmented Indians into hundreds of isolated communities" (Boldt, 1993: 85). The national Indian consciousness that had its genesis in the encounters between Native servicemen in World War I, and which had grown slowly over the next fifty years, was:

> facilitated by the spreading of information and values relevant to Natives. Until recently, this process was hindered by primitive communication processes, a lack of literacy, and linguistic diversity among the Native population. But as English becomes the working language of Natives, as literacy levels rise, and as greater funding is provided, Native groups are increasingly gaining access to the news media (Frideres,1988: 286).

This discusssion focuses on the creation of Aboriginal newspapers. The circulation of these publications historically contributes to the development of a national Aboriginal public sphere by contributing to the circulation of information regarding common experiences and issues, providing sites for public opinion formation, engaging in collective efforts to bring their issues to the dominant public sphere,[22] and attempting to influence the policies of the Canadian government through the pressure of public opinion. As Marc Raboy suggests, in liberal democracies "where the policy making process is still at least partly in the public political arena... the policy arena can . . . be said to constitute a new public sphere of communication" (Raboy, 1991: 171).

The need to engage in deliberations regarding public policy, especially to provide an effective voice against policies like that set out in the White Paper, led to the rise of new regional organizations and publications. For example, the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI) and the Micmac News were created in 1969 in direct response to the need for a political organization to address issues raised by the White Paper and for a communication vehicle to reach the membership of the new organization.

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[22] However, pan-Indianism also had the effect of distancing the Indian, Metis and Inuit leaders from their grassroots constituencies that they were supposed to represent (Boldt, 1993: 86). In the new environment in which direct democracy was being replaced by mass democracy, the rise of the Aboriginal newspapers supported efforts to maintain links between the communities and their representatives to regional and national bodies, as well as facilitating the exchange of information between Aboriginal organizations and informing the non-Aboriginal public.

The earliest edition of the publication called the Micmac News was published by Chief Ben Christmas of Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia in 1932. It was "a small, short-lived publication out of the Membertou reserve" (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 46). The Micmac News was revived by the Youth Club of Membertou Indian Reserve and published from 1965 to 1966 in a one-year trial project sponsored by the St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department. That project planted the seeds of both the political organization and the publication, which took root and grew with the release of the White Paper. An editorial recalling the early history of the publication explains that "When the White Paper on Indian Policy stimulated native reaction, Indians in Nova Scotia realized that they had no organization or channels to assess or focus native opinion or activity" (Douglas, Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 2). However, two of the individuals that were involved in the 1965-66 project, Roy Gould from Membertou and Noel Doucette from Chapel Island, established the Union of Nova Scotia Indians (UNSI) and the Micmac News. Doucette became the first president of the UNSI and Gould co-ordinated the operations of the new organization, including the establishment of a Department of Communications within its structure. From 1969 to 1975, the Department published the Micmac News monthly, as well as producing radio shows and providing information services for the UNSI.

The Development of Organizations and Publications to 1973

Indian organizations were most directly implicated in the policies set out in the White Paper; however, the backlash against it lead to a variety of new policies and programs, including efforts to resolve long-standing issues with Aboriginal groups, and the development of new programs to help Aboriginal people experience the benefits of Canadian citizenship, which had an impact on all of the Aboriginal organizations.

The New Breed publication that was established in November 1969 to serve the Metis and non-status Indian people of Saskatchewan, was easily the most radical, and least journalistic (in the sense of being balanced and objective) of the early publications. Publisher Howard Adams, a Metis from Northern Saskatchewan who had previously completed his Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley in the midst of the student uprising of the 1960s, was also elected president of the newly formed Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS). The New Breed was turned over to the Saskatchewan Native Communications Society (Wehtamatowin) in the early 1970s and became a monthly news magazine serving Metis, non-status and status Indian people. Although its founder was adamantly opposed to accepting any government support (Adams, 1992), the new leadership of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan accepted provincial funding for the publication. In Habermasian terms, the involvement of the state in the publication of the New Breed

marked the "feudalization" of the Metis public sphere; and as Habermas theoretically predicted, the action made it vulnerable to government control. A front page editorial of the June 1970 edition reported that at a meeting of the Metis Society executive, lead by President Jim Sinclair, with Liberal Saskatchewan Premier Ross Thatcher, the premier told them "If the society does not support the government's program . . . and if we do not quit objecting to government stands, the government will cut off our grant" (New Breed, June 1970, 1 (7): 1). A few months later, the federal DSOS agreed to provide a grant to the Metis Society (New Breed, September 1970, 1 (9)) and the Society was able to continue to provide thirty copies of New Breed to each Metis local in the province, as well as sending copies to subscribers (New Breed, October 1971: 5). Although the Metis Society was dependent on the funding it received from the provincial and federal governments, it continued to publish scathing attacks on various government programs. For example, in the January 1972 issue, it published the following "public service notice":

> Attention Native People--Learn the true facts of relocation. Why live in poverty? When you can live in poverty in the big city. Try the best of Indian Affairs (relocation program). We'll take you away from the outdated customs of your tribal homeland and drop you in an exciting slum. You'll be on your own, without friends or money. You'll meet interesting people: policemen, welfare workers, dope pushers, hoodlums. And we'll train you for a challenging career as a dishwasher, welder, mechanic or vagrant. You can live in a beautiful urban tenement . . . overcrowding plus pollution and crime. Let us take you away from all those backward Indians and

> make a Canadian out of you. Contact your department of Indian Affairs today (New Breed, January 1972: 6)

In spite of rhetoric like this, the Metis Society continued to receive provincial funding in the form of grants from the Human Resources Development Agency. In 1974-75, the grant amount was $220,000, out of which the New Breed received about $36,000 (New Breed, February/March 1975: 9). In 1974, it switched from a tabloid to a magazine format and started an additional circular newsletter that was to be distributed twice a month. It is interesting to note that the suggestion was made that the newsletter be read aloud by members at each local: "We are requesting once again of the locals to call a meeting at least once a month, so they can read out the newsletter to the general membership" (New Breed, October 1974: 1). A report done for the Metis Society in 1972 indicated that:

> In some communities in northern Saskatchewan, approximately one quarter of the adult population have never been to school . . . [and] the majority of Metis and Indians do not go beyond Grade 8 (Adams, 1989: 135).

This finding suggested that literacy provided an informal barrier to access to the Metis public sphere, as it undoubtedly did in varying degrees to all of the other regional Aboriginal publications. Although this barrier was able to be overcome by holding public readings, the effort for an illiterate person to contribute to the published discussion was considerably greater than for literate people.

The Inuit Tapirisat was created in 1970 to represent the 30,000 Inuit in Canada, and eventually six regional organizations came under the ITC umbrella: the Committee on Original Peoples Entitlement (COPE) in the Western Arctic, Kitikmeot Inuit Association in the Central Arctic, the Keewatin Inuit Association in the Eastern Arctic, the Baffin Regional Association on Baffin Island, Makivik Corporation in Arctic Quebec[23] and the Labrador Inuit Association. Two of these organizations eventually published newspapers. The Labrador Inuit Association published the first issue of Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk newsletter in 1972. It started as a mimeographed newsletter, with all of the editorial content in both English and Inuktitut. In the Western Arctic, the Inuvialuit magazine was first published in 1978 by the Committee on Original People's Entitlement (COPE), the land claims negotiation group for the Inuvialuit people in the region. It was developed to keep the beneficiaries in touch with the land claim process, and to serve the information needs of the 3,200 Inuvialuit people who lived in the Beaufort District of the Western Arctic (NACS, 1987). Another publication that was originally developed by a land claims organization was the Cree Ajemoon magazine, which was published quarterly by the Cree Regional Authority starting in 1973, following the signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (NACS, 1987).

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[23] Frideres (1988) mistakenly locates the Makivik Corporation in Newfoundland.

In 1970, Aboriginal organizations were receiving almost $1 million for their activities (Frideres, 1988: 281); however, the Department of Indian Affairs "reacted negatively" to the involvement of other departments in the activities of Indian people, since it contravened the arrangement laid out in 1880 that the DIAND had the sole responsibility for Indian people. DIAND maintained that projects and funding carried out by other departments had the effect of undermining its own policies, and in a bid to reassert control, it began to provide each of the regional Indian organizations with a per capita grant of $1 per registered Indian member and a $.25 per capita grant to the National Indian Brotherhood (Frideres, 1988: 281).

Many of the organizations used this financial support to develop and support communications. For example, financial support for the early issues of the Saskatchewan Indian was provided by the Department of Indian Affairs, but it was hoped that the paper would become self-sufficient (Saskatchewan Indian, October 1970, 1 (2): 4). Under a subsequent agreement with the province, the FSI received up to $250,000 for their communications program, which included the production of radio programs that were broadcast on private stations across the province and the publication of the Saskatchewan Indian (Cuthand, 1995).[24] An article in the second edition of the paper, published in October 1970, outlined

[24] The FSI also received the $25,000 grant provided under the Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program for Native organizations to carry out communications work.

the role of the workers in the communications program at the Federation. They were to be registered Indians who could speak their Indian languages and who knew their Indian culture. They were elected to their positions as communications workers at the annual conference of the FSI and had dual roles as members of the FSIN executive and as communications specialists in the areas they represented: "When it is necessary that Indians speak in a unified voice at a regional or provincial level a communication officer can do this" (Saskatchewan Indian, October 1970, 1 (2): 3). In July 1971, Doug Cuthand, who had been the editor of the Native People in Edmonton, became the editor of the Saskatchewan Indian . Under his editorship, it remained a monthly publication (except for a nine month experiment as a biweekly publication in the mid-1970s). It was produced as a tabloid until 1975, when it changed to a magazine format that it kept until the early 1980s. It had an initial circulation of 3,000 copies that was increased to 7,000 in 1971 and claimed a readership of over 30,000 people (Saskatchewan Indian, November 1971, 2 (9): 16). By the late 1980s, it had reached its peak circulation of 10,000 copies, including almost 2,000 paid subscriptions (Cuthand, 1995). The rest were sent in bundles by second class mail and were distributed to households and band offices on every reserve in the province as well to many off-reserve organizations. In 1982, a Progressive Conservative government was elected in the province and within months, all provincial funding to the FSI had been terminated. Until the late 1980s, the

Saskatchewan Indian was published with financial support from the DSOS's Aboriginal Representative Organizations Program (AROP) and annual advertising revenue of about $50,000.

The importance of communications in the minds of the Saskatchewan Indian leadership was reflected in a paper they submitted to the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Indian Self-government in 1983 which indicated the critical importance of mass communications to the development of Indian self-government:

> Indian society needs mass communication systems that serve its needs and respect its characteristics and values. The existence of a strong effective communication system would strengthen Indian government at all levels. Communication is crucial to the equitable workings of the democratic process (FSIN, 1983: 1).

The vocabulary used in this submission reflected not only the characteristics and values of the Indian society, but also the rhetoric of the federal government which was publicly committed to fostering participation in the democratic process. The appeal to rational, administrative, goal-oriented justifications reflected the strategic direction of lobbying for federal funding using the state's own rhetoric.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of publications were created by the emergent political organizations in Eastern Canada. As described in an earlier section, the Micmac News was established in 1969. In Ontario, the Calumet was published between 1968 and 1970, "supported and approved by

the Executive of the Union of Ontario Indians" and from 1972 to 1973 the Ontario Native Examiner was produced by the Communications Division of the UOI in Toronto. The first issue of Agenutamagen was produced in November 1971, by the Union of New Brunswick Indians. It was produced under the editorship of a woman from the Woodstock reserve who had worked at a local publishing company. Agenutamagen, which means "news-" or "story-teller" in the Micmac and Maliseet languages was published monthly and was "designed to allow the expression of ideas and opinions by Indians or non-Indians" (Agenutamagen, April, 1973, 2 (6): 2).

In Western Canada, simultaneous developments were shaping the Aboriginal communications milieu. The Native Voice newspaper, published by the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia since 1946, was suspended with its November 1968 issue and restarted in November 1970 under the banner that it was "The official organ of the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia and the RAVEN Society." The RAVEN Society had been established in B.C. in 1969 as a registered, non-profit society, with a grant from the Donner Foundation, a philanthropic organization that supported a variety of Aboriginal communications and training projects. The Society (whose initials stood for Radio and Visual Education Network) was established by the chief of the Qualicum band, who became executive director; author and artist George Clutesi, who became the president of the RAVEN Society; and Senator Guy Williams, president of the

Native Brotherhood of BC and publisher of the Native Voice who was the chair of the

society.[25] The RAVEN Society in British Columbia received support from the Native Citizen's Directorate, starting in 1970, to publish a newsletter and to provide trail radios to fishermen. When the Native Communications Program expanded in 1980, additional funding was secured for technical maintenance of community radios and for the purchase of additional facilities and equipment. However, a political shift gave rise to new leadership in the society which was problematic for the administrators of NCP funding, because it had developed "strong political overtones" (Big Canoe,1995), and its political alliances contravened the criteria for NCP-funded societies, which were required to be independent of political organizations. When the new society did not comply with the NCP criteria, the NCP funding was reallocated to the Native Communications Society of British Columbia (NCSBC).

