Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in the Market Economy:

An Exploration of Alternative Aboriginal Development

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the influence of Aboriginal traditional values on Aboriginal economic activities and explores the possibilities of an alternative development of Canadian Aboriginal society. It argues that alternative Aboriginal development is possible in a way that emphasizes various social relations.

Arguing that the development of Aboriginal society should follow Western society's path, researchers have hardly discussed alternative tradition-based Aboriginal development until the 1990s. The newer discussion for alternative Aboriginal development with respect for their tradition is still in its infancy. In order to identify if and how Aboriginal traditions can be included in their economy and in their society's development, this study conducted interviews with Aboriginal individual entrepreneurs in Quebec and Ontario.

This thesis identifies that traditional values such as collectivity, reciprocity, being ecological, non-competitiveness, and respect or concern for different generations influence their business in the form of facilitating formation of social behaviors including: contributions to a First Nation community; close and collective relationship building among workers; providing ecological services or products; modest marketing; and operation takes into consideration influence on elders and the youth. The relatively distinct business activities of Aboriginal entrepreneurs suggest that Aboriginal peoples

are involved in the mainstream market economy but in a distinct and more social way. The interviewed Aboriginal entrepreneurs are maintaining social activities while managing their businesses in the market economy. Therefore, Aboriginal development that reflects their traditions is possible with an emphasis on social relations over economic relations.

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Writing an acknowledgement brings back warm memories. Since this project has taken a longer time than I expected, I have had opportunities to receive support from more individuals than I originally imagined. Their support not only made this project possible, but also gave me many cherished memories.

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The relaxed atmosphere of the interview with her relieved my weariness of the trip. John and Ken Sioui generously shared their unique advertising strategy. I enjoyed hearing John Sioui's professional opinion as a business owner. Brian Porter offered me a chance to sit in on a design meeting shared his passion for his profession with me. I truly enjoyed hearing about Nicolas Marcotte's internationally growing business, Power-Lite Industries inc. I loved the paintings of Nathalie Coutou (owner of Khewa Native art boutique), which represent her identity as both a French Canadian and an Aboriginal woman. Tammy Beauvais allowed me to experience and enjoy the Native cooperative exchange. During the interview, she shared with me about her love for the people of the Kahnawake community. Although the strict criteria for participant selection forced me to not analyze some of the interviews I conducted, I deeply appreciate all of these interviewees' kindness, caring, and willingness to share their experiences. I am glad that I can finally deliver a copy of this thesis to them.

This thesis has benefited from suggestions and comments by many individuals. First I must thank my advisor, Dr. Jean-Philippe Warren, for his guidance, encouragement, and inspiration. I am glad he took the risk to work with this foreigner who, at that time, knew little about First Nations. Not only did he provide the knowledge that enabled me to perform research on Native entrepreneurs, he allowed me the opportunity of an assistantship, supported my trips to different reserves for interviews, and strongly encouraged me to present my work at conferences, when I was still scared and reluctant to do so. His enthusiasm for both his own and his students' projects has brought energy to my work and made it a complete joy. His amazing energy for his work inspired me, for which I will always remain appreciative.

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

The situation of Aboriginal [1] peoples has drawn my interest since I came to Canada as a foreign student three years ago. Among other things, what struck me was a newspaper article reporting the lives of some First Nations people in northern Ontario. The article described an overcrowded and dilapidated houses in Mishkeegogamang. "With a few exceptions, every house...bears broken windows patched with plywood or cardboard... Eleven people are crammed into [a] dark, dingy, three-bedroom house, holes punched in every one of its inside doors, mattresses tossed on bedroom floors to sleep everyone... gusts of frigid air rushing into the house." Maryann Kwandibens, who is one of the family members living in the house, describes her family's life. "Sometimes we can't pay all the bills... Sometimes we're out of food" (Philp, 2007, p. F5).

This story vaguely reminded me of the slums I saw in the city of Manila in the Philippines, where I once lived and worked. The walls of the residents' houses had square, glassless holes – which the residents called windows – cut into them, and the rooms were similarly overcrowded with children. When a storm struck, water often flooded the houses. Leading a hard life with less than one dollar per day, people there were faced with daily financial problems. I could not believe that some Canadians live in conditions akin to those of the "developing world."

Researchers have recognized the lower living conditions of the Aboriginal population, and according to the Human Development Report (2007/2008) published by the United Nations Development Programme, Canada ranks fourth among the world's most comfortable countries. However, Canadian Aboriginal peoples live far below the

[1] This study uses the terms "Aboriginal" and "Native" as synonyms.

Canadian average, as shown in the 2001 index of Registered First Nations people living on-reserves. Canadian Natives' score is ranked similarly to Colombia (ranked 62) and below Malaysia, Mexico, and Romania (Cooke et al., 2004).

Why, I asked myself, are Canadian Aboriginal peoples living in such difficult conditions, while non-Aboriginal Canadians live so well? Is there anything that causes this economic difference between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population? How can Natives elevate themselves out of their enduring poverty? What steps can they take to foster their development? This essay tries to provide a tentative answer to these questions and to address the issue of the Aboriginal Canadian population's present economic situation.

Among others, questions about impact or role of the Natives' distinct culture in their economic development have sparked discussion among researchers, who have studied the impact of culture -- as well as other social dimensions -- on Native economic development. Their question asked whether Native peoples' traditional values are compatible with capitalist economic activities. Recently, the question about Aboriginal culture is a part of academic discussion for Aboriginal development.

Based on interview data gained from Native entrepreneurs in Southwest Quebec and Southern Ontario of Canada, this essay discusses if and how so-called Aboriginal 'traditional' values are reflected in their economic activities. This essay also attempts to verify if the economy promoted by these entrepreneurs is in any way different from mainstream Western or profit-oriented economies. It will contribute to the recent academic discussions of Aboriginal tradition in relation to Aboriginal economy, as well

as offer an interpretation of Aboriginal entrepreneurships, economic conditions, and broader Aboriginal development.

This study also contributes to recent discussions on Aboriginal economy by providing a theoretical interpretation of Aboriginal economic activities. Until the last decade, studies on Aboriginal economic activities were generally based on the premise that their development had to follow the path defined by Western mainstream economy. However, over the last decade some Canadian scholars have started to argue in favour of a unique and autonomous economic and social development of Aboriginal society. They have commonly argued that Native development does not have to reproduce Western economic development and tried to identify the ideal strategy for developing Native societies. Some of them have pointed to Native traditional culture as key to fostering an alternative Aboriginal development and this newer discussion is still in its infancy. Therefore, providing theoretical interpretations of the Aboriginal businesses researched herein, along with an explanation of Aboriginal economy as it currently exists, will contribute to academic discussions.

The first section of this thesis introduces information on the current general and economic conditions, including their self-employment, of the Aboriginal population of Canada. The second section provides a review of the literature on Canadian Aboriginal peoples in relation to the economy, and the third part discusses some key characteristics of the Native worldview. After introducing the design and method of the interview research, it analyzes the research data, focusing on the different identified categories of Native traditional values. Referring to Polanyi's (1957, 1971) work, the following section underscores the theoretical implications of the discussed data. The conclusion argues that

Native cultural values are a source of their unique economy in which social relations are respected, and that Aboriginal development based on their traditional culture is possible in the way of emphasizing social relations. It also discusses some theoretical implications as well as mentioning some research limitations.

A. Current Situations of Aboriginal Businesses in Canada

Aboriginal peoples compose one of Canada's minorities and fall into the lower economic range of the population. They show a different shape in terms of their business practices and it is important to discuss the actual economic and entrepreneurial situation prevalent amongst the Aboriginal populations. This section provides some general information that facilitates the understanding of the context in which Native businesses operate.

1. Statistical Overview of Economic and Entrepreneurial Situations

Native peoples in Canada represent a growing minority group in the county. According to the 2006 Canadian Census, over 1,172,790 people identify themselves as Aboriginals, which constitutes 3.8 percent of the country's total population. This includes 698,025 (59.5 percent) First Nations or North American Indian, 389,780 (33.2 percent) Métis, and 50,480 (4.3 percent) Inuit.[2] This Aboriginal population has grown faster than the rest of the Canadian population. Between 1996 and 2006, it increased by 45 percent, nearly six times faster than the rate of increase (8 percent) of the non-Aboriginal population during the same period, which partially explains their younger median age (2006 Canadian Census). In 2001, the median age for the Aboriginal population was 24.7 years, whereas that of the non-Aboriginal Canadian population was 37.7 years (2001

[2] Counting Aboriginal individuals based on their ancestry is another way to identify the whole Aboriginal population. In the 2006 Census, 1,678,235 individuals reported their Aboriginal ancestry. This included 1,205,510 people who reported that they have North American Indian (First Nation) ancestry either partially or as a single ancestry. 363,045 individuals reported their Métis ancestry. 59,585 persons reported their Inuit ancestry. The rest, 50,090 people, held other Aboriginal multiple ancestries.

Canadian Census). In 2006, 40 percent of the Aboriginal population lived on-reserve, while 60 percent lived off-reserve (2006 Canadian Census).

The economic status of the Aboriginal population is lower than other non-Aboriginal Canadians. For example, its income is lower. In 2004, the Aboriginals' median family income was under $27,000 per year, while it was over $64,000 for the general Canadian population. In 2002, 40 percent of Aboriginal families were making less than $20,000 per year, whereas only 10 percent of non-Aboriginal families were making less than that amount. Only 7 percent of Aboriginal families were making more than $70,000 per year, while 36 percent of non-Aboriginal people are categorized into the same income group. While only 10 percent of the total Canadian population (over the age of 15) reported no income, nearly one-fourth of the Aboriginal population reported no income. This income gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians remained the same as it had been over the period of 1980–90. In 1981, Aboriginal people were making 67 percent of the annual income of non-Aboriginal Canadians. After 20 years, they are making only 65 percent of their non-Aboriginal counterparts. This means the income gap has slightly widened. The income sources for Aboriginal population are composed of wage (earned) and non-wage (unearned or transfer). The first is the major source of income for them, however for those living on-reserves, 20 percent of their income is gained from government transfer payment (Frideres and Gadacz, 2008, p. 102–3).