In 1970, the Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS) received $139,012 from the Native Citizens Directorate and became the model for

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[25] The earliest projects of the RAVEN Society included taking videotapes of government officials explaining policies related to B.C. natives into the communities and videotaping the reactions of people in the communities to bring back. They also received a small grant from the Leon and Thea Korner Foundation for building a cultural and historical library of colour film materials. The RAVEN Society also had the goal of linking Indian communities (especially those without phone or radio contact) by a radio network using the single-side band radio system with three private frequencies that the society had been licensed to operate.

Aboriginal communications societies in Canada (Demay, 1991: 98). In 1971, contributions and grants totalling $1,907,110 were made to programs in the Native Citizen's Development division, out of a total Citizenship budget of $6,315,694 (DSOS, 1971: 12). These funds were used to support the operation and administration of Indian, Metis and Inuit associations, conferences and to assist communication societies (DSOS, 1971: 12). As one observer remarked:

> Two decades earlier, some representatives of small, voluntary Indian associations had been prevented by Departmental officials from using band funds to travel to Ottawa to testify before the parliamentary committee established to examine federal Indian administration. By 1972 each of the three provincial Indian associations on the Prairies, for example, had annual operating budgets of more than a million dollars; their leaders headed programs to provide community development, health liaison, communications, sports and recreation, economic development liaison, and various educational services to reserve communities; they published newspapers, ran fleets of leased automobiles, and chartered aircraft to transport delegations of band chiefs to Ottawa; and they dispensed generous salaries and expense accounts (Dyck, 1991: 111).

Native Communications Societies in Alberta and British Columbia received a total of $701,003 with the ANCS receiving the lion's share of 93 percent (Demay, 1991: 98). Another publication was taking shape in the NWT, where on April 23, 1971 a single issue of a stencilled and stapled newsletter called the Brotherhood Report was issued by the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories. Within a month, the first issue of the Native Press was produced and distributed.

In 1972, Native communications projects in Alberta, B.C. and the N.W.T. received a total of $581,000 (Demay, 1991: 97). In 1972, the DSOS outlined policy objectives that included "full participation by all citizens in Canadian society; the reinforcement of Canadian identity and unity; the encouragement of cultural diversification within a bilingual framework; the preservation of human rights and individual freedoms; and the development of meaningful symbols of Canadian sovereignty" (DSOS,1972: 5). Corresponding with these broad national policy objectives, the Native Citizens' group of programs was described as "designed to enable the Native people of Canada to develop and maintain their culture and identity while sharing fully in the benefits of Canadian society" (DSOS,1972: 16).

Along with the emphasis on achieving a "just society" and encouraging all Canadians to participate in our democratic institutions, support for Native communications in this period also was attributed to the policy of multiculturalism that was introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau in 1971. Sceptics have called support for Aboriginal organizations "a sidestream effect of Canada's policy of bilingualism and multiculturalism - a policy designed to serve the 'national interest' by conciliating Quebec separatists without offending other immigrant groups in Canada" (Boldt, 1993: 78). Ironically, programs to strengthen Aboriginal culture and languages treated Indians, Inuit and Metis as if they were members of the immigrant minorities population.

In response to these culturally oriented goals, the radical Metis leader Howard Adams wrote an article in the New Breed newspaper entitled "The need for revolutionary struggle" in which he argued that:

> The white rulers know that a spirit of nationalism is rising among native people, so they are working to direct and control it . . . . They get native people all tied up in traditional native culture that is not linked to revolutionary politics (New Breed, January 1972: 6).

This criticism of state intervention is reiterated by a group of Canadian scholars who argued for active state intervention through public policy in democratic cultural development:

> We . . . share the scepticism of those who deplore, and of some who denounce, the uncommendable history of efforts to bend culture towards political ends, or to direct public cultural practices toward the tastes of bureaucrats and politicians (Raboy, Bernier, Sauvageau and Atkinson, 1994: 308).

In 1973, a total of $14,863,000 was allocated in the form of Citizenship Development grants, of which over half ($8,436,000) was allocated to the Native Citizens' program areas (DSOS, 1973), including $691,109 to Native communications (Demay, 1991: 98). In 1974, the Native Citizens' programs were granted a total of $9,403,633, out of a total Citizenship budget of $21,576,317. In 1975, the Native Citizens' Directorate was formally established within the Citizenship area "to assist native people to define and achieve their place in Canadian society by providing them with resources to identify their needs and actively undertake their development as Canadians" (DSOS,1975: 36).

Although the original idea to have communication programs including newspapers came from the Aboriginal leadership, the implementation of the plan was not spontaneous in the same way as the creation of newspapers by the bourgeois public sphere described by Habermas. First and foremost, the bourgeois had the resources to produce their own newspapers and journals and so their public sphere was much less open to interference or manipulation by external forces. The mainstream newspapers have not developed by being materially influenced by the governments that they challenged and criticized. However, the example of the Aboriginal newspapers was extraordinary since these newspapers were being supported materially, and in most cases were completely dependent, on the same authorities that they hoped to influence through the formation and dissemination of public opinion.

Chapter V

A NEW DAWN FOR ABORIGINAL NEWSPAPERS

The Native Communications Program (NCP): 1973 - 1990

Starting in the early 1970s, the Native Communication Societies in Alberta, British Columbia and the Northwest Territories lobbied for additional funding so they could expand their services. The federal government agreed that there was a need for Native communications, especially print and point-to-point communication, e.g., trail radio (Big Canoe, 1995). Consequently, a new program for Native Communications Societies was developed "to encourage the development and effective use of communications media among native people" (DSOS, 1975: 36). The Native Communications Program (NCP) received its first mandate from the federal government in December 1973 (Lougheed and Associates, 1986: 1-1). It was administered by the Native Citizen's Directorate which had as its main objective "to assist native people in defining and participating in the social, cultural, political and economic issues affecting their lives in Canada" (DSOS, 1985) . The Native Citizen's Directorate was part of the Citizenship Development Planning Element, Department of the Secretary of State (DSOS) which had as its primary objective:

> To ensure that all Canadians have equal and equitable opportunities to further their personal and collective development in Canadian society and to fully participate in

> shaping the social, cultural, political and economic environment that affects them (DSOS, 1987:111).

This primary objective was divided into sub-objectives that referred to a series of anticipated results of the program:

> 1. Increased understanding of Canadian institutions (legal, social, fiscal and legislative) by Canadian citizens and improved responsiveness of institutions to Canadian needs, interests and values;
> 2. Enhanced personal development and identity, skills, knowledge abilities and attitudes;
> 3. Strengthened organizations representative of the broad range of issues and concerns of constituencies;
> 4. Strengthened community vitality and viability through improved services and infrastructures;
> 5. Increased and improved relationships and interaction as well as appreciation and acceptance of diversity among Canadians (DSOS, 1986/87: 111).

The objectives of the Native Communications Program were "clarified" several times; however, its primary objective remained constant: "To enable native people to develop and control modern communication networks" (Lougheed, 1986: 1-3).

The NCP was not developed specifically to support the print media, but was developed initially as a communication fund. Newspapers were the media of choice for the majority of societies because their opportunities were limited by technology and resources (Woolner, 1995). Between 1974 and 1990, twelve Native Communications Societies received NCP support for publishing newspapers, providing trail radio and developing educational materials. When the NCP

was first implemented, the societies that were already delivering communication services in their regions were "grandfathered" into the program (Big Canoe, 1995).

In the early years of the program, the NCP also provided funding to political organizations that had developed newspapers, and trail radio and community radio networks, because these organizations were the only ones with a communications infrastructure already in place (Woolner, 1995). However, the NCP was established to fund only non-political societies organized to operate at arms length from political organizations:

> Eligibility criteria require the Society to be a registered voluntary organization, to be controlled and operated by native peoples, and to aim at serving native peoples in the organization's state territory. Native political organizations are not eligible to receive sustaining funding under the NCP (Lougheed and Associates, 1986: 1-5).

The requirement that the societies be independent of the political organizations was limiting in a number of tangible ways. It reflected the perceived need to "democratize" the Aboriginal print media by taking it out of the control of the political organizations, thereby moving it in the direction of a "free press" model of the mass media. However, as so many have pointed out (see Keane, 1989; Warner, 1993; Garnham, 1986 and Raboy, 1994 for examples), this assumption that not being controlled by political authorities necessarily made the mass media "free" is naive.

Another reason for removing the newspapers from the direct authority of the politicians was to refocus the attention of the newspapers as created public spheres. It was hoped that the newspapers would assume the role of public watchdogs of their own political organizations and would be less vigilant of the interests represented in policies and programs of the Canadian state, which, after all, was providing the material support for the publications. Finally, it was hoped that a shift of focus to other areas of societal development, such as language and culture, which were clearly areas of priority in the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program that was implemented in 1983, would occur when the publications were removed from the direct control of Aboriginal politicians.

In the early years of the program, the NCP provided increasing support to the regional communication societies: in 1974-75, nine societies received $976,135 and, in 1975-76, they received a total of $1,258,000. Almost one third of the grant allotment for the societies went to the Alberta Native Communications Society, which was the largest and best established of the regional societies, with almost ten years of experience producing radio programs, a weekly newspaper, slide shows and films (DSOS, 1975: 36). In 1976-77, the NCP received approval from Cabinet and the Treasury Board[26] and in that year,

[26] The other program that supported Native newspapers was delivered by the Native Citizen's Directorate. Grants with a maximum value of $25,000 were given to Native associations that were already receiving core funding under Aboriginal Representatives Organization Program (AROP) in order to produce newsletters. In 1974-75, fourteen Native newspapers produced by Native associations were granted a total of $318,310 (DSOS 1975, 36), and in 1978-79, fifteen Native associations received funding in the amount of $325,000

eleven societies received $1,567,474 (DSOS, 1976). In 1977-78, twelve Native Communications Societies received a total of $1,695,663 and the first phase of an evaluation of the NCP was completed in January 1978.

Funding was generally limited to one society in each region. Even when there were applications from other Native Communications Societies, it was the policy of the Department to resist pressure to provide funding to different publications in one region. Since the funding for the existing societies was increasingly inadequate, there was great resistance on the part of program administrators to divide it up among even more organizations (Woolner, 1995). According to the Chief of the Communications and Broadcast Programs, if more money had been available, additional societies would have been created in under-served regions such as southern Ontario (Woolner, 1995). One of the effects of this situation was that it was left to one society in each region to provide information required by Metis, non-status Indian and Indian people to deliberate on issues of concern to them, as well as providing a defined discursive arena for their deliberations to take place.

Following from the insights of Nancy Fraser (1992, 1993), we can consider how difficult this task must have been, especially since the participants for the different groups had distinct communication styles and protocols, and the issues of concern to the groups not only varied greatly but often conflicted.[27]

(DSOS 1979, 23).

[27] A good example of such an issue is the Lavallee court case in the early

Additional research to evaluate the impact of this policy insofar as it weakened the performance of the newspapers as public spheres remains to be done at the micro level. However, a review of the regional publications provides evidence that each of the publications was dominated by the concerns of one group, and that others were not able to introduce their concerns into the public arenas provided by the newspapers.[28]

In its 1977-78 annual report, the DSOS first noted that the NCP provided grants only to communication societies that were non-political. In 1978, the Citizenship branch became the Citizenship and Bilingualism Development branch, which reflected Prime Minister Trudeau's emphasis on Canada as a bilingual state. A new program called "Consultation on Canada's Future" (DSOS,1978: 59) was established to promote the democratic ideals of participation, grassroots dialogue, volunteerism and the opening of societal institutions (DSOS, 1987: 61). In 1979, eleven native communications societies were granted $1,741,000 (DSOS, 1979: 23). The Citizenship branch underwent

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1970s in which Jeanette Lavell contested her loss of Indian status under the 1960 Canadian Bill of Rights (Jamieson, 1978). Most of the newspapers were dominated by Indian political organizations, which did not support Lavell (Wotherspoon and Satewich, 1993: 31). The editorials surveyed in my research showed a distinct bias against her and, I would suggest, did not represent (or invite representations of) the argument from the non-status Indian perspective.

[28] This situation remained a concern throughout the life of the program. In fact, in the 1986 evaluation of the NCP and NNBAP, one of the findings regarding the administration of the NCP was that most of the societies were not satisfied with the Program criteria and recommended that it should "permit separate funding of Metis, non-Status Indian, and Status Indian organizations" (Lougheed, 1986: 1-17).

another name change, to Citizenship and Official Languages sector, and it was noted that one of the departments major projects was "Provision of policy development expertise in the area of native communications" (DSOS, 1979: 9).

In 1980, eleven societies were granted a total of $1,778,539 (DSOS, 1980, 22). A cabinet document on Native communications called for increased support for the establishment of societies in regions that were not being served by NCSs, and for expansion into radio. A committee was also formed to explore extending the involvement of the federal government and enhancing the Native Communications Program (Big Canoe, 1995). The mandate of the NCP was extended to March 31, 1981 while the revised program, designed to reflect the federal government's socio-economic goals of fostering a "sense of belonging to Canada . . . through participation and communication" (DSOS, 1981: 1) was being developed. In 1981, $1.8 million was allocated to the NCP; and in 1982, thirteen societies were given grants and contributions totalling $2.6 million for library services, radio and television programming, newspapers and training.

In a 1982 program assessment, the program objectives were evaluated and its sub-objectives were reformulated:

> To extend the social development programs for citizens of native origin in accordance with the priority assigned by them to communications activities;
>
> To extend the scope and impact of native communications models which have demonstrated their worth to their client group in terms of information exchange, cultural preservation,

> social development and training, and to apply the knowledge and experienced [sic] gained through developing these projects to the similar needs of other native groups;
>
> To respond, on the basis of coherent and consistent criteria to the expressed needs of native groups for improved communications to compliment the current social development programs;
>
> To broaden the base of meaningful participation by citizens of native origin by providing access to professional and financial resources and training on all levels of communication among themselves, with other groups, with the larger society, and with decision-makers; and
>
> To ensure effective co-ordination of the interests and competence of departments and agencies concerned with communication activities by citizens of native origin (DSOS, 1982).

The objectives of the NCP were further clarified with the establishment of "implicit Program objectives":

> Enhancement of the social, cultural, and political development of native people in Canada through native managed and controlled communications projects and systems; and
>
> Enhancement of native people's capacity to exchange information with each other, government departments and agencies, and with Canadian Society at large on matters related to social and political development, cultural preservation, communication technologies, organizational models, and training requirements" (DSOS, 1982).

Although an extensive correlation of the content of the newspapers to the federal government's policies of the day is potentially revealing, it is outside the scope of this research project. However, the less detailed surveys that were

carried out for this thesis certainly give the impression that the editors and publishers were cognizant of their prescribed roles in furthering the goals set out for them in their funding criteria. The fact that the societies had to make annual applications for their funding, which often involved participating in extensive budgetary discussions with the bureaucrats who administered the NCP (and the NNBAP after 1983), suggests that they were aware of federal initiatives and aware of how these initiatives impacted on expectations about the operation of the newspapers. This situation supports the inference that the newspapers were being manipulated by the very state authorities that the newspapers, as public spheres, were intending to influence. The question of the capacity of these newspapers to provide forums where free exchanges and debates were possible is difficult to assess, and the degree to which public opinion that opposed federal policies and programs was in turn formulated and disseminated in an unrestricted fashion is difficult to evaluate as well. However, the evidence points to an evaluation that the communications societies were responding as much, if not more, to their government funders as to the communities they were established to serve.

The Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) was established in April 1983 with a mandate for four years and a budget of $40.3 million for the first four years. It was created as a result of the northern broadcasting policy developed by the Departments of Communication, Indian and Northern

Affairs and the Secretary of State. It was established to give thirteen independent native communication societies (many of which were funded under the NCP) financial support for radio and television programming that promoted Native languages and cultures. In its first year, the NNBAP was allotted $9.3 million (Demay, 1991: 99). In the same year, the NCP was allocated $3.4 million to "enable Native citizens to control their own modern communications networks" (DSOS, 1984). The focus of the NNBAP was much more oriented to language and culture, having as its first primary objective to "Contribute to the protection and enhancement of native languages and cultures in the North" (Lougheed, 1986: 2-2). The operating budgets of the societies funded under the Native Communications Program remained at a level of $3.4 million[29] until the death of the program in 1990 (Demay, 1991b: 99).

In 1985-86, the total cost of the Native Communications Program was $4.2 million, including the capital component allocated to allow the societies to upgrade buildings and equipment (DSOS, 1986: 36). From the five societies that received NCP grants in 1974, the number grew to fourteen societies in 1985-86. The level of support for each society was determined based on their initial funding level (Big Canoe, 1995). The largest component was core or operational funding, which was elevated only slightly over the years. However, after 1981,

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[29] The NCP did provide additional funding for community radio maintenance, special projects, training and media workshops, and capital assets between 1985 and 1990.

the societies also applied for and received additional funding for training and media workshops, community radio maintenance and special projects.

In 1986, a "program evaluation" of the NCP and the NNBAP was carried out by Lougheed and Associates for the Department of the Secretary of State. They determined that the increase in the combined circulation of the newspapers in the early 1980s was dramatic: 27,000 in 1982/83, 33,000 in 1984/85 and 46,000 in 1985/85 (Lougheed, 1986: 4-15). Lougheed's evaluation also included the calculation that the 25,000 newspaper subscribers represented one of every four native households (based on the estimated 100,000 native households from the 1981 Statistic Canada survey). Since the societies had carried out no formal audience surveys (Lougheed, 1986: 4-9), and the surveys that had been carried out did not ask "appropriate kinds of questions" (Lougheed, 1986: 4-1), Lougheed attempted to assess whether the output and services of the societies reflected the principle objectives of the programs that funded them. To evaluate the output of the newspapers, the study selected one issue from each of the eleven papers that were published in March 1986 and carried out a basic content analysis. It found that of the 338 items surveyed (not including advertising), forty-seven percent fit the category of social and political items.[30] Only sixteen

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[30] The category included stories about health; housing; education; economic issues; native businesses; native government; federal, provincial and territorial governments; programs for native people; employment; stories about other native communities; court cases dealing with aboriginal rights and negotiations with governments (Lougheed, 1986: 4-7).

percent of the items fit the language and culture category and 6.5 percent of the copy was made up of letters to the editor, all of which fell into one of the two categories: "those which commented on the quality of the publication and those which addressed issues having been covered previously" (Lougheed, 1986: 4-14). Five percent of the items fit the news and information category, which included stories about Canadian politics and international issues. The explanations given for the low level of attention to Canadian and international politics was that the Societies gave priority to gathering and dissemination of "native news." Also, the NCP-funded print media producers did not have the resources to gather general news and information, given the high cost of wire services (Lougheed, 1986: 4-7). In terms of impact on readership, the lack of data from formal audience surveys led the researchers to rely on the informally collected feedback provided by the societies themselves: the NWT society indicated that in their 1984 survey, 75 percent of respondents said that they read the Native Press; and Wawatay indicated that their information was that Wawatay News was "an important regional information source read by 91 percent of respondents at least sometimes" (Lougheed, 1986: 4-15). In the limited discussion of these results, Lougheed indicated that the emphasis of the newspapers on news and current affairs corresponded to the objective of the NCP: "To ensure that all Canadians have equal and equitable opportunities to further their personal and collective development in Canadian society and to fully participate in shaping the

social, cultural, political and economic environment that affects them" (DSOS, 1986/87 III). However, the fact that the evaluation was carried out with the goal of assessing whether the newspapers furthered the objectives of the program that funded them, with no regard for the objectives of the editors and publishers (or the boards made up of members of the Aboriginal community), indicated that the newspapers were not funded with the goal of furthering the democratic, social, cultural, political or economic development of the Aboriginal communities that they served, except insofar as that development was a by-product of fulfilling the objectives of the Canadian government.

In 1987, the program was renewed on a "permanent" basis (DSOS 1987, i). The societies were allocated a total of $4 million (DSOS, 1987: 3) and approval was given, for 1987-88, to provide additional funding in the amount of $1,000,000 for capital equipment purchases and renovations" (DSOS, 1989-90 Estimates: 53). The Native Citizens Directorate was described as "support[ing] Canada's Aboriginal people in their efforts to resolve social, cultural, political, and economic issues." (DSOS, 1988: 3). However, in this period, a stipulation was added that "each applicant will be expected to indicate an attempt to raise funds privately" (DSOS, 1985: 12), an effort to push the publications in the direction of commercial self-sufficiency. This kind of push has been observed in other areas of "cultural development": "In Canada . . . a critical shift has occurred . . . [such that] the role of the state in culture has gradually been displaced from an

emphasis on cultural development toward economic development of cultural industries" (Raboy: 1994: 301).

In 1989, an amalgamated Department called Multiculturalism and Citizenship was created and the Native Citizens Directorate was moved to the Social Development division of the Department of the Secretary of State. Aboriginal language was a priority (DSOS, 1989: 33) and, ominously, the 1989 Annual Report contained no textual support regarding the Native Communications Program. However, the 1989-90 Estimates did point out that the mandate of the Native Communications Program had been renewed on a permanent basis in 1987 (DSOS, 1989: 53). The NCP funded sixteen societies which published twelve regional papers and supported high frequency (HF) trail and community radio, and the National Aboriginal Communications Society (NACS) received funding in 1989-90 to represent societies funded under the Native Communications Program and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program" (DSOS, 1989: 53).[31]

Native Communications Societies

In the 1970s, many of the Native political publications were turned over to independent Native communications societies in order to be eligible for federal funding under the Native Communications Program (NCP). The following brief

[31] The National Aboriginal Communications Society was established in 1986 to provide a public sphere about Aboriginal communications. The main activity of the organization was lobbying for additional funding for the societies.

"smapshots" of the NCSs, include a summary of funding levels and some administrative history. These histories are somewhat uneven. Funding data is available for specific years in DSOS evaluations; however, the more detailed administrative histories rely on data collected in interviews with informants from the societies, and in some cases key informants could not be located, e.g., the Native Press from the NWT and the Saskatchewan Metis newspaper New Breed. In the cases of the two Inuit papers, Tusaayaksat and Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk, the societies were created much later than others--around 1983 when the NNBAP funding became available. Consequently, the histories of these publications are shorter or contain less detail that others. The histories in this section end in 1990, the year the NCP was terminated. A later section picks up the threads and explores the operation (and in some cases, termination) of the societies between 1990 and 1995.

- **Native People/Windspeaker (Alberta)**

The first Native communications society was established in Edmonton in the late 1960s, when Eugene Steinhauer, who has been referred to as the "father of Native communications" (Rupert, 1987), founded the Alberta Native Communications Society (ANCS). The ANCS received federal and provincial support for its radio productions, and started publishing The Native People newspaper in July 1968. Support from the two levels of government has been

explained as "efforts in the area of rural economic development" (Demay, 97). The Native People ceased publication with its December 3, 1982 issue: "more a result of political infighting and administrative distress than of the societies communications performance" (Rupert, 1987). According to the NCP program officer, the ANCS had been experiencing financial problems and was placed under monthly auditing and monitoring by NCP accountants. When some of the managers of the ANCS did not co-operate, funding to the Alberta Native Communications Society was discontinued in January 1983 (Big Canoe, 1995). In its place, the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta (AMMSA) was incorporated and started receiving NCP funding in March 1983. It published the AMMSA newsletter until March 1986 when the name of the publication was changed to Windspeaker: "A new dawn in Aboriginal communications." The Alberta society also made an application to the new NNBAP and, with funding from it, developed a community radio station with call numbers CFWE-FM. It produced "The Native Perspective," a daily radio program in Cree and English. In 1985-86, AMMSA received $434,000 under the NCP,[32] $370,000 under the NNBAP,[33] additional moneys from the province's Municipal Affairs office and

[32] This amount includes a capital assets component of $100,000 that was allocated in 1985-86 and in 1986-87 to finance the society's purchase of a building in Edmonton to house their radio and newspaper operations (Big Canoe 1995).

[33] All NCP and NNBAP funding levels for the 1985-86 fiscal year are taken from the "Report on the Native Communication Program and the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program" prepared by Lougheed and Associates, 1986.

revenue from advertising and subscriptions (NACS, 1987). However, in 1986, the Alberta government announced its intention to phase out its support for Native communications over the next three years, ending in 1989 (Crowfoot, 1995). Until 1989-90, AMMSA's NCP funding remained steady at $434,282.[34] Windspeaker was being published weekly. It had completed the first two years of a five year plan for self-sufficiency, and with the revenue it had generated from advertising and subscriptions, it had created a "contingency fund" of almost a quarter of a million dollars (Crowfoot, 1995).

- **Kainai News (Southern Alberta)**

Alberta was also home to Kainai News which was published from February 15, 1968 until November 1970 by the Blood Indians of the Blood Indian reserve in Southern Alberta's Indian News Media (INM). It started out as a bi-monthly publication and ten years later, it was being published weekly with a circulation of 6,000 (NACS 1987). The INM received $273,000 from the NCP in 1985-86, as well as some additional funding from the provincial government for special projects and equipment, though not for operations (Smallface-Marule, 1995). The INM was also operating the Blackfoot Radio Network, with low power radio transmitters around the Blood Reserve near Cardston (NACS, 1987). The community radio project had been established with a grant from the

[34] The 1989-90 operational funding figures for each society were provided by the NCP program officer from NCP funding summaries.

Department of Communications for equipment and it received a small operating grant from the provincial government (Smallface-Marule, 1995). By the late 1980s, Kainai News was receiving $273,000 in core funding from the NCP, in additional to generating as much as 40 percent of its total income from advertising (Smallface-Marule, 1995).