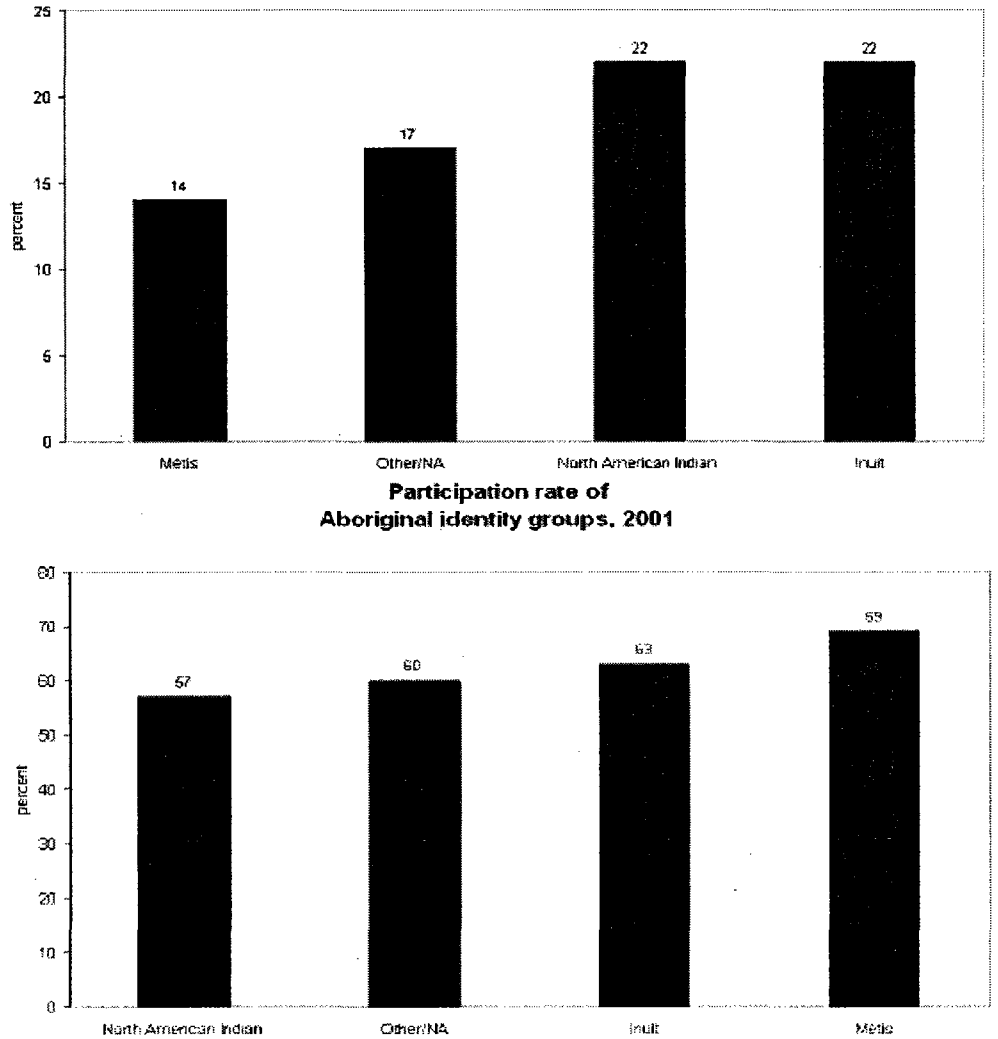
Labour force activities are another indicator of Aboriginal economic status. In 2001, the unemployment rate of people with Aboriginal identity was more than 2.5 times higher than the 7.4 percent of general Canadians. Although the Aboriginal participation

rate has improved over the last decades and is now nearly the rate of general Canadians, for those with First Nation (or North American Indian) identity, it is more than 10 percent lower than the Canadian rate (Table A.1 and Figure A.1). The labour force participation rate for Aboriginal people is not same as that of the non-Aboriginal population (Table A.1). This lesser involvement in the labour force is not solely due to the Aboriginals' educational level or residential location. As shown in Table A.2, there is an income gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations with the same level of educational background. It is true that many Aboriginals reside in small and isolated communities, which might make it more difficult for them to fully participate in the labour force. However, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states that Aboriginal economic performance comes short of general Canadian performance, even when Aboriginals are compared with rural and isolated non-Aboriginal communities (Frideres and Gadacz, 2008, p. 105–8).

Table A.1: Labour Force Activity of Aboriginals, 2001

	Aboriginal identity	Total population (Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal)	Relative Rate
Unemployment Rate (%)	19.1	7.4	258
Participation Rate (%)	61.4	66.4	92

Figure A.1: Labour Force Activity of Aboriginal Identity Groups, 2001



Source: 2001 Census.
Cited from: Mendelson 2004.
Note: "Other" means people who reported as more than one Aboriginal identity group or did not identify any Aboriginal identity group.

Table A.2: Average Individual Income of the Population by Highest Level of Schooling, Aboriginal Identity, 2000

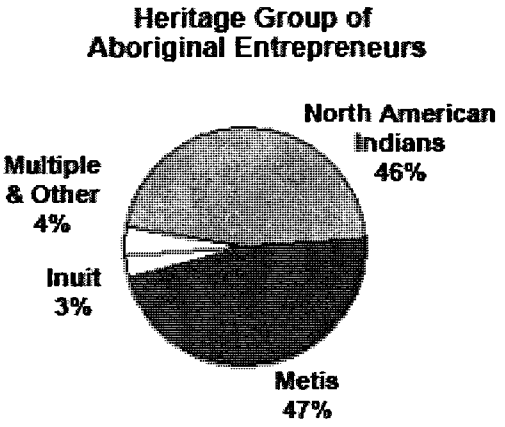
Gender and Highest Level of Schooling	Total Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Women - All Levels	**16,519**	**23,065**
Less than grade 9	11,619	14,249
Grades 9-13 without certificate	11,378	15,582
Grades 9-13 with certificate	16,041	20,363
Non-University without certificate	15,785	19,824
Trades certificate	18,360	21,574
Other Non-University certificate/diploma	22,408	26,324
University without degree	20,754	24,387
University degree	33,624	38,276
Men - All Levels	**21,958**	**37,265**
Less than grade 9	15,948	22,721
Grades 9-13 without certificate	18,365	25,531
Grades 9-13 with certificate	23,201	32,041
Non-University without certificate	20,676	29,456
Trades certificate	28,387	37,865
Other Non-University certificate/diploma	30,467	41,854
University without degree	26,299	36,583
University degree	43,752	63,255

Created from: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/abw/t6-2_e.html. (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.)

Of primary concern to this research, Native businesses represent another aspect of their economic activities. In 2001, 2.78 percent or 27,195 of the overall Aboriginal population were self-employed. This is composed of First Nations descent (46 percent), Métis (47 percent), and Inuit (3 percent) (Figure A.2) (Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002). The number of Aboriginal peoples operating a business in Canada has rapidly risen. Since 1996, the number of self-employed Aboriginal peoples has increased by 30.7 percent, which is nine times higher than the growth rate of self-employed Canadians overall (3.3 percent). In addition, Native entrepreneurs are younger than the Canadian average. Over 25 percent of Aboriginal entrepreneurs are younger than 35, and the median age group

for self-employed Aboriginal people is 35 to 44, whereas it is 45 to 54 for Canadians overall (Figure A.3). Two-thirds of the businesses surveyed had been operating for more than five years, and four out of ten had been operating for 10 years or more (Figure A.4).

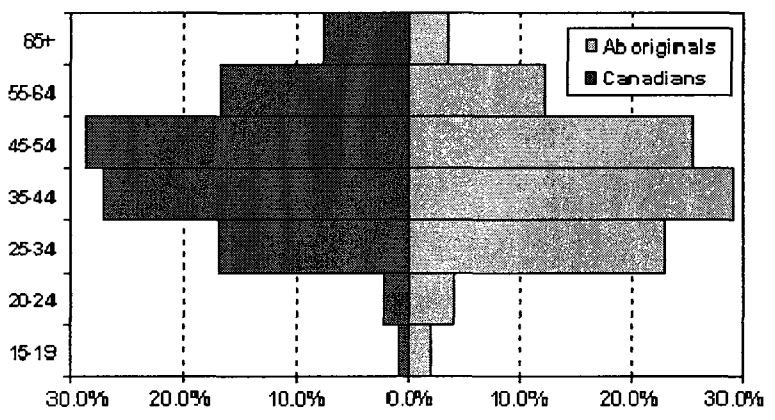
Figure A.2:



Source: Statistics Canada - Census 2001

Created from: *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002.*Industry Canada.

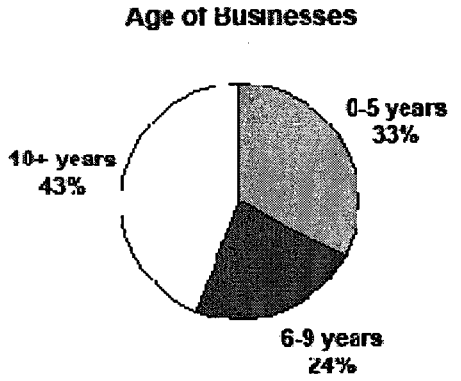
Figure A.3: Age of Self-Employed Workers



Source: Statistics Canada - Census 2001

Created from: *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002.*Industry Canada.

Figure A.4:



Source: Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey", 2002

Cited from: *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002.* Industry Canada.

The traditional sectors in which Aboriginal businesses have operated in the past are still their primary business sector, e.g., fishing, trapping, and farming. However, Aboriginal entrepreneurs are becoming more active in knowledge-based areas. The number of businesses in higher-knowledge sectors, such as professional, scientific and technical, education, health and social services, has increased significantly (to be exact, it has more than doubled) from 1996 to 2001. Although the rate is still much lower than the non-Aboriginal correspondent, this industry is certainly growing at a fast pace among the vast array of Aboriginal businesses. Finally, the number of manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing businesses has been multiplied by five from 1996 to 2001 ("Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002") (Table A.3).

Table A.3: Industry Sectors of Aboriginal Businesses

Industry	ABS 1996 [Note 1]	Aboriginal SMEs 2001 [Note 2]	Canadian SMEs 2001 [Note 2]
Primary	25.0%	20.3%	15.7%
Construction	28.0%	15.1%	12.1%
Manufacturing, Transportation, Warehousing	2.0%	9.9%	9.5%
Wholesale, Retail Trade	20.0%	13.7%	17.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Accommodation, Food & Cultural	7.0%	4.6%	4.7%
Professional, Scientific & Technical, Education, Health & Social	7.0%	17.7%	27.7%
Other	11.0%	17.7%	13.0%
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

1. Statistics Canada, Aboriginal Business Survey, 1996.
2. Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

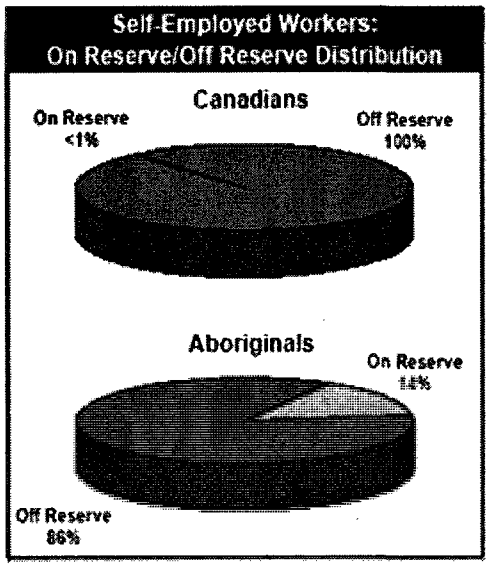
Cited from: *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002.* Industry Canada.

Many Aboriginal businesses are owned by a sole person or are home-based. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of surveyed businesses operated under a sole proprietorship, 18 percent operated under a partnership, and 15 percent were incorporated. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of entrepreneurs operate their business from home. This proportion is highest among primary industries (89 percent), and lowest in wholesale and retail trade (54 percent).

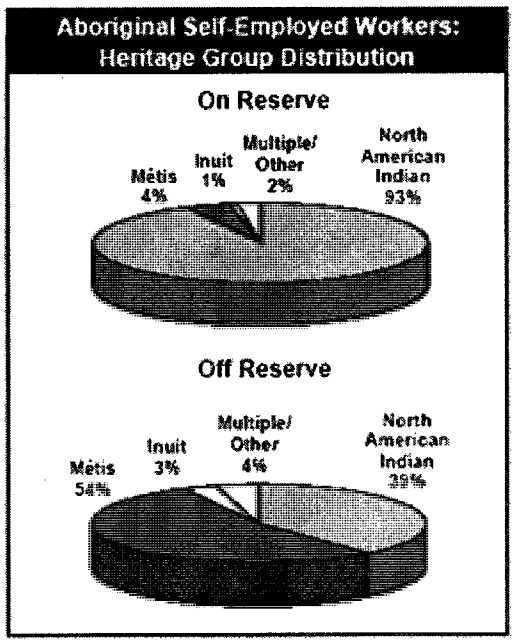
Many Aboriginal businesses have no employees. 65.2 percent of Aboriginal businesses have no full-time employees while 34.8 percent have one or more employees. 29 percent of the whole surveyed Aboriginal businesses have one or more part-time employees.

According to the 2001 Census, about 14 percent (3,920 people) of Aboriginal entrepreneurs reside on-reserve, 93 percent of which are First Nations, while 86 percent (23,275 people) of the Aboriginal entrepreneurs reside off-reserve, more than half of which are Métis (Figure A.5).

Figure A.5: On-Reserve/Off-Reserve Distribution and Heritage Group Distribution of Aboriginal Self-Employed Workers



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census.

Cited from: "Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Thematic Fact Sheets. On reserve/Off Reserve." Industry Canada. Aboriginal Business Canada. July 2005.

While Native businesses situated on-reserve are not significantly different from those situated off-reserve in terms of the industrial sectors in which they operate (Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002), they are more likely to be owned by sole proprietors (Table A.4). They are less likely to use loans and lines of credit as a source of start-up funds. Almost half (49.8 percent) of Aboriginal entrepreneurs did not borrow any

start-up funds, while almost one-third (32.5 percent) of them borrowed fifty percent or more of their funds. Nearly one in five Aboriginal businesses (19.0 percent) had received financial support from governments or Aboriginal organizations.

Table A.4: Aboriginal Businesses, On-Reserve/Off-Reserve Distribution, Ownership Structure

	On-Reserve	Off-Reserve
Sole Proprietorship	82.6%	64.0%
Partnership	10.7%	19.8%
Incorporation	6.7%	16.2%

Source: "Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey, 2002: Thematic Fact Sheets. On-Reserve/Off-Reserve." Industry Canada, Aboriginal Business Canada. July 2005.

"Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002," published by Aboriginal Business Canada, reports that Aboriginal businesses are performing increasingly well. Over seven out of ten businesses surveyed (72 percent) in the *Aboriginal Entrepreneurs Survey* in 2002 reported profits in that year. This rate is 11 percentage points higher than in 1996. Forty-three percent (43%) reported an increase in sales revenues between 2001 and 2002, and 39 percent reported stable sales. The proportion of Aboriginal businesses that stopped their operation in 2002 was three percent, 16 percent of which declared bankruptcy and more than half of which was due to personal factors such as illness and family matters. A smaller proportion (20 percent) of those entrepreneurs indicated access to financing as a factor of business closure in 2002, compared to 1996 (28 percent). As well, fewer

mentioned competition as a factor (12 percent vs. 22 percent) for the shutting down of their business ("Aboriginal Entrepreneurs in 2002").

2. *Federal Programs for Aboriginal Businesses*

Receiving financial supports and benefits from some governmental programs represent an important aspect of conducting business in Canada. Although it is true that the focus of federal policies has recently been on (Aboriginal) community business (trying to provide more autonomy to each community (Frideres and Gadacz, 2008, 384–7)), the federal government is also continuously offering programs to support individual businesses managed by Native peoples.

The central program is Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC), an Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) program that "maximizes Aboriginal people's participation in the economy through business development" (Aboriginal Business Canada, "About ABC"). The majority of the program's support is in the form of non-repayable contributions; in other words, conditional transfer payments to an individual or organization for a specific purpose. The amount of the contribution differs from project to project, but cannot exceed $75,000 (the typical support is usually lower). ABC focuses on prioritized areas: Innovation, trade and market expansion, tourism, youth entrepreneurship development, and strengthening Aboriginal financial and business development organizations. Projects falling under the youth development priority occupy about half of the current ABC contributions. Approximately 1,000 projects receive ABC funding each year. Particularly in rural and remote areas, business services and support

for Aboriginal businesses is delivered through Aboriginal-owned and operated organizations (Aboriginal Business Canada, "About ABC").

In addition, INAC also continuously assist Aboriginal businesses through the Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business (PSAB). It started in 1997 as one of several responses to the RCAP report and benefits Aboriginal businesses and communities through such ways as reserving larger contracts, which serve the Aboriginal population, for competition among Aboriginal businesses (INAC, "Performance Report for 2000"). Although this program does not assist Aboriginal businesses through direct funding, it helps them seize various opportunities to do business with federal departments and agencies (The Procurement Strategy for Aboriginal Business). Through mandatory and voluntary set-aside processes, Aboriginal suppliers bid for and win federal contracts. The PSAB applies to all federal departments and agencies except Crown corporations.

In 2004, a total of 5,980 federal contracts worth $244.91 million were awarded to Aboriginal firms. About 78 percent of total contracts over $25,000 (or 697 out of 891) were awarded to Aboriginal businesses under open competition (not set aside). Interventions by INAC through the Procurement Review Committee accounted for less than three percent of all requirements valued at more than $2 million that were set aside for Aboriginal businesses (PSAB Performance Report, 2004).

This section has mainly provided a brief description of the economic conditions of Canadian Aboriginal peoples and their business activities. As their population has steadily grown, the number of their businesses has also increased. This part presented age, sector, location, and some other characteristics of Native businesses. What about Native

economic activities in relation to their traditions? To what extent have Native businesses developed any characteristics stemming from their cultural values? Before analyzing the interview data to answer these questions and introducing the research method and design, the following section reviews previous studies regarding the Aboriginal economy in Canada.

B. Previous Literature on the Aboriginal Economy

The history of studies on Aboriginal economy is not long. Scholars have begun to actively study Aboriginal economic activities since the 1970s. Their arguments were initially based on the premise that Aboriginal development is possible only through adaptation to mainstream Western norms. However, recent researchers have suggested otherwise, commonly insisting on the importance of establishing Aboriginal development under their control and according to their unique tradition. In particular, the impact or role of distinct Native culture on their economic development attracted attention. Together with other questions relating to social and political dimensions, the cultural issue has become one of the focal points in the recent discussion on autonomous Aboriginal development.

1. Assumption of Universal Modernization and an Absence of Concern on Aboriginal Economic Activities (pre-1970s)

Prior to 1970, Canadian researchers were not particularly interested in studying Aboriginal economy. They assumed that Native population would inevitably be assimilated into Western society. Culture-wise, Natives were considered as a "dying race."

This belief was based on a modernization perspective. This perspective considered Western society the most advanced civilization and explained that other non-Western societies needed to attain this stage of development. It not only guided the social

scientists' approach to Amerindian economic activities, but also influenced the federal government's Aboriginal policy (High, 1996).

The very rare works that mentioned Native economic activities published in these early decades commonly assumed Native assimilation. *The Indians of Canada* (1932) by Diamond Jenness applied the modernization theory to Native economic development. Stating, "Old World has fallen in ruins, and is helpless in the face of a catastrophe ... The end of the century it seems safe to predict, will see very few survivors" (p. 350), Jeness explained that they "lagged behind march of progress" (p. 28) because they failed to maximize their use of available resources. Another scholar, Harold Innis, who studied the history of the fur trade in Canada and its role in the development of the Canadian nation, described how Natives' participation in the fur trade affected their lives. According to him, Native people gradually became dependent on relations with Europeans as a result of their reliance on European technology. An increasing need for iron cutting tools led to the decline of game, and a growing need for furs to trade for these goods resulted in intertribal warfare (Innis, 1956). As well, G.T. Hunt's *The Wars of Iroquois* (1940) argued that Native economies, political alliances, and value systems had been radically transformed because of the fur trade. As soon as European technologies became available, Native cultures were fundamentally changed.

Some researchers, especially anthropologists, generally sought to record Native culture as it was before the Natives' first contact with Europeans. For this very reason, they paid little attention to the various economic aspects of Native life. They only attempted to document and record the vanishing features of Indians' traditional way of life. For example, Marius Barbeau collected Indian folklore from both the East and West

coasts. He wrote a number of works such as *Huron and Wyandot Mythology* (1915), *Totem Poles of the Gitksan* (1929), and *Haida Myths* (1953), most of which were published by the National Museum of Canada. Indians were viewed not as fellow Canadians, but rather as exotic specimens whose artefacts should be stored in museums. With such strong assumptions of the eventual decline of Native tradition and their assimilation into Canadian society, Canadian scholars hardly studied the Indians' economic situation.

2. *Emergence of Idealist-Cultural Relativist Interpretations and Concern over Aboriginal Economic Activities (1970s–)*

Since the 1970s, Canadian scholars have begun to pay more attention to the specific economic activities of Native peoples. The focus of their research was on Native economic activities in relation to fur trade from the seventeenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, and on the subsequent decades of European settlement between the end of the fur trade and the beginning of World War II.

A newer group of scholarly works emphasizes non-material factors involved in Aboriginal economic practices. While "rationalist-materialists" thought Native actions were the results of "rational" decisions made in response to material conditions, this newer school of "idealist-cultural relativists" (Trigger, 1989, p. 15) stresses the fundamental distinctions between Native culture and Western culture. Drawing part of their inspiration from Innis's work, rationalist-materialists argued that Natives quickly became dependent on European goods and gradually abandoned their traditional belief system. On the other hand, cultural relativists assigned Native cultural traditions a more

important role as the determinants of Native adaptation to European economic systems. While both these views conflict on the extent to which Natives have embraced the capitalist system, both imply that they will succeed economically only as far as they abandon their traditional or cultural methods and practices.