- **Katou (Native Communications Society of British Columbia)**

When NCP funding to the RAVEN Society was discontinued due to its political affiliations, funding for the B.C. region was reallocated to the Native Communications Society of B.C. It was established in 1983 and with NCP grants, it published the Vancouver-based Katou, which had a circulation of 8,500 by the mid-1980s (NACS, 1987). In 1985-86, it received $241,000 from the NCP with which to serve the 572 Indian bands in the province as well as non-status people and other Native organizations. By 1986, Katou was employing a dozen people (Barbour 1995). It also had an operating deficit of about $250,000 which made it necessary to place far more emphasis on developing a strong advertising base . According to the Katou editor, the staff had a vision and a sense of what they needed to do in order to survive. The process of change, however, was slowed by their board of directors, some of who were politicians who were committed to "playing it safe" (Barbour, 1995). For example, the board of directors had refused to allow sales people to follow up their sales letters with phone

calls. After the editor and sales staff convinced the board members that they would have to spend money to make money, advertising sales increased dramatically (Barbour, 1995). The staff also saw the opportunity to become more automated with computer technology. Through a Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) training project, they were able to acquire computers and hire computer trainees. Efforts to make Katou more economically self-sufficient started in the late 1980s. These were accompanied by attempts to restructure the organization to make the newspaper an independent entity, with the NCSBC acting as a parallel organization. Negotiations were initiated in which the tribal councils in B.C. were offered shares in the society; however, lack of confidence in the organization on the part of some of the board members, who were also tribal council members, meant that others were reluctant to buy the shares and, in the end, the effort failed (Barbour, 1995). In 1989-90, core funding from the NCP had dropped to $228,544.

- **Wawatay News (Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Northern Ontario)**

The Wawatay Native Communications Society was created in 1973 by an organization of chiefs from the Treaty Nine area in Northern Ontario (Kidd, 1990: 95). In a brief to the minister of communication, the chiefs explained that:

> Until recently there have been almost no way for chiefs and community leaders to discuss matters of importance--except over the Bell Radio Telephone system which is done through an operator in Kenora--and which does not serve many

> communities, and which is not very reliable (Hudson, 1974: 234).

In response, the Department of Communications sponsored the Northern Pilot Project, which provided sixteen communities with HF trail radios for "facilitating the exchange of information about regional events, Native economic and political matters and government affairs" (Kidd, 1990: 96; see also Stiles, 1986). In 1974, Wawatay Native Communications Society started providing trail radios to trappers. It also purchased the rights to a publication called Keesis that had been produced by the Sioux Lookout Friendship Centre and renamed it Wawatay News. The first issue appeared in January 1974 (Kidd, 1990: 165). It was published to serve the people of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) on 50 northern Ontario reserves in the Treaty 9 region, and by the mid-1980s, the monthly Wawatay News had a circulation of 2,600 copies. Stories were printed in English, Cree and Ojibway-Cree syllabics (NACS, 1987).

Wawatay Native Communications Society also received funding from the NNBAP starting in 1982, to operate 26 community radio stations in northern Ontario and produce Oji-Cree television programming that was broadcast on the TV Ontario network. In 1985-86, Wawatay was receiving almost $1 million from the Secretary of State programs: $333,000 from the Native Communications Program and an additional $620,000 from the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program. Wawatay News also generated revenue from advertising, which filled about 30 percent of the total space. Prior to 1990, it employed an editor,

reporter, layout person and advertising sales person (Mombourquette, 1995). In 1989-90, the Society received $320,440 from the NCP.[35] Wawatay News had become a biweekly publication and the Society was considering options that would make it more self-sufficient. Among these options were becoming a weekly publication, entering in to a partnership with the Sioux Lookout Bulletin, and expanding into the Kenora, Thunder Bay and Timmins markets, which had many more potential advertisers than there were in the rural communities with their traditional economics that had been served by the publication (Mombourquette, 1995).

- **Dan Sha (Ye Sa To Native Communications Society)**

In the Yukon, the Thay Lun Lin Communications Society started publishing the Yukon Indian News in 1972 (NACS, 1987). The Society was renamed the Ye Sa To Native Communications Society in 1974 and started receiving NCP funding to produce a biweekly newspaper with a new name Dan Sha. Although the Yukon Indian News had focused on news items, Dan Sha had the goal of being "a paper of record," with more human interest and Aboriginal issues articles (NACS, 1987). The publication remained biweekly until 1984 when financial difficulty resulting from funding delays[36] caused the society to switch to

[35] This figure includes not only operational component, but also funding under the technical maintenance, and training and media workshops components of the NCP.

[36] The evaluation produced by Lougheed and Associates in 1986 reports that all of

a monthly publication schedule (Vance-Duchesne, 1995). In 1985-86, Ye Sa To received $151,000 under the NCP and funding remained steady at this level until 1989-90 when they received $151,050. In 1989, Dan Sha became a glossy magazine. It had a circulation of 10,000 copies, which were sent to all of the Yukon reserves and to subscribers and retail outlets across the Yukon and in major centers across Canada. The Ye Sa To Society was committed to the goal of achieving financial self-sufficiency-- between 1985 and 1990, revenue generated through advertising, special projects[37] and subscriptions had almost surpassed the level of their government funding (Vance-Duchesne, 1995). Although Yukon Indian News and Dan Sha had been published in English only, between 1989 and 1992, the society was able to have parts of the paper translated into Aboriginal languages through the Aboriginal languages service that was set up by the territorial government in Whitehorse. In 1989, the Society approached NCP program officers with the proposal that Ye Sa To receive secure funding for five years--during which time the society would develop the business aspect of its operations, including its advertising base, production contracts, and a marketing strategy. Following the five year transition period, the society would not require any further government funding. The was rejected

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the NCP funded societies had experienced delays ranging from one to nine months in receiving their funding (see Section 1-27).

[37] For example, Ye Sa To produced 50,000 copies of a tourist publication called *Shakat* annually from 1980 to 1990.

because federal funding was allocated on a yearly basis only (Big Canoe, 1995). Six months later the Native Communications Program was discontinued.

- **Micmac News (Nova Scotia)**

In 1975, Union of Nova Scotia Indians and its communication department were threatened by the creation of a separate organization for non-status Indians which limited financing to the Union and the communications department. These factors limited the development of the department as well as jeopardising its communications projects (Douglas, Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 2). Roy Gould (who was the publisher of the Micmac News from 1969 until 1990) left UNSI and created the Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia. After it was turned over to the Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia (NCSNS) and incorporated in 1975, it became one of the first independent publications to receive funding under the Native Communications Program (Rupert, 1987):

> "The Society was formed in order to meet the criteria of the program administered by the Department of the Secretary of State to become a separate identity from various native political organisations . . . . From meagre beginnings as an information vehicle of the Union, the publication broke out on its own in 1976, with financial assistance from the federal government's Native Communications Program, to serve the entire native population of Nova Scotia, independent of the native political movement from which it evolved" (Douglas, Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 2).

The Board of Directors of the new Society included representatives from the UNSI, the Native Youth Association, the Native Women's Association, the

Non-status Indian and Metis Association, the Friendship Centre and the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling Centre. The early arrangement also called on the supporting organizations to provide office space and field staff (Micmac News, October 1975, 4 (10): 1). By February 1976, 5,000 copies were being distributed free to the on-reserve households of the thirteen Nova Scotia bands, and to paid subscribers throughout Canada and the United States, and there were requests for its expansion into Prince Edward Island and from the Boston Indian Council (Micmac News, February 1976, 5 (2)). In 1985-86, it received $250,000 from the NCP and was being published monthly with a circulation of 4,500 (NACS, 1987). The paper had additional revenue from ad sales; however, the ad rates were low in order to appeal to organizations and businesses that wanted to reach the wide geographic area covered by the publication: five reserves on Cape Breton Island and the other eight small reserves on the Nova Scotia mainland (Paul, 1995). The staff of the paper took pride in the fact that the Micmac News was of high journalistic quality (Rupert, 1987). In 1989-90, the society received $253,410 in core funding from the NCP (including $14,310 that was earmarked for training). Ads, circulation subscriptions and society sponsored bingo games generated an additional $80,000 annually (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 46).

- **Native Press (Native Communications Society of the Western NWT)**

The Native Press was taken over by the Native Communications Society of the Western Northwest Territories in 1976 (NACS, 1987). In 1983, it had a circulation of 4,900. The tabloid was published biweekly and distributed free to Dene and Metis readers. In 1985, the society started providing community radio service to twelve towns and villages and was in the process of expanding its radio network to another eleven communities (NACS, 1987). Funding for the Society came from both the NCP, in the amount of $240,000, and the NNBAP, in the amount of $480,000 in 1985-86. By 1989-90, their NCP core funding had dropped slightly to $217,194.

- **New Breed (Saskatchewan Native Communications Society)**

The New Breed started receiving Secretary of State funding in 1981 (Rupert, 1987). By 1985-86, it was receiving financial support from the provincial government, as well as $132,000 from the federal NCP (NACS, 1987). By 1989-90, their core funding had decreased slightly to $128,384.

- **Cree Ajemoon (James Bay Cree Communications Society)**

In 1978, the Cree Ajemoon magazine was passed from the Cree Regional Authority to the newly created James Bay Cree Communications Society (JBCCS) and the society started receiving core funding from the NCP in 1982

(Big Canoe, 1995). The magazine had a circulation of about 1,500 copies that were mailed to subscribers and made available free at the radio stations and other distributions points in the communities (Petawabano, 1995). It received about $80,000 annually from the NCP as well as NNBAP funding for regional radio that started in 1984 (Orr, 1995). According to the JBCCS president, payment of funding dollars under the NCP was very slow and the society was forced to obtain bridge financing from the board of compensation that manages the funds from the JBNQA (Orr, 1995). The society moved its office to Val D'Or in 1984 in order to centralize its operation, with radio and television studios and the newspaper in one building. Shortly after, the office was moved to Mistissini which had become the centre for the society's regional radio service which was operating seven community radio stations by the mid-1980s (NACS, 1987). In 1985, the society purchased a computer system with desktop publishing software, scanner and printer, and developed its own syllabic font for publishing in Cree (Orr, 1995). With the use of the new computer technology, the magazine switched from a quarterly to a bi-monthly publication. Although the newspaper was supposed to be a cultural publication, the JBCCS president and others wanted it to contain more news and investigative reporting. In fact, the magazine did publish articles critical of the board of compensation (Orr ,1995). Financial difficulties in the publishing arm of the JBCCS lead to the society to stop publishing and the NCP funding for Cree Ajemoon was discontinued in

January 1986. In 1985-86, JBCCS was receiving no support under the NCP but received $370,000 under the NNBAP.

- **Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk (Okalakatiget Communications Society)**

When the Okalakatiget Communications Society was formed in 1982, it was seen as the logical group to take over publication of Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk (Williams, 1995). The Society started receiving funding for its core operations and the monthly newsletter under the Native Communications Program in 1984, and soon after, it started to receive funding under the new Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) to produce programming for its radio network and CBC's northern radio service and two half-hour television shows monthly (NACS, 1987). Funding for the Okalakatiget Society came entirely from the Secretary of State: in 1985-86, the society received $128,000 from the NCP and $465,000 under the NNBAP. Prior to 1990, the tabloid size newspaper was fully reliant on the NCP, with no other government funding, advertising revenue or subscription revenue (Williams, 1995). In 1989-90, the Okalakatiget Society received $130,716 in core funding from the NCP.

- **Tusaayaksat (Inuvialuit Communications Society)**

In 1983, Inuvialuit was turned over to the Inuvialuit Communications Society (ICS) and the name of the publication was changed to Tusaayaksat.[38]

[38] The other communications tool developed by the ICS was television

The ICS produced it monthly as an "informational paper . . . not into hard-core news" (Gordon, 1995). It had a circulation of 1,800 copies, of which 1,120 were subscriptions paid for by the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, which was formed in 1984 as the regulatory body of the regional land claim. Its annual subscription sponsorship of $32,000 covered the delivery of one copy to the household of every land claim beneficiary. The rest were sold in convenience stores. In 1985-86, the amount of their NCP funding was $135,000. The Society also received $450,000 from the NNBAP for television training that started in 1984 and the programming was first broadcast on the CBC's northern service in 1985. Prior to 1990, Tusaayaksat depended almost entirely on their NCP grant and had almost no advertising (Gordon, 1995). By 1989-90, its NCP core funding was $106,000.

- **Saskatchewan Indian (Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation)**

In 1988, the editor of the Saskatchewan Indian established the Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation (SIMC) with an independent board in order to conform to the funding guidelines of the Native Communications Program. The SIMC received $100,000 in operational funding from the NCP in 1989-90 and for the next year they published the monthly tabloid. The

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programming. Television training started in 1984 and the ICS programming was first broadcast on the CBC's northern service in 1985.

Saskatchewan Indian lost its NCP funding in September 1990 when the final payments under the Secretary of State program were made.

The Reliance on Government Funding

The importance of government funding to the development and the survival of the Native communications societies cannot be overstated. The 1986 evaluation of the Native communications societies (Lougheed and Associates, 1986) pointed out that as much as 90 percent of the principal activity of the societies was directly related to the funding provided under the NCP and the NNBAP. Also observed was that the balance of the activity of the societies would not be possible without the core support provided under the Secretary of State programs (Lougheed, 1986: 5-7). Funding was generally limited to one society in each region. Even when there were applications from other native communications societies, it was the policy of the department to resist pressure to split funding up among different publications in one region. The reasoning was that the funding was not adequate even for the societies that already were delivering communication services, and that given the limited resources, it was preferable to centralize funding in one society (Woolner, 1995). According to the chief of the Communications and Broadcast Programs, more money was needed to create additional societies in under-served regions like as southern Ontario (Woolner, 1995).

Over the years, many of the societies attempted to broaden their funding base. For a time, the Alberta Native Communications Society received provincial support, but that was phased out between 1986 and 1989. While the Saskatchewan Indian was being published by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, from the early 1970s until 1982, it, too, received provincial support. In the other regions of the country, however, especially in the Maritimes, provincial support was limited to "moral support" (Rupert, 1987). Many of the societies also attempted to generate revenue through advertising. However, societies located in remote regions with little economic development, had virtually no opportunity to expand their funding base. According to the Lougheed report, "Total self-sufficiency, and in some cases even limited self-sufficiency, is not a reasonable expectation" (Lougheed, 1986: 5-9). Further, efforts to generate funds through private and public fund-raising has the affect of draining "their limited human resources, thus hindering achievement of their private objectives." Funding available through the Native Communications Program was critical to the development and continued publication of many the Native newspapers.

Termination of Funding: The 1990 Federal Budget

In March 1990, the federal budget announced that the Native Communications Program was to be completely eliminated. The communications societies that had been funded only under the NCP would receive funding for six

months and those that received NCP and NNBAP funding would receive their NCP allotment for just three months.

The search for an answer to the question why the Native Communications Program was terminated in 1990 was difficult to reconstruct. In the opinion of some societies, the program was cut because the NCP-funded newspapers had become too critical "not only of their own governments but of all governments . . . . We did our jobs too well" (Vance-Duchesne, 1995). According to a program officer of the NCP, the federal government's rationale for the NCP cut was that the government's involvement in Native communications had evolved on two fronts: the NCP in the 1970s and the NNBAP in the 1980s. By 1990, it was reasoned that the government should continue to support Native communications, but only through the broadcasting undertakings that had the capacity to reach the most people (Big Canoe, 1995). The head of the NCP and NNBAP programs throughout the 1980s and early 1990s suggested that the NCP funded newspapers were not able to be rationalised in light of emerging public policy (Woolner, 1995). The NCP was a small but visible anomaly in government programs. Even though the Native Communications Program provided funding for community and trail radio, it was administered in the social development context of the Department of the Secretary of State, rather than in a broadcasting context. This gave it the appearance of being a rich program among the smaller, less expensive non-profit organizations that were also funded under the

Native Citizens' Directorate (Woolner, 1995). To a large extent, it had also become a newspaper program and there was a feeling in government that the operation of a newspaper was not a proper place for government (Woolner, 1995).[39] This was understandable in the context of an open economy such as Canada's, in which policy interventions that interfered with supply and demand in the marketplace were continually being challenged (Raboy, 1994: 306). However, one way that the government intervention was justifiable was by appealing to the principle of accessibility and arguing that only through government support were Aboriginal people to have future access to the publishing market.

The Immediate Reaction to the 1990 Budget

Following the announcement of the cuts, the Native communications societies organized a lobby effort in support of their program. Over fifteen hundred letters were received, "the most correspondence that any issue in recent memory had generated," according to the NCP program officer (Big

[39] The difficulty rationalizing government-funded, independent communications organizations had been realized and was taken into account in the design of the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, which has as its mandate the preservation and enhancement of Aboriginal cultures and languages, rather than the creation of vehicle of communication (DSOS, 1985). In the late 1980s, a lobby effort to put the NCP and NNBAP together was carried out. Had the merger been successful, it might have served to highlight the uniqueness of the programs and made it easier to rationalize the continuation of both. But the NCP alone was an easy target for people looking for a way to make budget cuts (Woolner, 1995).

Canoe, 1995). The campaign attracted the attention of the literary organization PEN International, a political action collective of authors and poets, which selects and supports a cause each year. PEN lobbied on behalf of the Native communications societies and held a conference in Ottawa to call public attention to the NCP termination (Big Canoe, 1995). Even federal government agencies supported the Native communications societies. As the Saskatchewan Indian editor noted, the departments of Indian Affairs, and Health and Welfare, which had been using the Native publications to get their messages into Native homes, joined in the lobbying effort to save the NCP (quoted in Demay, 1991: 104).

The societies also managed to engage the attention of the mainstream media with events like the " burning in effigy" of the Secretary of State by Wawatay and the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (Woolner, 1995). Native leaders and communicators met with the minister of the Secretary of State. Donald Marshall attended one meeting of Native communicators with DSOS Minister Gerry Weiner and pointed out that the only newspaper that had continued to draw attention to his case had been the Micmac News and that without that sustained effort, his wrongful conviction for murder would not have been overturned (Vance-Duchesne, 1995). According to representatives of the NCP, insofar as the lobbying effort was designed to make the views of organizations and individuals who supported the Native societies known, it was quite effective (Big Canoe, 1995). However, even though it was a reasonably effective lobby

insofar as the government was made to feel embarrassed, it had no chance of changing the government's commitment to terminate the program (Woolner, 1995). In response to the lobby, a ministerial committee on Native communications was established and eventually recommended that each society receive a one-time grant of $20,000 for a market study that would assist them in diversifying their funding base and becoming financially independent. The department also developed an initiative to help the societies make application to other departments, like the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS), the Employment and Immigration Commission (EIC), Indian Affairs and the Department of Industry, Science and Technology. In 1990-91, a total of $712,740 was made available in the form of one-time funding allotments.

By way of explanation, the 1990-91 Estimates said only, "Funding under this program will be discontinued during 1990-91. This program supported Aboriginal regional communications media" (45). In fact, almost all of the grants and contributions in the Social Development area were reduced, including the non-Native areas of Women, Disabled Persons' Participation and Open House Canada. Of the Native Citizens' programs, only Aboriginal Women and Aboriginal Languages received small increases, while the Friendship Centres, Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, Native Social and Cultural Development, and the Canada-Northwest Territories and Canada Yukon Aboriginal Languages grants and contributions were reduced. However, the Native Communications

Program was the only program to be completely eliminated. (DSOS, 1991: 45). Just over one million dollars in transitional funding was provided in 1990-91 to the NCP funded societies whose funding was being eliminated (DSOS, 1991: 49). An additional $712,740 was granted to the societies, which covered the allocation of $20,000 to each society in order to carry out a market study. In the following year, the Estimates contained the note that funding under the Native Communications Program was discontinued in 1990-91 "as a result of the governments expenditure reduction plan" (DSOS, 1991-92: 4). The Native Communications Program did not appear in the 1992-93 Estimates.

The failure of the Aboriginal communications societies to influence the government's decision to discontinue funding under the NCP suggests that either the newspapers (and their lobbying effort to save the program) were not seen as legitimate vehicles of public opinion or that the federal government was committed to dismantling the program even though public opinion in the Aboriginal and, arguably, the mainstream communities, supported the continuation of the newspapers. These actions and reactions highlight the limitations of the newspapers as weak public spheres, with only opinion-making power and not decision-making power. It also gives clear evidence that a public sphere that is completely reliant on the state cannot inevitably fulfill its role as site where private citizens can formulate public opinion to influence the state.

Regional Aboriginal Newspapers: 1990 - 1995

Although the Native communication societies had become accustomed to a federal policy toward Native communications that was "consistently ambivalent" and some of them had as much as "a twenty-year training in roller coaster finance and politics" (Demay, 1991:100), none of the societies was fully prepared for the 1990 federal budget which announced the termination of the program. In fact, some of the societies had relaxed their guard after the NCP was made "permanent" in 1987. The six-month grace period that was offered to the NCP-funded societies[40] in order to allow them to close down their operations or to become self-sufficient meant that the effects of the termination of the NCP were not felt immediately. In fact, the true impact of the cuts were not felt until the following September (Mombourquette, 1995), which had given some of the societies a sense of false hope that the program would be restored (Crowfoot, 1995). The publisher of Alberta's Windspeaker pointed to this kind of thinking as a factor that contributed to so many of the societies not being in a position to become self-sufficient.

The following section provides a short discussion of the impact of the funding cuts on each of the societies, focussing on their efforts to continue to publish without NCP funding. Many of the publications did not survive which, as this thesis argues, represents the loss of voices in the national Aboriginal public

[40] Societies that were funded under both the NCP and the NNBAP received only 25 percent of their funding.

sphere. This process is illustrated by presenting the publications in the order of their demise, leaving the remaining societies to the end of the section.

- **Kainai News (Indian News Media)**

Kainai News, in southern Alberta, was the first of the papers considered in this study to cease publication. As rumours of the termination of the NCP started to circulate, the Indian News Media in southern Alberta had attempted to prepare for it. The radio station and printing operations were closed and the video arm of the society was privatized. The society purchased a building so that when the cuts were announced, most of the society's equipment was paid for and they had a relatively low monthly mortgage payment (Smallface-Marule, 1995). The manager of Kainai News at the time of the NCP cuts pointed out that their society had become accustomed to receiving grants and, therefore, did not have "a business attitude" (Demay, 1991: 101). Looking back, one of the INM directors stated that the society might have been able to survive if it had had a more experienced staff with a stronger business orientation (Smallface-Marule, 1995). Although Kainai News was largely dependent on NCP funding, its publishers considered the switch from non-profit to profit orientation (Demay, 1991: 102). To cut costs, Indian News Media started placing greater emphasis on local news, reducing provincial and national coverage, and started trying to market their publication to non-Aboriginal people, Americans and even Europeans (Demay,

103). Nonetheless, it was eventually forced to reduce staff and switch from a weekly to a biweekly publication. They also attempted to increase their advertising revenue; however, there were few businesses on the reserve and the business people in the nearest commercial centre of Cardston "took our people's business for granted" and preferred to advertise in the Cardston newspaper (Smallface-Marule, 1995). The last edition of Kainai News was published late in 1991. Key staff members had left the organization and, rather than hiring new people for what had become a shaky operation, the decision was made to cease publication. The society has remained inactive, but has not dissolved. A privately owned newspaper is attempting to fill the void left by Kainai News; however, the Blood Tribe Community News serves a more limited market. The death of Kainai News has resulted in a reduction in the level of information and communication activity in the southern Alberta region and the Native people no longer have access to in-depth coverage and analysis of local and national issues (Smallface-Marule, 1995).

- **Dan Sha (Ye Sa To Communications Society)**

In the Yukon, Ye Sa To received the six month transitional funding until September 1990. They reduced their staff, switched to a bimonthly publication schedule and even closed their office for three months (Vance-Duchesne, 1995). The Yukon Territorial Government provided $45,000 "to bail us out" and with that

and revenue generated from other contracts, Dan Sha was published in a newspaper format from 1991 until the fall of 1992. In 1991, Ye Sa To also received financial support from the Canadian Aboriginal Economic Development Strategy (CAEDS) to develop their business plan, but when it was completed, there was no additional money to implement the plan. An overture to Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon (NNBY), which received funding under the NNBAP program and which received funding in 1990 for their new Television Northern Canada (TVNC) production and distribution facilities, was rejected. Dan Sha has not been published since 1992 and the Ye Sa To board members planned to dissolved the Society in 1995 unless money could be found to implement their business plan (Vance-Duchesne, 1995).

- **Micmac News (Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia)**

In 1989-90, the NCS of Nova Scotia received $253,410 under the NCP (including $14,310 that was earmarked for training). Ads, circulation subscriptions and society sponsored bingo games generated an additional $80,000 annually (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 46). When the 1990 budget announced the end of the NCP, the Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia had accumulated savings of $150,000 (Paul, 1995). It was granted a six-month extension of funding "to phase out its operations" (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 46) and there was an initial disagreement among the

staff, which was requesting that the money be used for a severance package, and the board, which wanted to keep the paper going (Paul, 1995). The board instructed the newspaper staff to explore other funding sources including band councils, private foundations, the private sector and the provincial government. However, none of these sources provided adequate support and the provincial government reiterated its position that funding to Native organizations is the "exclusive constitutional responsibility of the federal government" (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 47). Micmac News staff received small severance packages and were laid off after the six-month funding grace period had expired. The "Final Edition" of the Micmac News, published in September 1990, included an editorial that lamented that:

> The loss of the native press is a tragedy of immense proportion to Indian communities because native newspapers perform a vital and crucial function in aboriginal communities. They have made Indian people more aware of the world around them and they have educated people on a wide range of issues affecting their daily lives. They provide comprehensive news coverage of community and cultural events, some of them in native languages. They stimulate, promote dialogue, and serve as a catalyst for action (Micmac News, September 1990, 20 (9): 47).