Scholars had mainly tried to reveal how Native peoples dealt with the European capitalist economy by studying the ethno-history of the Native fur trade, insisting on the bargaining of pelts, employment in the Hudson's Bay Company, and other behaviours related to trading activities with Europeans. Rationalist-materialist interpretation was chiefly illustrated by analysing property ownership and commodity values. For example, McManus (1972) described the emergence of private property ownership among Natives as a rational choice induced by new materialistic conditions. Indians started to own private hunting territories after the introduction of the fur trade because they wanted to increase the chance to capture pelts and gain more European goods through trade.

Ray and Freeman (1978) also concluded that North-American Indian rapidly adapted to the Western capitalist economy. With the ongoing commercial competition between England and France Native peoples took advantage of this rivalry and demanded more manufactured goods for their pelts. They made a rational response to differing exchange values of their beaver skins and seemed to behave in the same fashion as Europeans living in a capitalist society.

As well, Warburton and Scott (1985), taking the materialist interpretation, explained that fur trade led Native peoples in British Columbia to a mutual dependence with the fur traders. The trade introduced capitalist social relations to the region and by

the time of the Gold Rush in the 1850s, British Columbia was already on the way to capitalist economic development.

The rationalist-materialist school occupied mindset of some of the Canadian scholars of the 1980s who attempted to reveal the real economic activities of Native peoples in the period of European settlement after the decline of the fur trade. The pioneering work about Aboriginal peoples' economic practices after the fur trade era is *Indians at Work: An Informal History of Native Labour in British Columbia 1858–1930*, written by Rolf Knight and published in 1978. According to Knight, the regional market in British Columbia transformed into an economy with various industries in the years following 1858. Natives in this region, who had only been hitherto living in a subsistence economy or engaged in some simple commercial activities such as trapping for fur trade, started to be involved in the labour market. Prior to the end of the nineteenth century, the fur trade declined, and Indians were integrated into other industries in British Columbia and many other regions (1996 [1978], pp. 8–9).

Knight (1996)'s work nourished the materialistic argument: with the decline of the fur trade, and the absence of subsidy payment by the government, Natives made a choice that provided them with better economic conditions than staying in a subsistence economy (p. 20). Conversely, with the Great Depression of 1930, which caused an increase in unemployment and a decline in wages, many Indians who had been wage labourers returned to a life based on subsistence activities as this offered better living conditions (Knight, 1996, p. 322). Knight states that his work constitutes "a refutation of the view which holds that Native Indians were occupationally limited by the continuing imperatives of their Aboriginal cultures (p. 20)."

Following Knight's work, some social scientists argued that Natives were able to quickly adapt to the economic system brought by European settlers. For instance, emphasizing Natives' ability to participate in the Western economy, Burrows (1986) pointed out not cultural but other factors such as government regulations, lack of capital, and discrimination against Natives in the labour market to explain their difficulties to participate in the economy of British Columbia during the post-fur trade era. Dunk (1987) explained that Indians in Ontario participated well in the industrial economy of the region. Recognizing cultural differences between the Native society and the newly developing society of Euro-Canadians, he denied the view that Indians are culturally handicapped from being able to meet the demands of an industrial economy. In short, scholars belonging to the materialist school argued that Natives quickly adapted to the capitalist economy.

On the other hand, based on the fundamental thought that human actions are influenced by non-materialistic factors, such as values and ethics, the idealist-cultural rationalists provided another interpretation of Native economic activities. Scholars belonging to this school believed that the Aboriginal worldviews or values shaped the ways in which they participated in the colonial economy. Emphasizing the cultural differences between Euro-Canadians and Aboriginal peoples, these scholars maintained their cultural perspective by providing examples of non-capitalistic behaviours, such as the absence of accumulation-seeking and the sense of private ownership within pre-Colombian Native communities, and reluctance to be engaged in wage labour.

An early publication, *The Indians of British Columbia* (Hawthorn et al., 1958) explained that their attitudes, traditions, and values restrict Indians to casual labour and

kept them struggling in the "poverty cycle" (pp. 242–3). In establishing that Natives were virtually absent from wage labour in 1954 to 1955 Hawthorn et al. (1958) pointed out five factors that contributed to their perceived backwardness: (1) links to village and kin, (2) the absence of a status system based on accumulation of wealth, (3) an intrinsic interest on outside and physical labour, (4) the seasonal way of life, and (5) desire to keep an independent status, which is not reconcilable with the factory system (pp. 232–6).

Since the 1970s, a number of studies have attempted to interpret Native economic activities from the standpoint of this idealist-cultural relativist school. Arthur J. Ray, in *Indians in the Fur Trade, 1660–1870* (1974) mentioned that when Europeans proposed a better exchange rate to the Indians, the latter decreased the amount of beavers they brought to the trading post. They chose to constrain the supply of furs instead of buying more goods or accumulating a greater profit. George Hamell (1987) argued that not material conditions but Native traditional culture explains relations between Indians and Europeans during the two centuries following the European discovery of North America. According to him, Native peoples initially valued European goods not because they recognized the utilitarian values of those goods, but because they assigned religious significance to them according to their traditional religious beliefs.

Based on the case of the West Main Cree in North-eastern Ontario, George and Preston (1987) found fundamental psychological and cultural differences between Indians and Europeans. The Cree did not fully develop a sense of private ownership when they were engaged in fur trading with Europeans. During the fur trade, European post managers gave "debt" in advance of trapping during the coming winter in order to ensure that the Cree could engage in hunting with the proper equipment, hoping that they would

capture many beavers and bring the catch back to the trading post. However, the Cree did not necessarily feel any obligation to meet European expectations. The traders often complained in their reports about the "indolence" of these Cree hunters.

Natives' traditional values also facilitated their dependence upon the provided relief. By the 1960s, instruments Indians used for hunting and trapping had changed. This was accompanied by a gradual shift from traditional activities in the bush to residence in the post villages and increasing reliance on relief provided by Hudson's Bay Company first, and then on government transfer payments. According to George and Preston (1987), Indians were willing to accept their dependence on those relief efforts and governmental monetary transfers because it was not opposed to their traditional values. While personal independence is an important goal and dependence is considered a liability for North Americans, traditional Cree culture insisted that "it is both commonsensical and friendly to accept gifts" (George and Preston, 1987, p. 455). Refusing gifts is, for them, to rebuke or to offend their benefactors. Consequently, the Cree readily accepted those financial supports (p. 455).

According to George and Preston (1987), the Cree traditional values also hindered their wage labour potential. Some Cree were hired by missionaries, the HBC, and the Company's families, to perform different tasks. However, since hunting and trapping ranked high for the Cree while wage labour did not, they were reluctant to work for a wage. George and Preston explain that the antipathy to wage labour amongst the Cree people was due to the fact that work was never meaningful for them. While Western ethics "valued work as an end in itself as well as for its results, the Cree placed great emphasis on the social and cultural context of work. They eagerly pursued work which

had significance in their scheme of values, which promised success, and which earned favourable public opinion" (1986, p. 455). In other words, the Cree's work ethic made it difficult for them to manage regular wage labours.

Lutz (1992) maintained that Aboriginal cultural values were the primary reasons why Native peoples joined in the capitalist economy after the end of the fur trade era. According to him, in British Columbia, Native cultural values drove them to wage labour and participation of Native peoples in the Western economy was to obtain money, but this money was not to satisfy personal needs. They sought money to claim a higher status in religious and cultural events, such as potlatch. In their society, potlatch offered an important opportunity to reinforce Natives' social status (through the redistribution of monetary wealth, for example). What facilitated the Aboriginal peoples' participation in the capitalist economy were not their financial or economic personal interests but their collective Native values.

In the 1970s, the rationalist-materialist school developed a new interpretation with the dependency theory or internal colonial model of the Aboriginal economy (Frideres, 1988; Haddad and Spivey, 1992; Boldt, 1993). Whereas the majority of previous researchers had claimed that capitalism brings development, some new group of scholars pointed out the destructive aspect of capitalism. Since "the structural-historical realities of the periphery are the direct result of the expansion of core capitalism into the periphery, in search of raw materials" (Haddad and Spivey, 1992, p. 206), they hypothesised that relations with the mainstream economy are exploitive for Aboriginal society. When this approach is applied to the economic experience of Canadian Aboriginal population, it requires researchers to question "the long-accepted proposition that Natives are in the

condition they are in because of some inherent fault in their cultural ideals and institutional arrangement..." (p. 209).

In summary, in the 1970s, researchers started to study the life of Native people in relation to the economy. These studies were mainly based on either a rationalist-materialist or idealist-cultural-relativist interpretation. Although the two views are different in terms of how they define the determinants of transition in Native society, they share the same assumption that Natives can only be economically successful by adopting the capitalist approach shared by mainstream Canadians. In other words, they both carry the implicit notion that the economic success of the Native population is dependent on their acceptance of the mainstream capitalists' social order. These views implied that Native culture is to some degree hindering, or even preventing, their economic success.

Today, some researchers continue to argue for the adaptation of Aboriginal peoples to the mainstream economy. This argument is found in the work, *First Nations? Second Thought* (2000) by Tom Flanagan. He argues against a separate economic development and does not concur with those who think that First Nation people should be encouraged to develop a self-sufficient economy with the support of the federal government. Instead, he believes that integration into the Western economy is required for them to be prosperous (p. 7). The current state of Aboriginal peoples in Canada where they live under a system of generous welfare, Flanagan explains, discourages them to adapt. According to him, the governmental subsidies function as a way to hinder the natural integration of Natives into the Western economy. The "welfare trap" (Flanagan, 2000, p. 174) set by the government encourages them to continuously depend on revenue from social assistance instead of participation in the labour market. To him, it is by

breaking from the heavy dependence on government financial support, both at an individual and corporate level, that will allow them to join the Western capitalist system. In his argument, Natives need to culturally and economically adapt themselves to the mainstream Canadian society for their prosperity (Flanagan, 2000).

Disrobing the Aboriginal Industry: The Deception Behind Indigenous Cultural Preservation by Widdowson and Howard (2008) is another work that strongly emphasizes Aboriginal adaptation to Western society. Based on an analysis with historical materialism, Widdowson and Howard argue that there is a cultural gap between Aboriginal peoples, who are still at a pre-civilization stage, and the Western population, who are at the late capitalism stage. Widdowson and Howard not only justify withdrawal of governmental funding exclusively for Aboriginal peoples, like Flanagan (2000), but also argue that the undeveloped character of Aboriginal culture prevents them from being productive. The solution they suggest is creating special programs to assist bridging the cultural gap and leading Aboriginal peoples to development, instead of respecting Aboriginal traditions, such as traditional knowledge and healers, and leaving decisions up to Aboriginal peoples for their affairs (p. 258).