In November 1990, the first edition of the monthly Micmac Nation News was published by the Confederacy of Mainland Micmacs. It changed names with its January 1991 edition to Micmac Maliseet Nation News. Over the next five months, the Native Communications Society of Nova Scotia went through a

reorganization (Demay, 1991: 102), including the reduction in the board to a small executive committee (Paul, 1995). In February 1991, it reopened as a weekly publication, determined to compete with other weekly publications for advertising dollars. The first issue of 1991 included a drive for subscriptions and a request that readers complete and mail in a survey questionnaire: indication of status (Indian, non-Indian, other), intention to purchase a car, ownership and brand of computers, where the reader did their grocery shopping, number in the household, age, sex and employment status (employed, collecting UIC, other). (Micmac News, February 21, 1991, 21 (1): 6). This survey questionnaire was particularly interesting since it represented the first attempt to identify their readership as consumers, rather than as citizens of the Micmac nation. This shift in the function of the press was anticipated by Habermas in his discussion of the commercialization of the print media. The effects included the blurring of the line separating the public sphere from private interest, and the prospect of manipulation by privileged private interests. In the case of the Micmac News, however, the role of the non-profit board potentially mitigated these influences. Further study, including a detailed content analysis of issues of the Aboriginal newspapers before and after the 1990 budget cuts, would be very interesting, but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

According to the editor of the Micmac News, attempts to attract major non-Native advertisers had limited success because of the large coverage area

and the small, scattered population of the reserves served by the paper. The combination of staff burnout and inability to cope with increasing postage costs forced them to return to a monthly publication in August (Paul, 1995). According to the editor, the Micmac News was not able to survive without external funding because the demographics of the readership made it impossible to make the paper economically self-sufficient (Paul, 1995). Although a few issues were self-financed after the Micmac News returned to its original monthly schedule, of the sixteen issues that were published, many lost money. By late 1992, the human and financial resources of the paper had been drained and the Micmac News was discontinued.

- **Native Press (Native Communications Society of the Western NWT)**

With the cancellation of the NCP, the Native Press was transferred from the non-profit native communications society to its business arm DM (Dene-Metis) Communications Ltd. Since the publication had substantial revenue from ad sales at the time of the 1990 cuts, the society was hopeful that it could continue to be published (Zellen, 1995). In order to bolster their ad sales, the Natives Press became a weekly publication in June 1990 and in November, it changed its name to the Press Independent. Its marketing attempts centred on an attempt to heighten its appeal to a Yellowknife market (Demay, 1991: 103), a radical change from its established niche market in the rural communities of the

McKenzie River Valley. Reflecting on those decisions, the current executive director of the Native Communications Society observed that these changes had the result of disenfranchising the newspaper from the Native community it had been established to serve, which lead to a loss of political support for the paper (Zellen, 1995). The Press Independent became an alternative paper to the mainstream Yellowknife paper. The changes that occurred in the Native Press provided a good example of the processes that Habermas and others linked to the commercialization of the public sphere. Clearly, the role of the newspaper as an arena of discursive activity for Aboriginal people who lived in the small rural villages and settlements was diminished. Under the new arrangement, these people were no longer addressed as participants in the public sphere of the Native Press; they were not even addressed as consumers and targets of private advertising.

The decision was also made to enter into a joint venture with a private business in the creation of a communications centre that was designed to house the society's radio, television and newspaper operations. The increased costs associated with publishing weekly, and paying for space in their new building, were not balanced by an increase in revenue and the Press Independent fell into debt. Its main creditor was its printer which owned the competing mainstream Yellowknife newspaper. In late 1992, legal proceedings were launched and the assets of the Press Independent were seized. The paper was sold to a local

businesswoman who changed the name of the paper to the Northern Star and published for one year before ceasing publication.

The current executive director of the NCS acknowledges that reactivating the newspaper will be difficult. Continuity, of course, is important in the highly visible publishing industry, and since 1990, the Native Press has had three names and ceased publishing entirely for almost two years. However, the NCS is considering reactivating the Native Press and returning it to its original focus on the issues of interest to the Dene and Metis people in the rural communities (Zellen, 1995)

- **New Breed (Saskatchewan Native Communications Society)**

Following the 1990 budget cuts, the New Breed magazine in Saskatchewan renewed its already close association with the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan (MNS), becoming an "affiliate" of that organization. Its office was moved from Regina to Saskatoon where responsibility for it was turned over to one of the Saskatchewan Native Communications Corporation (SNCC) board members who was experienced in publishing. For the next two years, the New Breed tabloid was published monthly with a circulation of 10,000, including 4,000 paid subscriptions (McKay, 1995). The SNCC board, with members from each of the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan's thirteen areas, continued to give direction to the paper and its staff especially in the area of editorial content. According to the

managing editor of the publication, news was always presented in a "positive manner" and in "political exchanges" space was given to organizations that helped the paper (McKay, 1995). For example, one Metis area organization donated part of its bingo earnings to the paper each month in return for coverage of issues and developments important to their area. On the other hand, the marketing aspect of the paper reflected a strong entrepreneurial spirit. By 1992, New Breed was generating up to $20,000 each month in advertising revenue, most of it from federal and provincial government departments, tribal councils and Metis areas. New Breed had secured contracts with federal departments like the Secretary of State, which sponsored a special edition on racism, and it also received a $30,000 federal contract to cover the 1992 referendum. At its height, New Breed employed up to six people, as well as freelancer reporters (McKay, 1995). Although the New Breed was still operating in a deficit, it was moving in the direction of commercial self-sufficiency. In Habermasian terms, however, the New Breed had relinquished its role as a public sphere and shifted its function to that of a vehicle for advertising and opinion management. Through advertising, the private individuals, who had once been able to receive information and engage in public discussions in the pages of the New Breed, were addressed as consumers; through the public relations material, the private individuals of the public sphere were addressed by organized private interests. The commercialization of the New Breed provides a noteworthy example of a

publication that was, to use Habermas' terminology "refeudalized" by both the private political and commercial interests in ways that precluded the participation of those without economic or political advantages.

Following a political shift in the MNS in 1992, the New Breed publication was turned over to another editor who published just six issues in 1993 (Ball, 1993). When that relationship disintegrated in 1994, the MNS decided to produce the magazine in-house and managed to publish four issues. In 1995, an executive director was hired by the board of the New Breed, however no moneys were made available from the organization for publishing or for the board of directors. Although the executive director also had responsibility for editorial content, ad sales and distribution, she managed to publish four issues between March and September 1995. According to her, ad sales were especially difficult because of the negative media coverage the MNS was receiving regarding the overall finances of the organization (Ball, 1995). The New Breed ceased publication in 1995.

- **Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk (Okalakatiget Society)**

Although most of the societies responded to the NCP cut in 1990 by down-sizing their publications, the Labradorian paper Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk went from a tabloid newspaper to a glossy, bilingual English and Inuktitut quarterly magazine after the termination of the NCP. The change was carried

out in order to attract advertisers (Pijogge, 1995); however, the shift to a business mentality did not override the magazine's commitment to serve the Inuit people of the area. The society's board of directors told the magazine staff not to try to please the advertisers, but to please the original target audience (Williams, 1995). The society hired a journalism professor from Carleton University to help them change the style of the magazine and give the staff training in advertising (Williams, 1995). The executive director of the Okalakatiget Society remembered that it was difficult to get advertising, with the small population of the area served and a depressed economy. However, in their first year, with their sales person in Happy Vally/Goose Bay, the ad sales were much better than expected "because it was a novelty" (Williams, 1995). This situation changed in the next year when the staff of Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk found that it was difficult to retain old advertisers and hard to find new ones. The magazine had a circulation of six hundred copies, including about 100 subscribers, and was sent in bulk to the communities, where young people were hired to distribute them. It was also marketed as the Labrador Airways' in-flight magazine. Following the NCP cuts, Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk was produced in Okalakatiget's radio facility, and had support from the radio staff who also did translations for the publication. In 1992, the society was able to hire a trainer for one year through a CEIC program, however, as Williams pointed out, the society did not have the staff available to look for other revenue. Without the NNBAP-funded part of their

organization, the publication would not have survived as long as it did. However, in 1994, Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk was "put on hold." The editor explained that the magazine was losing advertisements and the freight costs were high, and finally they could not cover the printing costs of the magazine (Pijogge, 1995).

According to the executive director, "People want to see it revived even if it goes back to its former, nothing fancy, not glossy form" (Williams, 1995). In 1995, however, as they faced additional cuts in their NNBAP funding, the Okalakatiget Society did not have the human resources or the time to look for other sources of funds for their publication. As Okalakatiget's executive director pointed out, "There is a crying need for the written Inuktitut to come back. Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk was the only source of written documentation for the people, of our history and way of life in the region" (Williams, 1995).

- **Saskatchewan Indian (Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation)**

The last edition of the Saskatchewan Indian was published in August 1990. In the last two years of its operation, two-thirds of its operating budget of $150,000 had come from the Native Communications Program. The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations no longer supported the publication that it considered to be a "loose cannon" which had opposed the conservative Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations on issues like the stand-off at Oka and the treaty right to education (Cuthand, 1995). With neither the NCP funding nor the

political will to keep the Saskatchewan Indian alive, the SIMC "pulled the plug" in September 1990 (Cuthand, 1995). The assets of the SIMC were turned over to the FSIN which entered into a contract arrangement with a private Aboriginal publishing house to produce the Saskatchewan Indian.[41] In the fall of 1994, there was a political shift in the FSIN and the contract to produce the Saskatchewan Indian was given to another Aboriginal entrepreneur who published it under the auspices of the FSIN for the next few months before financial difficulties caused him to cease publication. The Saskatchewan Indian currently being produced intermittently by the staff of the FSIN has returned to being a political communication vehicle for the Federation.

- **Katou (Native Communications Society of British Columbia)**

When the termination of the NCP was announced, Katou editor Ron Barbour "denounced the absence of preparation to deal with the severe financial consequences of the programs cancellation" (Demay, 1991:101) However, even before the cuts, the biweekly publication with a circulation of about 10,000 copies was in a relatively good position to become more commercial because it served a broad Native audience with large purchasing power and the staff of Katou had a strong entrepreneurial spirit (DSOS, 1986: 25). After the NCP

[41] It is interesting to note that the publisher contracted by the FSI to produce the Saskatchewan Indian was the same publisher who was involved in the publication of the Metis paper New Breed.

termination was announced, Katou returned to a monthly publication and was forced to scale back its operation and its staff compliment. However, its advertising sales, combined with the co-operation of creditors, e.g., their bank, printing house and service bureau, helped the paper survive from month to month. When the six-month grace period had expired, the board of directors wanted to dissolve the society but was convinced by the editor and remaining staff to keep the paper going (Barbour, 1995). Students were hired to conduct an extensive subscription drive and by the end of the summer Katou had almost 4,000 paid subscribers (Barbour, 1995) and a data base of all of the bands, tribal councils, government offices, libraries and schools in the province (West, 1995). The staff of Katou also undertook an aggressive advertising campaign, and developed focus issues on topics like basketball, elders, alcohol addiction and land claims. They also benefited from contracts with special interest groups, like the Medical Services Branch of Health and Welfare which sponsored a special interest section on drug and alcohol awareness in the communities between 1989 and 1991. Beyond this, they developed an informal native news network with writers in different areas of the province, which allowed them to continue to publish community level stories even though they could not afford to travel (Barbour, 1995). Although Katou was moving in the direction of becoming self-sufficient, it continued to experience problems at the board level. In 1991, the president of the NCSBC resigned and the board was restructured with new members. By

early 1992, employees were experiencing demotions, firings and bounced paycheques (Barbour, 1995). When the paper missed a print deadline, many of the advertisers with time-sensitive ads refused to pay and the delicate balance of receivables and creditors was upset. Soon after, Katou was purchased by one of the new board members and the society was dissolved. Katou is currently published in the reserve community of Sechelt. However, its provincial scope has been narrowed considerably and the journalistic quality of the paper has fallen (West, 1995).

- **Wawatay News (Wawatay Native Communications Society)**

Wawatay News had the advantage of a twenty year tradition of publishing in the Northern Ontario market, as well as having a diversified organization that was taking steps towards self-reliance before the NCP cuts. Once the six month grace period of funding had expired, the newspaper was forced to reduce its staff and make its operation more efficient. In that first year, a provincial grant paid the salary for a reporter who was responsible for covering health issues. Other Nishnawbe-Aski Nation organizations sponsored special sections, like a section paid for by Tikanagan Youth Services, that published letters from young people and responses from the organization's staff psychologist. With the termination of the NCP, Wawatay News was forced to delay its plan to extend into the Thunder Bay market until the following year (Demay, 1991: 102). Since 1991,

Wawatay News has expanded its coverage and distribution to include an additional 25 communities in the Treaty 3 and Robinson Superior treaty areas, increasing their circulation from 6,000 to 7,600 (Phelan, 1995). One of the advantages of these other treaty areas was that, in contrast to the rural Treaty 9 reserves with their largely traditional economic base, the Treaty 3 reserves have road access to urban centres, so advertisers want to reach them. The paper has a strict policy of filling at least 60 percent of its space with advertisements (Phelan, 1995).