Widdowson and Howard argue that the current overwhelming view that Aboriginal peoples should make decisions for themselves regarding their affairs, which includes advocacy for land claims and self-government, is the result of a long historical process in which an Aboriginal Industry has taken advantage of Aboriginal peoples' situations in order to justify demands for more funding. The Aboriginal Industry is "an amalgamation of lawyers, consultants, anthropologists, linguists, accountants, and other occupations that thrive on aboriginal dependency" (p.20). With the racism accusation

taboo, the Industry has romanticized Aboriginal culture, created native leadership as a comprador in Aboriginal communities, and avoided discussing dysfunction and corruption in the leadership and communities. This trend will never lead the Aboriginal peoples to a solution (Widdowson and Howard, 2008).

3. *Alternative Approach to Aboriginal Economy (1990s–)*

Since the 1990s, especially after the RCAP report was published in 1996, new trends in Aboriginal economic studies have emerged. While a conservative argument for Native adaptation to the Western mainstream economy continues to exist (as Tom Flanagan), more researchers emphasized the possibility of development while seeking an alternative way of development. They do not consider development similar to the Western economy a universal goal. This approach attempts to establish a way for traditional Native culture and market economy activities to coexist. It considers development based on Native local and national self-determination a possible way toward Native societies' prosperity.

It does not mean that all scholars now similarly emphasize the distinctive Native economy's development. They disagree as to the extent to which this economy should connect to the larger market economy. For example, conducting research on a case of Mikisew Cree First Nation, Slowey (2008) maintains that First Nations peoples can form a self-controlled type of development under neoliberal circumstances. According to her, the world's neoliberal trends facilitate accelerated formation of liberal policies in Canada and self-determination of First Nations. In neoliberalism, the ideal citizen is the

individual who competes in the marketplace without relying on the state. Therefore, in a neoliberal context, First Nations may enjoy greater autonomy and therefore could have more opportunities to find a way for economic development that respects their own preferences within the Canadian state. "Neoliberalism provides a policy environment that privileges the marketplace and disproportionately benefits the wealthy; but it also works to benefit of well-resourced First Nations" (Slowey, 2008, p. 79).

On the other hand, other – especially Aboriginal – researchers emphasize Aboriginal initiatives to drive change and growth. They argue that a combination of their cultural and social traditions and economic practices is the most reliable way to enable the development of Aboriginal society.

An important book for those researchers who emphasize reflection of Aboriginal tradition is *Living Rhythms: Lessons in Aboriginal Economic Resilience and Vision* by Wanda Wuttunee (2004). While being descriptive, it stresses the importance of combining Aboriginal cultural values and Western capitalist values to ensure the economic success of Aboriginal peoples. Wuttunee argues in favour of a business model that reflects Aboriginal thinking (pp. 19–26). In the Aboriginal worldview, it is considered more important to satisfy human needs than to maximize growth and gain for one's own sake. Although Aboriginal values such as spirituality, kinship, personal efficacy and group orientation may not normally constitute priorities in dominant corporate culture (since they do not lead to any immediate profits) Aboriginal companies can combine traditional values and capitalist values.

> Relationships between people, communities, and environment with a spiritual underpinning are honoured and are the focus for economic development within a context of values, culture, and tradition. Many of these factors were labelled as

> problems in the regular approach to business and economic development. Now they form the basis for success (Wuttunee, 2004, p. 24).

Researching eight community-owned businesses, Wuttunee described how Aboriginal businesses based on Native communities and Native values can be successful in a capitalist economy. For example, the Bigstore Cree Nation in Alberta did not accept a business partnership with other non-Native corporations because they did not want to compromise their environmental standards. The First Nation members did not give up their ecological values for the sake of their business' growth. In the Tsuu T'ina Nation in Alberta, spiritual leaders are asked for advice before business decision making. The Nation retains its spiritual tradition in its business practices. In the Fort McPherson-Gwich'in community in the Northwest Territories, community members are often involved in the leadership of their businesses. In all of the three communities above, creating jobs for other members of the band, increasing opportunities for the community and encouraging youth initiatives are important goals shared by Native entrepreneurs. Wuttunee states that, although profit is an important aspect in Aboriginal business' management, decision-making is not determined by profits alone.

Wuttunee also interviewed two individual entrepreneurs in later research. With other researchers, she proposed a combination of indigenous values and capitalist values in the management of individual business as well (Wuttunee et al., 2006). Describing how Aboriginal entrepreneurs reflect indigenous values in their business practices, she concludes that their holistic way of thinking led to their business success.

Focusing on business management of the Aboriginal economy, Anderson and Bone (1995) suggested a collective approach to their economic development. According

to them, Aboriginal economic development should be centred on Aboriginal communities and be closely tied to lands, traditional practices, and identity.

As well, Newhouse (2004) introduces a concept that he calls "red capitalism," based on Aboriginal world views and values. He believes that Aboriginal values can have a positive and transformative influence on the life of Aboriginal communities as well as on broader society in several ways including the following (Newhouse, 2000, pp. 59–60; Salée, 2006, p. 15):

1. The concept of personal and social development will be much broader, encompassing all the dimensions of life included in the medicine wheel;
2. Development will be seen as a process, not a product – a journey, not an end in itself, with long-term results taking precedence over short-term gains;
3. Red capitalism will bring development to be seen as a joint effort between the individual and the collective and its institutions, as a collaborative rather than a competitive process;
4. Similarly, red capitalism will also be seen as a partnership between the individual and the world in such a way that, when individuals see themselves as part of the creations, they are more likely to make respectful choices in their development projects and the technology they employ;
5. The emphasis will be on human capital investment rather than individual capital accumulation;
6. Elders' traditional wisdom will be used to guide planning and decision-making;
7. Wealth distribution will reflect Aboriginal values of kindness and sharing, thus modifying the capitalist notion of success in material terms;
8. The establishment of Western economic institutions will have to be attuned to be the needs and values of the community;
9. Decision-making by consensus will guide the development of the community and the organizational structures needed to support it; and
10. Notions of honesty and respect, so central to the Aboriginal value set, will foster a heightened sense of accountability for economic institutions and decision-makers.

According to Newhouse (2000), Aboriginal peoples are able to achieve economic development in a holistic, sustainable, collaborative, environmental, traditional, reciprocal, and collective rather than competitive, individualistic and materialistic manner.

Different from Western capitalism, "red capitalism" reflects Aboriginal values and enables Aboriginal peoples to achieve a distinct form of economic development.

In the short history of scholarly literature on Aboriginal economy, researchers have shifted their fundamental perspective in recent years. Conservative arguments were based on the premise that Aboriginal peoples had to adapt to Western capitalism for their prosperity. While these conservative arguments have not disappeared, recently a greater number of studies have attempted to establish an alternative development model which commonly encourages the combination of Aboriginal traditional worldview and economic ways of thinking.

Finally, recent research has begun to advocate a semi-autonomous development of Aboriginal economy. This research however, is still in its infancy and Wuttunee's works (Wuttunee, 2004; Wuttunee et al., 2007) are mainly descriptive and do not provide an overall theoretical interpretations of the cases she described. On the other hand, Newhouse's studies (2000, 2004) offer discussions at a theoretical level without providing empirical data. Attempting to cover these shortcomings of earlier works, this research aims to provide both empirical and theoretical discussions on the current situation of the Aboriginal economy. Through offering theoretical discussions based on an interview research on Aboriginal entrepreneurs it will try to provide information that is usable for an assessment of Wuttunee's and Newhouse's works. By analyzing the cultural aspects of Aboriginal businesses, this study will explore the place and role of Aboriginal traditional culture within Aboriginal economy. What are the Native 'traditional' worldviews? What is the Aboriginal traditional value system? And how does

this value system influence the way for Aboriginal entrepreneurs to conduct their business? The following sections will focus on these questions.

C. Cultural Context of Aboriginal Peoples

Researchers have identified some distinct Aboriginal values, all based on fundamentally different philosophical assumptions about nature, human beings, and society. Although great cultural diversity exists among the different Aboriginal groups across Canada, most Natives have recognized that they share some common cultural beliefs. For example, the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP Report), written in 1996 by Aboriginal scholars and leaders, states:

> We arrived at a shared conviction that there is an Aboriginal world view that assumes different features among different peoples and in different locales but that is consistent in important ways among Aboriginal peoples across Canada. We became convinced that distinctively Aboriginal ways of apprehending reality and governing collective and individual behaviour are relevant to the demands of survival in a post-industrial society. (RCAP, 1996, p. 616)

Although, as the RCAP Report states, many federal and provincial policies have tried to force Native peoples to lose their tradition and adapt to Euro-Canadian society (RCAP, 1996, vol.1), Aboriginal peoples have been able to preserve their pre-Columbian culture. This culture might be less dominant now than four hundred years ago, yet it still influences their life. "Embedded in Native culture as social norms" or basic principles of behaviour, the Aboriginal values "continue to influence Native life today" (Brant, 1990, p. 535).

Western thought stresses individuals' freedom rather than solidarity to the group to which they belong and individual self-interest often takes precedence over group interests (Boldt and Long, 1985). The key themes of this worldview are assertiveness,

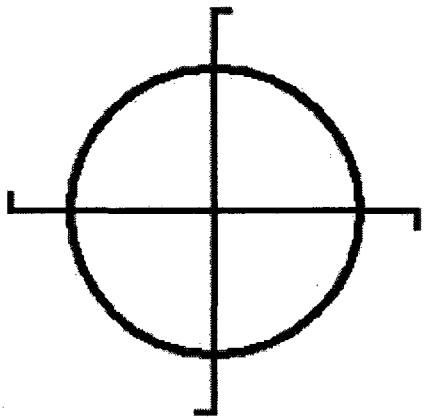
competitiveness, individual achievement, and the ability to influence and manipulate others. In general, thinking takes a "linear and singular" approach. Time is conceptualized as a straight line (Dumont 1993; Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, pp. 174–175).

Contrary to Western philosophical positions, Aboriginal peoples have a view that focuses not on individuals but on society as a "whole." All parts of the whole are interconnected and interrelated and must exist in harmony. The whole and its parts can fully 'operate' only when each works in harmony. Since human beings are only a part of the whole just like other animals, plants, and inanimate objects, individuals are subordinated to the whole. As a result, in Aboriginal culture, individual self-interest never takes precedence over group-interest (Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, pp. 174–175). The Aboriginal worldview can also be characterized as cyclical. The world is construed as circular, without the concept of the beginning and end. There are repetitive phases and patterns of the world (Waters, 2004; Bol, 2003). Time is understood as cyclical; days and nights and seasons alternate in a predictable round (RCAP, 1996, vol.1. p. 646; Waters, 2004; Bol, 2003). This vision of wholeness and the holistic worldview lie at the Native culture's spiritual core.

Native researchers and leaders often explain the Native worldview using the concept of the "Medicine Wheel" (Figure C.1). Being a teaching device in many First Nations of the plains – Cree, Blackfoot, Dakota, and others – it "represents the circle that encompasses all the life and all that is known or knowable, linked together in a whole with no beginning and no end. Human beings have their existence in this circle of life, along with other beings and the unseen forces that give breath and vitality to inhabitants

of the natural world" (RCAP, 1996, vol.1, p. 646–647). The Medicine Wheel's circle represents the whole composed of constituent parts. The lines intersecting at the centre of the circle mean order and balance (RCAP, 1996, vol.1, p. 647).

Figure C.1: The Medicine Wheel



Source: Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol.1. Ottawa: 1996, p. 646.

This Native worldview generates cultural values that are distinct from the non-Native values. Reading scholars' and researchers' works (Jules, 1988; Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008; Brant, 1990: RCAP, 1996, vol. 1), one can identify nine basic values that are considered specific to the traditional Native way of life: collective and cooperative behaviour; reciprocity and sharing; consensus; egalitarian; environmental; non-interfering; non competitiveness; emotional restraint; respecting older and unborn generations. The following briefly describes them.

Collective and cooperative behaviour. As collective interest prevails over self-interests, collective benefits are prioritized. "Co-operative behaviour and the "good" of

the tribal member override individual differences; they are valued and encouraged" (Jules, 1988, p. 7).

Reciprocity and sharing. This value partly overlaps with the emphasis on collective behaviour. Since all members of society interact with each other, they always need to take others into consideration (Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, p. 175). To preserve the well-being of others, individuals are expected to take no more than they need and to freely share the rest. It is "a behavioural norm that discourages the hoarding of material goods by an individual" (Brant, 1990, p. 535). Consensus-building or decision-sharing forms another aspect of these reciprocal behaviours, as well. If Natives fail to arrive at a consensus, they leave the decision unmade. Voting on a majority basis, which inevitably ignores some disagreements, is undesirable (Jules, 1988, p. 7).

Egalitarian behaviours. Since everything is thought to be interrelated, each part constituting the world is understood as equal to all others (Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, p. 175); and, accordingly, each individual should be considered equal to everybody.

Environmental values. As all parts of the world are considered equally important, Natives respect all forms of life. Human beings are dependent on the harmonious functioning of all parts or elements of the world. Respecting the parts contributes to the survival of themselves and the whole world. Land, for example, should be respected. The 1996 RCAP Report describes what the land means for Natives as follows:

> When Aboriginal people speak of the land they mean not only the ground that supports their feet; they also include waters, plants, animals, fish, birds, air, seasons – all the beings, elements, and processes encompassed by the term 'biosphere' (p. 631).
> Ignoring that there is a balance to be preserved not only invites dire consequences, but also ensures that misfortune will follow and afflict all those who depend on the generosity of the land, which nourishes us like a mother (p. 634).

Non-interfering. This value stems from the Native values that emphasize all components of the whole, as well. In order to keep world harmony, each individual is required to follow the fundamental order of the universe. Brant (1990) explains that the attitude of non-interfering suppresses conflict and keeps people in harmony. By not interfering with other people's choices, decisions, and actions, Natives avoid provoking disputes and conflicts.

Non competitiveness. This also suppresses conflicts "by averting intragroup rivalry and preventing any embarrassment that a less able member of the group might feel in an interpersonal situation" (Brant, 1990, p. 535).

Emotional restraint. This is another method of conflict suppression, being the "corollary and extension" of non-interference and non-competitiveness (Brant, 1990, p. 535).

Respecting elders and concern for the younger generations. These values stem from the Native cyclical perception of the world. Because the past, present, and future are intertwined in the Aboriginal perception of time, traditions are respected and the future is to be stewarded. Elders are often treated as wise men and teachers. The life of the youth and unborn generations is also a matter of concern. This value can be described as respect for the traditions of the past and an obligation to care for the future generations' well-being (Dumont, 1993). Elders are "the keeper of the world for the unborn" (Jules, 1988, p. 11). As an elder explains: "The world does not belong to us; it belongs to the unborn, to the children of our children's children" (Spiller, cited in Jules, 1988, p. 11).

In sum, according to Julles and other scholars, Native peoples share distinct cultural values based on their holistic worldview. The concept of the whole in which all parts function in a harmonious order generates collective, reciprocal, egalitarian, and environmental values as well as non-interference, non-competitiveness, emotional restraint and respect for elders. The cyclical approach strengthens connection between all elements of life: young and old; past and future; nature and human; dead and alive; night and day; and so forth.

Can these behavioural values that apparently conflict with economic success be included in contemporary business operations? Can they be part of Native development? Can they be integrated within the functioning of the Aboriginal economy without threatening their development? This research explores these questions through an analysis of some Canadian Aboriginal businesses. Before analyzing the research data, the following chapters explain the program and research design.

D. Program of Research

This study explores to what extent Aboriginal traditional values are reflected in Aboriginal peoples' economic practices. If those values are part of their economic activities, how do they distinctly influence their economy? How is Aboriginal development based on their tradition possible? The research questions of this research are as follows:

> **Research Question 1:** Can Aboriginal cultural values be reflected in Aboriginal economic activities? If so, in which way?
>
> **Research Question 2:** How are Canadian Aboriginal peoples forming their economy? Are they joining the capitalist system exactly as other Euro-Canadians or Western people? Or, are they forming their economy differently?
>
> **Research Question 3:** Can Aboriginal peoples form a distinct development within the larger market-oriented society? Is Aboriginal development that reflects traditional values possible? If so, in what way is the distinct Aboriginal development possible?

E. Research Design: Interview

This research is based on a series of interviews with twelve Aboriginal Canadian entrepreneurs (Table E.1). Interviews conducted in person as face-to-face interviews minimize misunderstanding, which often happens when interviews are conducted in the form of mail-in questionnaires. They also enable a better understanding of the participants' feelings, which do not always clearly appear in the answers they provide. In addition, interviews in person provide some valuable non-verbal information. This research used semi-structured interviews, which allow researchers to have the flexibility to modify or add questions anytime during the conversation.

This study chose the interviewees on the basis of six criteria. Participants needed to: a) be engaged in a private and for-profit business, b) be occupying a decision-making position in the company, and c) hold a First Nation identity. Participants were also selected in such a way as to create diversity in respect of: d) the sector in which they are involved and e) First Nations (tribal) groups to which they belong or from which they are. In addition, this research selected f) businesses that show some evidence of Aboriginal cultural values in their activities.

(a) Being engaged in a private business

This study set the criterion that the company for which participants worked needed to be an individual private business. Community-owned businesses are generally based on governmental supports, grants, or funding. Since tribal bands receive plenty of financial support from the federal (or provincial) government, they are not forced to be

fully engaged in a competitive market. Flanagan (2000) provides the example of the Tsuu T'ina Nation. The nation's Wolf's Flat Ordinance Disposal Corporation has had contracts in several countries, but "it is sustained by a $34-million contract with the Department of National Defence to clear a firing range on land leased from the Tsuu T'ina Reserve" (p. 190).

In the current market economy, it is unusual to have a situation in which company owners or businesspersons receive enough funds for them to do business at a loss in their other activities. Hence, those businesses are not under the same financial conditions as other non-Aboriginal corporations, most of which do not receive governmental supports.

In order to examine how Aboriginal cultural values are reflected in their economic activities, this research focuses on Aboriginal privately-owned businesses instead of band-owned entrepreneurships. Unlike community-owned Native businesses, Native private business owners rarely receive large amounts of external financial support. The federal government, especially the Aboriginal Business Canada in Industry Canada, provides only initial grants and loans for privately-owned Aboriginal businesses. In other words, private businesses will eventually have to maintain a certain margin of profit in order to continue to operate. Hence, focusing on private businesses rather than Aboriginal community-owned and community-operated business will provide more realistic information on Aboriginal economic development. As well, in order to examine business activates well-involved in a competitive marketplace, non-profit organizations were excluded.

(b) Occupying a decision-making position

Interview subjects were company presidents, owners, and workers occupying a decision-making position. They can change activities of the company according to their values. On the other hand, when they make a decision, they also need to consider the company's financial situation. Therefore, interviewing these individuals will provide information useful to examine to what extent Aboriginal traditional thought can be included in their business activities in a competitive market economy.

(c) Holders of First Nation identity

Although there are different categories of Aboriginal population (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) in Canada, this research set a limitation on the group to which participants belong and selected them only from the first group. Since the three groups of people are greatly different in terms of their culture and history, this limitation make it easier to analyze the Aboriginal cultural aspects of their business activities. Furthermore, recent works that argue for distinct Aboriginal development have focussed on First Nations peoples. Moreover, excluding Métis and Inuit from the pool of potential participants helps facilitates this research's contribution to recent academic discussions on Aboriginal alternate development.

(d) Diversification of industries of the businesses

As indicated in the statistical data above, Aboriginal entrepreneurs have established businesses in a variety of sectors. In order to reflect this diversity as much as possible, subjects were selected from a wide range of different industries.

(e) Diversification of First Nations (tribal) groups

In order to make sure that the core worldviews of Aboriginal peoples are shared among different (tribal) groups, this research diversified the groups that the participants are from or belong to.

(f) Some evidence of Aboriginal values in their business

Finally, this study selected businesses that show some evidence of Aboriginal values (in business vision, business philosophy, etc.). This criterion helped to select business people who retain Aboriginal cultural values and enabled the researchers to see if and how the subjects' traditional values are reflected in their business activities. For instance, when a business's Web site mentions that its Aboriginal unique way of thinking composes an integral part of its activities, this research considered the statement as an evidence that the company holds Aboriginal traditional values.

Questions posed to participants were to find: 1) general information about their business, including a description of their business, the history of their entrepreneurship, their relationships with other companies, and any financial support they secured from the government or other sources; 2) relations with First Nations communities if any; 3) education, training, and job experience; and 4) differences from other non-Aboriginal businesses that participants can identify. In addition to these standard questions, participants were asked specific questions about any difficulties, strengths, and weaknesses in their business, as well as Aboriginal values mentioned in the company's business information.

All interviews were recorded and later transcribed with the agreement of each participant. Subjects were provided with an opportunity to check the interview transcript and/or the final draft at their request. If they had any questions or concerns, they were offered opportunities to discuss them at any time before and after the interview.

Participants' identity was disclosed only with their personal agreement. The identities of presidents and other workers in the higher echelons of a company are usually publicly available. In addition, the interview questions were solely concerned with the individual's business, workplace experiences, and opinions as a businessperson. Therefore, in this research, disclosing participants' identity created a strong verification, whilst the mental or psychological risk to the subject was very low.

Each interview lasted between one and two hours. The research was conducted in English during the period from August 2007 to June 2008 in the Southern part of Québec and Ontario.