However, the trade-off for the wider coverage area was the community coverage in the NAN region. The people in the other treaty areas differed culturally and linguistically (Mombourquette, 1995) so more of the stories were published in English only. The cost of translations has also caused Wawatay News to reduce its use of syllabics to less than ten percent of the total space (Phelan, 1995). Following the NCP cuts, the staff of Wawatay was reduced to an editor/reporter, a production person, one person who does double duty in distribution and the darkroom, and two sales people. In 1995, they also had a Native intern who was funded by a provincial government grant. The paper made use of freelancers for coverage of many events since the paper has a greatly reduced travel budget (Phelan, 1995). The survival of Wawatay News can be attributed in part to its ability to rely on the rest of the Wawatay organization, which continued to be funded through the Northern Native Broadcast

Access Program. Wawatay radio and television purchased ads for their programming in Wawatay News; the newspaper continued to share a building with the radio department, and the administration costs, including receptionist, executive director and board, supplies and equipment, were shared on an ongoing basis among all of the departments based on their revenue (Phelan, 1995). In terms of their traditional market areas, Wawatay News has greatly reduced community coverage in favour of regional coverage.

According to the editor of the paper, Wawatay News is still in a period of adjustment, and is "struggling to keep afloat" (Phelan, 1995). Another observer points out that Wawatay is very weak financially and could not exist without the NNBAP support that the society receives and which is used to cover the cost of the building, as well as covering overdrafts and deficits in the newspaper operation (Woolner, 1995). Wawatay News continues to publish on a monthly basis.

- **Tusaayaksat (Inuvialuit Communications Society)**

Prior to the NCP cut, Inuvialuit Communications Society had a staff of two translators, two reporters and an editor to produce Tusaayaksat; following the cut, the newspaper employed only two people, one of them sponsored by a Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) grant. The cuts also meant that travel into the communities had to be eliminated, and with no new capital purchases, the newspaper quickly ran into problems with equipment failures

(Demay, 1991:100). The search for other sources of revenue to replace the NCP grant, which was their main source of funding, have taken the society in two directions: advertising sales and grants from a federal-provincial program called the Aboriginal Language Enhancement Program (Zellen, 1995). In the fall of 1991, the society applied to the territorial government's Department of Culture and Communications for moneys to do a pilot project and make Tusaayaksat a bilingual newspaper (Zellen, 1995). Based on the success of the pilot project, the Government of the Northwest Territory provided an annual grant of $35,000 for a translator who translated every article in Tusaayaksat into the Inuvialuktun language (Gordon, 1995). The paper continued to be fully bilingual and includes games and activities to help school children in the region learn their Inuvialuktun language. The switch to a bilingual publication has also had the affect of raising support for the publication among businesses and individuals who believe that preserving the language and the stories in a written form is important. Tusaay-aksat has been able to generate about $40,000 annually in advertising revenue, which covers one salary and part of the cost of operations. Tusaayaksat has remained a monthly publication, except for a one year period from September 1993 to September 1994 during which they switched to a biweekly publication schedule in the hope that their advertising would increase. They discovered that the biweekly schedule of production and mailing was too expensive and could not be covered by an increase in advertising. In October 1994, the paper

reverted back to a monthly publication (Gordon, 1995). In a successful effort to cut costs, the society purchased three computers and laser printers which has allowed it to decommission their old typesetter, which used expensive paper and chemicals. This move has helped the society cut production costs by 35 percent (Gordon, 1995).

According to the executive director of the ICS, after the cuts, the operation of the newspaper placed a burden on the television department until a new management team hired in 1992 was able to make cuts in the cost of producing the newspaper (Gordon, 1995). With its strong emphasis on the financial aspects of the business, the new management was able to move the newspaper in the direction of economic self-reliance. Still, co-operation between the television and newspaper meant that when the television crews were going onto the land and the newspaper could not afford to accompany them, the television crew took the still camera along to take pictures for the newspaper (Gordon, 1995).

Television remains the main source of income for the society, but over the next two years, they will have to absorb a seventeen percent reduction in NNBAP funding. Five years after the NCP cut, the editor of Tusaayaksat reports that the paper is adapting to the funding cuts and the newspaper is slowly becoming self-reliant (Pizya, 1995). It continues to be published to the present.

- **Windspeaker (Aboriginal Multimedia Society of Alberta)**

AMMSA's reaction to the termination of the NCP was "immediate." Windspeaker went from a weekly to a biweekly publication and fifty percent of the staff was laid off (Crowfoot, 1995). Over the next five years, AMMSA was able to draw on the "nest egg" of about $250,000 that it had managed to accumulate, and the organization continued to carry out its five year plan for self-sufficiency. Unlike so many of the Native Communications Societies, AMMSA had a strong business orientation and was very strong in the area of marketing (Crowfoot, 1995). The other strength of the Society and the publication was its national coverage and subscription base, and the decision was made to exploit this aspect of their business operation (Crowfoot, 1995). Sadly the need, and therefore the opportunity, for a national native paper grew as other Native newspapers were forced to close down their operations. In January 1995, Windspeaker became a monthly publication in an effort to cope with the "skyrocketing price of newsprint"[42] and postage rate increases. The change to a monthly publication allowed increased coverage in each issue, including focus issues on various issues and organizations. In 1995, Windspeaker reached a monthly circulation of 15,000 copies. Five free copies are sent to every reserve, and the rest are sent to paid subscribers including chiefs, program directors, and band managers who them hand down their subscription copies (Kanten, 1996). AMMSA estimated that each copy of the Windspeaker is read by four people,

[42] Since January 1995 newsprint prices have increased by approximately 80 percent.

and is making efforts to increase the readership at the grassroots level by, for example, making them available for sale at all Northern Stores (formerly Hudson Bay stores).

As Habermas and others have suggested, commercial mass media is oriented to markets and not to the creation of associations or communities. However, in order to at least to attempt to continue to fulfil its community-oriented mandate, the AMMSA developed another monthly publication called Alberta Sweetgrass which is distributed free to all of the Alberta bands and has a total circulation of 5,000 copies. The cost of producing it is covered by advertising sales and, in fact, revenue from the Sweetgrass publication is used to cover the overhead costs of both papers.

Windspeaker has continued to benefit from its association with the broadcasting arm of AMMSA, which received funding under the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program.[43] The print and broadcast arms of AMMSA share an executive director, as well as administrative and other overhead costs. Although Windspeaker has turned a corner on self-sufficiency, contingencies like the cost of newsprint and postage and the influx of Native newspapers (at least some of them owned and controlled by non-Native people) have drained their contingency fund (Crowfoot, 1995). Long-term goals, like the development of other provincial Sweetgrass-type publications and developing in the area of

[43] The NNBAP funding, however, is also being reduced every year with a sixteen percent cut in 1990 and additional cuts every year since.

electronic media, have had to be placed "on the back burner for now" (Crowfoot, 1995).

Although the impacts of commercialization have challenged the publisher and the staff, Windspeaker has attempted to avoid the conflation of the editorial and publishing functions within the newspaper.[44] Unlike many small publications that offer positive coverage to organizations in return for the purchase of advertising, the editorial and sales areas of the publication continued to operate autonomously.[45] However, the commercial orientation has affected the publication. AMMSA conducted phone surveys of its readership as well as publishing detailed readership questionnaires in Windspeaker (Kanten, 1996). It tended not to publish information about upcoming events because they were not considered to be "news." Thus, material that has been referred to earlier in this thesis as "mobilizing information" (that is, information that helps people become involved in protests or campaigns or organizational meetings, for example) were not presented. Most requests for coverage of this kind of material were sent to the sales department in the hope of selling the space in the form of an ad (Kanten, 1996).

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[44] A detailed content analysis of Windspeaker relating advertising and editorial content would be useful for assessing how successful their efforts are in this area; however, such an analysis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

[45] I base this observation on my own experience purchasing advertising space for the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.

These changes do not preclude the AMMSA publisher and editor from being aware of the potential impact of the newspaper on community development and as catalyst and site for dialogue. AMMSA publishes classroom editions which are offered at reduced cost to band schools across Canada, as well as publishing feature articles about issues of concern to Aboriginal people which are not "advertising-driven" (Kanten, 1996).

Rethinking the History of the Aboriginal Newspapers

Although the model of the public sphere was first theorised by Habermas in consideration of national boundaries, it has become acceptable to talk about public spheres that became formulated abound other kinds of boundaries--such as racial, class and gender boundaries (Raboy, 1994). Central to this thesis, the focus has not been on national boundaries, but rather on the creation of an alternative Aboriginal public sphere in Canada. These various public spheres, as constituted by the regional Aboriginal newspapers, related to each other in a way that reflects their distance from the dominant public sphere, and this contrasted to the continuing problem of being treated as a homogenous group by federal programmers and legislators. The first consideration gave them reason to work together and to support each others' efforts. For example, during the Oka crisis in 1991, many of the newspapers supported the Kanehsatake Mohawks. In fact, the Saskatchewan Indian supported the Mohawk stand in

defiance of the FSIN's position against violent confrontations (Cuthand, 1995). The other way that the exchange of the newspapers and the creation of a loosely based national discursive arena was beneficial to the various groups was the ways they were treated as a representation of homogenous groups. The newspapers become sites for information exchange so that programs that were launched in one region were evaluated by other regions. The extensive discussion in the various newspapers and the general rejection of the Sechelt Act that made the B.C. reserve a provincial municipality was an example of an issue and the manner in which this relationship between alternative public spheres as sites for information exchange and opinion formation occurred.

The NCP-funded newspapers attempted to engage their readers as citizens and to encourage their participation in the emerging institutions of Indian political life--from local to regional and national organizations and movements. However, the discontinuation of federal funding in 1990 caused a shift to a more commercial orientation in which the emphasis shifted from the readership being viewed as citizens of the public sphere to constituencies of consumers whose attention could be sold to advertisers. The readership survey in the 1991 edition of the Micmac News was a clear example of this shift in orientation. Although the AMMSA has also had to focus on marketing efforts, they have also attempted to retain something of the community-orientation that they had under the NCP through the publication of the Alberta Sweetgrass. Their commitment to

keeping the editorial and publishing functions separate also has the potential to mitigate the impact of their shift to a commercial orientation

Over the years, many of the societies attempted to broaden their funding base. For a time, the Alberta communications society received provincial support, but that was phased out between 1986 and 1989. While the Saskatchewan Indian was being published by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, from the early 1970s until 1982, it, too, received provincial support. In the other regions of the country, however, especially in the Maritimes, provincial support was limited to "moral support" (Rupert, 1987). Many of the societies also attempted to generate revenue; however, societies located in remote regions with little economic development had virtually no opportunity to expand their funding base. According to the 1986 Lougheed report, "Total self-sufficiency, and in some cases even limited self-sufficiency, is not a reasonable expectation" (Lougheed, 1986: 5-9). Further, efforts to generate funds through private and public fund-raising had the affect of draining "their limited human resources thus hindering achievement of their private objectives." Funding available through the Native Communications Program was critical to the development and continued publication of many of the Native newspapers.

Marc Raboy (1991) states his concern that "the unequal relations built into the major communication systems in the world today pose a fundamental problem for democracy" (Raboy, 1991:161), and he makes a strong case for the

explicit role of the state in the socio-cultural arena, reallocating resources to support non-commercial alternative media. The alternative media "are particularly useful as oppositional forms to counter the exclusion from mainstream media for political or economic reasons, or as media in the service of particular minority groups or social movements" (Raboy, 1991:170).

As this survey of the Aboriginal newspapers in the period following the 1990 budget cuts indicates, six of the regional Aboriginal publications are no longer published. This represents a loss not only of the newspapers as sites for regional discussions and public opinion formation, but also the loss of voices in the national Aboriginal public sphere. Consequently, access to that sphere is lost to people from regions without their own newspapers. Thus, it is the argument of this thesis that the Aboriginal public sphere has become unbalanced, with public opinion formulated and disseminated by the unevenly distributed (regionally and culturally) remaining regional newspapers. The Windspeaker, as the only publication with a supportable claim to being a national publication, attempts to fill in the gaps in information and give voice to a variety of associations and regions; however, they are constantly mindful of the need to survive as commercial enterprises in a highly competitive marketplace. Thus, the commercial imperative necessarily dictates the ratio of advertisements to editorial copy, and if advertising is low, the potential dialogue is cut short.

Chapter VI

THE ABORIGINAL PUBLIC SPHERE: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Understanding the History of the Aboriginal Newspapers

Aboriginal people were totally disenfranchised and subordinated in Canadian society until the 1960s. Without the federal vote, they had not even symbolic access to democratic political institutions. Their governments were no more than weak publics, with no institutionalized means for making the parliamentary government accountable to them. In fact, the strong parliamentary publics used their power to prohibit activities that would lead to opinion formation regarding issues to which the state retained a monopoly on information and interpretation. Early attempts to constitute contestatory public spheres were carried out by the Aboriginal leaders at national and regional levels. In fact, Lieutenant F.O. Loft's efforts in the 1920s represented one of the earliest attempts to create a national discursive arena for Aboriginal people. The meetings and correspondences of the League of Indians of Canada from 1919 until the mid-1930s were an important stage in the evolution of the modern Aboriginal public sphere.

The resistance to these developments, on the part of the Department of Indian Affairs, gave witness to the federal government's concern that if Aboriginal people were allowed to meet and discuss issues, or discuss them in mediated

sites like newspapers, coherent positions would be formulated and articulated within the Indian, Metis and Inuit communities, and also in the wider Canadian public sphere. The publication of the Native Voice in B.C. in the 1940s was important not just regionally, but also nationally. As witnessed by letters to the editor, it provided the hub of a developing network of information exchange for many organizations across Canada. These fledgling organizations benefited from both the example and also from access to information that was seldom made available through the Department of Indian Affairs or the mainstream media. The Native Voice also provided a very early forum for various Native leaders and citizens to contribute to public debates. This trend was continued with the election of Pierre Elliot Trudeau in 1968, and his efforts to create a "just society" in which each citizen was encouraged to participate in its democratic institutions. Funding for Aboriginal projects and organizations grew in the late 1960s and, following the release of the White Paper which breathed fire into the organizations, the Aboriginal print media went through tremendous growth in the 1970s. By 1973, there were at least ten regional papers, published by provincial (and territorial) organizations representing Indian, Metis and Inuit. They were funded predominantly by the DIAND and the DSOS through grants to the political organizations.

The NCP represented a consolidation of the ad hoc funding to projects that had occurred to date. As this thesis has argued, the NCP also represented

a consolidation of efforts to control and manipulate the newspapers. Program criteria, funding formulae and systems of accountability were developed and implemented with little or no input from the publishing societies. The requirements that each newspaper support the informational needs and provide discursive arenas for disparate groups implicitly contributed to relationships of dominance and subordination, and even exclusion of individuals and communities from the pages of the publications. The situation of women who lost their Indian status, and whose position was not represented, let alone supported, by most of the newspapers, demonstrated their lack of access and participatory parity which occurred due to legislated social inequalities being manifested in the Aboriginal public sphere.

Although more research is also required to assess whether the funding agencies bear responsibility for limiting political discussion, it is clear in their funding criteria and program objectives that addressing issues like language and culture are often made priorities and even conditions for further support. The development of the NNBAP in 1983 included explicit expressions of the federal government's willingness to provide support for Aboriginal languages and cultures. Even though the newspapers were not governed by the same program guidelines, they were well aware of, and responded to, the changing interests and policies of the state with regard to Aboriginal communication. The 1990 elimination of the funding to Aboriginal newspapers forced them into a

commercial mode of operation. As examples have illustrated, the need to attract advertisers started to outweigh the desire to create and sustain associations and communities of Aboriginal people. The readership became viewed as consumers, to be polled and analysed, a reading public to be sold to advertisers and opinion managers. This shift marked the feudalization of the Aboriginal public sphere by the marketplace. The commodification undermined the capacity of editors and publishers to provide access to and participatory parity in the newspapers as public spheres, including the organizations and individuals with resources to buy space while squeezing out other voices. As this thesis has argued, the impact of this process on the newspapers themselves was also felt at the national level as information exchange became limited by budget constraints and the voices of people who had ultimately lost their publications disappeared from the national Aboriginal public sphere.

The Future Contribution of Newspapers to the Aboriginal Public Sphere

At the centre of democratic public life are the public spheres in which private citizens learn about and comment on issues that concern them. These discursive activities take place in many settings--in classrooms, voluntary associations, unions, community meetings, and in provincial and national political arenas. Most Canadians take for granted the access that they have to these various discursive arenas and assume that when they participate in the debates

in them, their voices will be heard. However, a great many "other" Canadians (to use Gayatri Spivak's terminology) are not guaranteed access or equality in these public spheres. They are denied access by virtue of their lack of fluency in an official language or lack of proficiency in the written expression of their ideas. Their style of speech or their very ideas identify them as members of a minority group or perspective that has a subordinate position in the dominant public sphere. For these individuals and communities, gaining entry to the dominant public sphere is difficult; having any impact there is unlikely. However, these individuals and communities potentially gain access to the nationlal public sphere through regional public spheres. With the advent of mass democracy and mass media, Canada becomes a society of multiple connected public spheres. Although some scholars try to make the case that there is really only one national public sphere and that the multiple, alternative public spheres are to be accommodated by this overarching public sphere; however, developments in the international scene call into question even the idea of the national public sphere. For example, the European public sphere that is developing through the mitigation of national barriers to broadcasting make those national borders become redundant. Thus, those who insist on talking about a single public sphere, may have to accede to the transnationalists' argument and forget about national public spheres altogether. In keeping with the argument for a single national public sphere and multiple, nondominant variations of it, the argument can also

be made that national public spheres are simple nondominant variations of the transnational public sphere.

However, my research for this thesis is not subscribing to this direction. Rather, I argue that public spheres evolve in unique social, political, economic and cultural contexts. Consequently, it is a mistake to identify public spheres that are recent developments as simply variations of pre-existing models, and demonstrates a considerable historical short-sightedness and ethnocentrism. Imagine the reaction to the suggestion that the Canadian public sphere is simply a nondominant variation of the British public sphere. And yet, for some, it is not problematic in the least to suggest that the Aboriginal public sphere is simply a variation of the Canadian public sphere. This assumption, however, is problematized in this thesis, which argues to the contrary that the developing Aboriginal public sphere emerges in a unique context that persistently centers on the goal of emancipating Aboriginal people and communities from the authoritarian control of the colonial government in Canada. As a process, this is manifested through the creation of institutionalized public spheres in which Aboriginal peoples are educated and provided with the resources they need to deliberate about the issues that affect them. The Aboriginal public spheres also contribute to a wider process of public opinion formation regarding issues of concern to the Inuit, Indian, Metis and Non-status Indian people. This spectrum of public

opinion is introduced into the Canadian public sphere through the dissemination of Aboriginal public opinion in their newspapers, as well as in other mass media.

Through this process, Aboriginal publics attempt to engage the attention and influence the decisions of the Canadian government on issues related to Aboriginal peoples. As this thesis asserts, in order for a public sphere to use public opinion effectively, it must be seen to reflect the will of the people in a way that matches the authority of the state that is brought to bear on the issue. Thus, in order to influence a national policy, such as the White Paper for example, the Aboriginal public had to mobilise a coherent and powerful national voice of dissent, which was presented by the provincial and territorial leaders who represented all of the major Indian organizations, and expressed in all of the existent publications, as well as through the National Indian Brotherhood. Foremost, the protest had the challenge of engaging the sympathy of the Canadian public. Judging by the fact that the White Paper policy was eventually abandoned, the Aboriginal public was successful. On the other hand, the lobby effort to save the Native Communications Program in 1990 failed to raise the same intensity of focussed and coherent response from the leadership of the Aboriginal communications societies and other organizations. The protests led by the employees of the Native Communications Societies themselves were viewed as being narrowly based on their self-interest, and since the societies were not made up of elected officials, they were not able legitimately to claim to

represent the public opinion of a wider public. This last point raises questions about how the legitimacy of expressions of public opinion is to be judged. Worthy of consideration is the argument that a journalist is more in touch with members of their community every day and maintains a better grasp of the public opinion than the politician who spends much of his time in meetings with other politicians.

The research for this thesis anticipated that the newspapers played a significant role in the creation of a national Aboriginal public sphere. Although their role has indeed been important, they have also been limited in the performance of their function as public spheres in that their potential contributions have not been realized. Constant financial worries limited all of their endeavours as did the annual cycle of adjusting plans to correspond to the latest demands of the department regarding political independence, entrepreneurship, Aboriginal languages initiatives and support for various programs. The observation can also be made that the demands of covering their large regions, as well as providing information and analysis about national issues, was far too ambitious given the resources available to the societies. Thus, many times covereage was limited, analysis was incomplete, and the various groups in the region were not adequately represented within the pages of the papers. The argument made in this thesis that the newspapers contributed to the operation of the national Aboriginal public sphere to the the extent that they were capable of doing so was

done in a stage of underdevelopment, in that they were too few, their coverage areas too vast, and their populations were too varied for the newspapers to be able to contribute the depth of understanding, or the vibrancy of debate, of an ideal public sphere. The weakness and lack of depth of the Aboriginal public sphere meant that Aboriginal public opinion was not formulated in a way that was able to influence in a sustained manner the operations of the state. In many ways, it lacked the legitimacy it needed to formulate public opinion that the state observed and in turn was forced to accept as the legitimate expression of public opinion in the Aboriginal population.

The loss of the regional newspapers in so many areas of Canada has undoubtedly had an impact on the level and type of discussions in those provinces and territories that were left without Aboriginal print media. Although in some areas, other forms of mass media operated by Aboriginal broadcasters has continued to provide a mass mediated discursive arena, the loss of the newspapers was a significant one. Consequently, the argument in this thesis is that the greater the number and kind of overlapping discursive arenas in which the members of a society can engage, the greater the likelihood of involving all of the citizens in the public deliberations of the society, and thus, also the greater the potential of arriving at decisions that represent public opinion at its strongest and most compelling.

As Habermas and others have stated, the creation of associations and communities, and the provision of benefits to community members through their participation in public discussions, were not primary goals of commercialized mass media. Thus, the shift of the Aboriginal newspapers to the commercial model carries the potential to have an impact on the democratic life of the entire society. This potential needs to be understood by Aboriginal people and their leadership. Aboriginal people should not necessarily accept uncritically the assessment of this thesis that the newspapers played an important role in the political life of their communities and should be reinstated through government financing. Clearly, these perrogatives remain within the perview of the Aboriginal publics that need to decide what kinds of public spheres are needed in their societies.

To those who chose to accept my interpretation of the important role of the newspapers, as well as those who prepare programming for broadcast, and create Web sites on the Internet for their bands and organizations, it is very important to think critically about the work they do and the impact it has. Habermas would agree with this suggestion, I think, because he points out that "a public sphere commandeered by societal organizations . . . can perform functions of critique and control . . . only to the extent that it is itself radically subjected to the requirements of publicity" (Habermas, 1989: 208). Another way

of describing it is that there is a need for a public sphere about journalism. It is my hope that this thesis makes a contribution in that public sphere.

Interviews

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1992 Telephone interview with Howard Adams, editor of New Breed from 1969 to 1971.

Ball, Lisa

1995 Telephone interview with Lisa Ball, executive director of the New Breed magazine.

Big Canoe, Gordon

1995 Telephone interview with Gordon Big Canoe, Native Communications Program / Northern Native Broadcast Access Program, Native Citizen's Directorate, Secretary of State.

Crowfoot, Bert

1995 Telephone interview with Bert Crowfoot, chief executive officer of the Aboriginal Multimedia Society of Alberta (AMMSA) and publisher of Windspeaker and Alberta Sweetgrass.

Cuthand, Doug

1995 Telephone interview with Doug Cuthand, editor of the Saskatchewan Indian from 1970 to 1990.

Gordon, Clayton

1995 Telephone interview with Clayton Gordon, executive director of the Inuvialuit Communications Society.

McKay, Milton

1995 Telephone interview with Milton McKay, managing editor of the New Breed magazine from 1991 to 1992.

Mombourquette, Lois

1995 Telephone interview with Lois Mombourquette, editor of Wawatay News from 1989 to 1993.

Orr, Sidney

1995 Telephone interview with Sidney Orr, president of the James Bay Cree Communications Society from 1983 to 1987.

Paul, Clifford

1995 Telephone interview with Clifford Paul, editor of Micmac News from 1991 to 1992.

Petawabano, Buckley
1995 Telephone interview with Buckley Petawabano, board member of the James Bay Cree Communications Society.

Phelan, Bryan
1995 Telephone interview with Brian Phelan, current editor of Wawatay News.

Pijogge, Ernestina
1995 Telephone interview with Ernestina Pijogge, editor of Kinatuinamot Ilengajuk from 1989 to 1994.

Pizya, Charles
1995 Telephone interview with Charles Pizya, acting editor of Tusaayaksat.

Smallface-Marule, Marie
1995 Telephone interview with Marie Smallface-Marule, director of Indian News Media from 1984 to 1991.

Vance-Duchesne, Eileen
1995 Telephone interview with Eileen Vance-Duchesne, executive director of Dan Sha from 1986 to 1992.

Williams, Fran
1995 Telephone interview with Fran Williams, executive director of the Okalakatiget Society.

Woolner, Florence
1995 Telephone interview with Florence Woolner, Chief of Communications and Broadcast Programs, Native Citizens' Directorate, DSOS from 1985 to 1992.

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