<Table E.1: List of Participants>

	Company name	Business description	Participants	Title	Company location	Cultural (Tribal) group (Linguistic group)
1	Iroquois Water Ltd.	Distribution of Water	Ben Benedict	Vice-President	Akwesne, (on-reserve)	Mohawk (Iroquois)
2	Sequoia	Production of hand soaps	Michaelee Lazore	Owner, President	Kahnawake, (on-reserve)	Mohawk (Iroquois)
3	Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro	Aboriginal cuisine	Phoebe Sutherland	Owner, Chef	Ottawa, (off-reserve)	Cree (Algonquin)
4	The Abor Group	Environmental engineering	Drew Hill	Owner, President	Six Nations, (on-reserve)	Mohawk (Iroquois)
5	Mawandoseg Indian Village	Aboriginal Attraction	Mike Coté	Owner, President	Kitigan Zibi (on-reserve)	Algonquin (Algonquin)
6	Big Soul Productions Inc.	Film and TV program making	Laura Milliken	Owner, President	Toronto (off-reserve)	Ojibway (Algonquin)
7	Prémontex Enr.	Production of stairs	Mathieu Sioui	Director	Wendake (on-reserve)	Hurons-Wendat (Iroquois)
8	NATSCO	Petrochemical construction	Doug Henry	Owner, President	Aamjiwnaang (on-reserve)	Ojibway (Algonquin)
9	Algonquin North Outfitters	Guiding service	Lorraine Montrevil	Owner	Mattawa (off-reserve)	Algonquin (Algonquin)
10	Spirit Creative	Advertising business	John Sioui	President	Ottawa (off-reserve)	Hurons-Wendat (Iroquois)
11	Two Row Architect	Architecture and engineering	Brian Porter	Principal	Six Nations (on-reserve)	Oneida (Iroquois)
12	Tammy Beauvais Designs	Clothing design	Tammy Beauvais	Owner, Designer	Kahnawake (on-reserve)	Mohawk (Iroquois)

F. Contribution

This study makes three contributions to the discussions on Canadian Aboriginal populations. First, this study helps to understand the life of increasing Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Recently, the number of self-employed Aboriginals increased from 7,485 in 1981 to 20,195 in 1996, before reaching 27,195 in 2001 (Industry Canada; Aboriginal Business Canada). While the government has collected statistical information, what those entrepreneurs experience in their day-to-day business activities is not very well studied. This research provides some information on the unknown aspect of Aboriginal entrepreneurs' work. It may help not only scholars but also governmental officials, staff of non-governmental organizations operating for Aboriginal developments, workers of companies that offer financial, management, or consulting services to Aboriginal entrepreneurs, and Aboriginal entrepreneurs themselves.

Second, this study might help policymakers to design specific programs for development of Aboriginal society. Academic and non-academic researchers have sought to cultivate methods for the Aboriginal development for many decades; however, they have not yet reached a consensus (Frideres and Gadacz, 2008, p. 390–404). Describing how Aboriginal entrepreneurs operate their business and what they try to achieve, and offering a theoretical discussion about Aboriginal economy based on the collected data, will provide useful information to nourish that discussion.

Third, this study makes a contribution to the field of Native studies by providing a theoretical understanding and empirical analysis of Aboriginal economy and society. As explained above, since it is only recent decade that researchers started to study Aboriginal

society without being constrained by the assumption of idealness of the Western capitalist development, studies for the alternative Aboriginal development is still in its infancy. Conducting a research on Aboriginal economic activities and form theoretical discussions based on the gained data will contribute to the recent discussion for alternative development of Aboriginal society in both the concrete and abstract way.

Chapter 2. ANALYSIS

How do Aboriginal economic activities include their traditional values? Is it possible to develop Aboriginal societies without sacrificing their tradition? This study tries to find an answer to these questions through an interview research on Aboriginal individual entrepreneurs. This chapter will provide an analysis of the interview, starting with a section introducing each of the businesspeople who participated in this research.

A. Presentation of the Researched Businesses

All of the 12 entrepreneurs selected identified themselves as First Nations members, although they did not necessarily belong to the same (tribal) and linguistic group. Four of them held Mohawk identity, two Algonquin, two Ojibway, two Huron-Wendat, one Oneida, and one Cree. In other words, seven of them fell into the Iroquoian linguistic group and the rest (five) into the Algonquian linguistic group.

In 2008, when the interviews were conducted, the twelve entrepreneurs had spent an average of 9.08 years doing business. Among the twelve businesses, four of them had been in operation for a maximum of five years, four had been around for six to nine years, and the rest (four) had been in operation for ten years or more.

These Aboriginal entrepreneurs were engaged in a variety of sectors: distribution of water, production of bath-related items, Aboriginal cuisine, environmental engineering, Aboriginal attractions, film and TV program making, production of stair components,

petrochemical construction, guiding service, advertising business, architecture, interior planning and engineering, and clothing design and production.

The businesses were based on different structures of ownership. Eight of the twelve Aboriginal-owned businesses were sole proprietorships; one was a limited partnership; and three were incorporated.

All of the participants interviewed had employees.[3] Five of the twelve businesses had five or less employees. Four of them had six to ten employees. The rest (three) had eleven or more employees. The informants included a company employing 40 people and another employing 80 people.

Eight entrepreneurs received some external support when they started their business, while four people used only their personal savings at the initial stage. Out of the eight entrepreneurs who received some external support, seven included the government as one of their sources of financial support. Although the programs they applied for may differ, the most popular program among the proprietors was Aboriginal Business Canada.

All participants were operating their businesses in the southern part of Quebec and Ontario. Eight were running a business on-reserve and the remaining (four) businesses were located off-reserve (Toronto, Ottawa, and Mattawa).

The following section provides specific information on the way each company operates, including its service/products, ownership, identity of the interviewee, customers, establishment year, support it has received, number of employees; and, in some cases, other information about the company's current/expected projects. It shall also mention

[3] In some cases, employees include the participant's family member(s). Those workers were counted as employees.

the Aboriginal cultural values underscored on the companies' respective Web sites, when it is applicable.[4]

1. Iroquois Water Ltd.

Name of Participant (Title): Ben Benedict (Director of Operations, Vice-President)
Company Location: Akwasasne, QC (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Mohawk (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on August 27, 2007; Web site visited on July 25, 2007

Iroquois Water Ltd. is an Aboriginal-owned company, headquartered on Cornwall Island within the reserve of Akwesasne in Ontario. It produces bottled water. Benedict, the current Director of Operations and Vice-President, raised in the First Nation, created this company with his wife and another business partner in 2001. Although they did not have any external support at the initial stage, at one point they received governmental grants. With 13 employees, more than 50 percent of which hold Aboriginal identity, Iroquois Water is first and foremost turned towards the First Nations' market. Its customers include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal customers in Canada, as well as international customers.

Calling itself "an authentic company," the Web site of Iroquois Water explains the Aboriginal values which are reflected in its business design. Respect for nature appears very often in the Web site:

> For us, descendents of the first nations, water is many things: food, life, and strength. This is our philosophy and no commercial value will change

[4] Companies that are interviewed but not analyzed are not introduced here. The cases are listed in order of interview date. Their contact information is listed in an Appendix at the end of this dissertation. Nativeness or Native cultural values of Aboriginal businesses were identified in sentences on the companies' Web sites. Company information was collected when the research was conducted. (i.e., from August 2007 to June 2008).

> that....When we recognize that water equals food and life and strength, we make a commitment to keep it clean and pure. A commitment to promote the greatest respect for that part of nature which is the source of life itself... In keeping with our people's values, we offer water that is pure and natural (Iroquois Water, 2007).

The company produces natural water whilst preserving the environmental values attached to traditional Native culture. Contribution to First Nation well-being is another value that is emphasized by Iroquois Water. Its mission is "Investing Profits in our community. Creating jobs for our people. Developing an entrepreneurial spirit within our community" (Iroquois Water, 2007).

2. Sequoia[5]

Name of Participant (Title): Michaelee Lazore (Owner, President)
Company Location: Kahnawake, QC (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Mohawk (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on September 19, 2007; Web site visited September 20–24, 2007.

Sequoia is an Aboriginal-owned and operated company that produces and sells bath/body- related items (such as soaps, lotions, candles, and fragrance oils). All products are handmade by Mohawk women and contain vegetable oils instead of animal fat, petroleum, or petroleum by-products. Many designs of those products are inspired by traditional Native culture. Michaelee Lazore, the owner of the company, is a Mohawk woman living in Kahnawake, a First Nation reserve in southern Quebec. One of Sequoia's stores, opened in 2004, is located inside the community and another, opened in 2007, is located in downtown Montreal. Its customers are both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal customers. Receiving different federal programs offered by Aboriginal

[5] Legal Name: Sequoia Native Arts. Operating Name: Sequoia.

Business Canada, Lazore has progressively developed her business. Employing only Aboriginal people, she currently has six full-time or part-time employees and hires additional workers in the busy season.

Stating "Sequoia is proud of it[s] Native roots," its Web site exhibits Native cultural values. It strongly emphasizes respect for nature as an influence of Native culture. "Welcome to the land of Sequoia! A place where nature and simplicity has not been forgotten" (Sequoia, 2007). The Web site continues as follows:

> We believe people have lost touch with simplicity and nature, and we would love to bring this back... As we make our products, our minds think back to the day where our people used every part of nature without being wasteful... And not to forget that nature is our friend not our enemy (Sequoia, 2007).

Sequoia is bringing back the idea, which has allegedly been lost, that nature is "our friend not our enemy" and that people can live with it – in other words – live with using parts of nature but without being wasteful and harming it. Explaining that "mother nature provided us with the materials that we need," Sequoia's production focuses on natural resources such as vegetable oils, fruits, and herbs (Sequoia, 2007).

The company's Web site also mentions Sequoia's contribution to the community economic development, Kahnawake. "Believe[ing] in building a strong economic base in [their] community," Sequoia hires all workers from the First Nation members. It also makes financial contribution to a Mohawk language school in the community (Sequoia, 2007).

3. Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro

Name of Participant (Title): Phoebe Sutherland (Owner, General Manager, Chef)
Company Location: Ottawa, ON (off-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Cree (Algonquin)
Research Date: interview on September 25, 2007; Web site visited on September 22, 2007

Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro is an Aboriginal-owned and operated restaurant that serves Aboriginal cuisine in Ottawa. This restaurant serves Aboriginal cuisine and features other aspects of Aboriginal culture such as decoration with traditional Aboriginal arts and collections of Aboriginal jewellery. In addition to seasonal dishes cooked according to "traditional methods" and using "traditional ingredients," the restaurant provides customers with an experience of Aboriginal culture. Phoebe Sutherland, one of the two co-owners and chefs, is from a Cree community in Mistissini Lake in James Bay of Québec (another co-owner and chef is her husband; the third owner is her father). The business started in November 2003 as Ottawa's first and Canada's second Aboriginal restaurant. It benefited from an initial grant from Aboriginal Business Canada, as well as other bank loan. It hires both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff. Currently 4 out of 10 employees are Aboriginal. Sutherland explains that the restaurant offers an experience of Aboriginal culture, including Aboriginal cuisine, for non-Aboriginal customers so that they can know about Aboriginal peoples and for Aboriginal customers so that they can feel at home (Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro, 2007).

The Web site emphasizes a respectful connection with nature, as a part of Aboriginal culture. In describing the Bistro's services, it states: "Just as Natives ate whatever the land proffered each season, the menus reflect this by also changing

seasonally" (Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro, 2007). Following the example set by Aboriginal peoples in pre-Columbian times, the Bistro makes a point of honour to use seasonal food.

The Web site also emphasizes the tradition inherited from earlier generations. The sentence, "Come in and experience seasonal lunch and dinner menus that follow the ancient paths of North America's Aboriginal peoples," represents the whole Web site and philosophy of this company. It continues, "It is important to the chefs/owners of this comfortable Bistro to keep with tradition." The chefs use "recipes that were passed on from their parents and grandparents" (Sweetgrass Aboriginal Bistro, 2007).

4. The Abor Group

Name of Participant (Title): Drew Hill (President)
Company Location: Six Nations, ON (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Mohawk (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on October 3, 2007; Web site visited on October 2, 2007.

The Abor Group is a company that offers services such as environmental engineering, site assessment, environmental assessment, and waste management. Working for non-Aborginal clients, it often works in partnership with other First Nations, including Ojibways and Crees, and deals with potential energy concerns in those Aboriginal communities by reducing the impact of energy-producing activities on the natural environment The Abor Group was established in 2003 with start-up support from Aboriginal Business Canada. Drew Hill, the president and owner, is from the Mohawk nation and operates his business in the Six Nations community. He currently employs

three and has recently started work in another service area, that of home energy efficiency.

Many pages in the company's Web site how the business is based on Aboriginal traditional values. It emphasizes the phrase "contemporary tools in the hands of traditional minds." It especially shows respect for nature, as shown in its business philosophy: "We all eat from one dish. Our dish is the Land. Our Mother has given us corn, squash, and beans, the sisters of sustenance; we must all work to keep the dish clean so that these and other gifts continue to grow on the land" (The Abor Group, 2007). This is at the core of this company's approach, especially when it comes to developing renewable energy projects. It underscores the need for sustainability: "Meeting contemporary needs without compromising tomorrows" (The Abor Group, 2007).

The Web site also explains that the company benefits and helps First Nation communities through the provision of sustainable energy. In doing this it strengthens their culture and voices. It states that the "Native voice will need to be heard with increasing environmental concerns" (The Abor Group, 2007). In addition, the Web site also argues that energy development strengthens the First Nations economy. It "increases the autonomy of the First Nation economies by creating the capital." Hill states, "I would like to help our First Nations as they attempt to deal with the environmental issues" (The Abor Group, 2007).

5. Mawandoseg Indian Village

Name of Participant (Title): Mike Coté (Owner, President)
Company Location: Maniwaki, QC (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Algonquin (Algonquin)
Research Date: interview on October 10, 2007; Web site visited on October 9, 2007

Mawandoseg is the Algonquin name for Meeting Place. This company offers an educational attraction for people who want to experience Aboriginal culture. With more than 5 km of walking trails, Mawandoseg includes different activities such as demonstrations of tanning hides and making birch bark canoes, snowshoes, drums and other Aboriginal crafts. The site is open from May to September. The business also includes a part-time restaurant serving Algonquin traditional food. Established in 2001, it is one of several companies currently owned and operated by Mike Coté from the Kitigan Zibi, an Algonquin community located near Quebec City. A variable number of people (currently six to eight) work for this company, all of whom are Aboriginal, including members of the owner's extended family and people from nearby Aboriginal communities. Initially, the company was supported by the band council of Coté's community and used an employment program of the federal government and a bank for start-up funding. In addition to tourists from Ottawa and other regions of Canada, the community members also visit Mawandoseg. The Indian Village is now temporarily closed for repairs but is expected to reopen after a year.

The company's Web site describes its chief attractions. It explains that Mawandoseg offers the chance to experience Algonquin traditions and values. The owner designed the attraction to "share and teach his Algonquin traditions and values." It provides visitors with "a new knowledge and understanding of the Algonquin nation's lifestyle" and "the human aspect" (Mawandoseg Indian Village, 2007).

6. Big Soul Productions Inc.

Name of Participant (Title): Laura J. Milliken (Owner, President)
Company Location: Toronto, ON (off-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Ojibway, (Algonquin)
Research Date: interview on October 18, 2007; Web site visited on October 17, 2007

Big Soul Productions is an Aboriginal-owned and operated company that offers a wide range of media services, especially Aboriginal content programming. The current sole owner and President, Laura J. Milliken, self-identified as Ojibway, established this Toronto-based company with a partner in 1999. Big Soul Productions were awarded a start-up grant for Aboriginal youth from Aboriginal Business Canada at the initial stage. Big Soul Productions' programs air on Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) as well as other television networks in Canada and abroad. In addition to the three employees, depending on the production, Laura J. Milliken works with many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, whether they be writers, actors, or directors.

Big Soul Productions' Web site argues that its values seek to benefit the entire Aboriginal peoples. In particular, the company has been strongly concerned about young generations of the Aboriginal population. Every year, the company welcomes young Aboriginals and actively trains them in the many areas of filmmaking. In addition to training over 300 Aboriginal youth since 2000, the company also attempts to encourage young Aboriginal populations, as well as those in other ages, through the "Project One Generation." This is designed to break a cycle of social problems "from addiction and abuse to pollution and racism" in Aboriginal society and ultimately encouraging "the viewer to 'be the one' generation to break a cycle that adversely affects families, communities and the planet" (Big Soul Productions, 2007).

7. Prémontex Enr.

Name of Participant (Title): Mathieu Sioui (Director of Production Research and Development)
Company Location: Wendake, QC, (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Huron-Wendat (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on November 7 2007; Web site visited on November 7, 2007 and August 26, 2008

Prémontex produces and distributes staircase components, panels, laminated tiles, and mouldings. It was founded in 1987 in Wendake, near Quebec City, by Normand Sioui. He established his company on land provided by the band, with an initial financial support from the government. He also had a loan at the local bank. Prémontex offers its products to customers living in Canada and the United States. Around 80 employees (45 percent of which are Aboriginal) are working in its 40,000-square-foot factory. Normand Sioui, the owner, is from the First Nation community as is his son, Mathieu, a director working just below him and managing those employees. Prémontex originally produced wood doors, slowly changed its service to producing stair parts, and has focused on the latter since 1992, thereby meeting its clients' request for this change.

Prémontex's concern about nature as an Aboriginal company appears in its Web site: "An Aboriginal enterprise in the Huron community of Wendake, in the greater Quebec City area, Prémontex has developed ecological production techniques for more efficient management of the raw material used and of waste in harmony with the environment" (Prémontex, 2008).

8. NATSCO Mechanical Contractors Inc. (& Native American Technical Services Company Ltd.)

Name of Participant (Title): Doug Henry (Owner, President)
Company Location: Aamjiwnaang, ON (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Ojibway (Algonquin)
Research Date: interview on Nov 23, 2007; Web site visited on Nov 22, 2007 and August 26, 2008

NATSCO Mechanical Contractors specializes in fabrication, installation, maintenance, and designing mechanical systems for the industrial sector, dealing with petrochemical construction, primarily pressure and process piping. It is located in Aamjiwnaang First Nation's Chippewa Industrial Park. Doug Henry, the owner and president, has an Ojibway identity, having been raised and living in the community. Partially supported by a bank and using money he has made, Henry established the company in 2004 after working for 23 years in petrochemical design, engineering, and construction management. His clients include international companies that conduct projects in the community. Currently Henry has 40 employees, including 10 Native workers and some trade union workers.

NATSCO Mechanical Contractors exhibits Aboriginal cultural values in its Web page, as well as informing its customers that it offers progressive engineering services by stating, "Our commitment to the environment, as an Aboriginal Owned company, will ensure that all Quality, Safety, and Testing procedures will be exceeded" (NATSCO, 2008). The Web site argues that NATSCO's environmental values and respect for nature spring from the fact that it is an Aboriginal-owned and operated company. Its mission statement mentions its commitment to the Aboriginal community and the harmony that reigns within the organization: "At NATSCO our goal is commitment to our clients,

workforce, and our community to achieve success. Success is measured by the satisfaction of our clients and the harmony within our organization" (NATSCO, 2008).

9. Algonquin North Outfitters

Name of Participant (Title): Lorraine Montrevil (Owner)
Company Location: Mattawa, ON (off-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Algonquin (Algonquin)
Research Date: interview on December 20, 2007; Web site visited on December 19, 2007

Algonquin North Outfitters is a company that offers guided tours in Algonquin Park. The tours are designed to introduce to visitors Algonquin culture, including drum, medicines, canoeing, spiritual ceremonies, and especially the park's wildlife such as moose, beavers, and the marsh. The company's owner, Montrevil, holds an Algonquin identity with a past experience of living in the park. According to her, to the extent that nature is an integral part of Algonquin culture, it is important to provide information about the Algonquin culture in connection with the environment. Tourists come from Canada and abroad, including some Aboriginal persons. She started the company in 1997, partially supported by Aboriginal Business Canada and also using a loan from a bank. With her husband, her son, and two other employees, all of whom identify as Aboriginal, Montrevil has overseen the business's growth.

Although the company's Web site does not insist on Aboriginal values, it emphasizes the chance they offer to experience Aboriginal values while taking the tour. Talking about their guides, the Web site states, "We provide Aboriginal guides that will share with you their skills, experience, points of interest, Aboriginal traditions, culture, and beliefs. Let us take you there" (Algonquin North Outfitters, 2007).

10. Spirit Creative

Name of Participant (Title): John Sioui (President)
Company Location: Ottawa, ON (off-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Hurons-Wendat (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on January 22, 2008; Web site visited on January 22, 2008

Spirit Creative offers communications services intended for any Aboriginal audience. Established in 1997 without the help of any financial support program, it is a federally incorporated firm located in the city of Ottawa. The majority of the company is Aboriginal-owned. John Sioui, the president and major owner, identifies himself, as well as his son, who is one of his three employees, as Hurons-Wendat. The company's clients include the provincial government of Ontario and the federal government. As a winner of some contracts in the procurement strategy for Aboriginal business (PSAB), Spirit Creative provides its services to some departments of the federal government. They also have private industries, such as banks, as clients. With diverse backgrounds and experiences in areas including market research and advertising planning/buying, the company provides services to their customers.

The company's explanation about some of its strategies implies reflects Aboriginal traditional values on collective decision making and building a consensus with its customers:

> "Circle of Discovery"© is our unique methodology that underscores the importance of, and the value gained from, a truly integrated team approach...Together we review goals, timelines, and agency-to-client reporting – ensuring that your expectations are met. Together we "re-affirm" our joint commitments and expectations...Together we establish consensus and commitment to honour development and execution timelines, milestones for reporting, review and approvals, and overall project component delivery (Spirit Creative, 2008).

11. Two Row Architect

Name of Participant (Title): Brian Porter (Principal)
Company Location: Six Nations, ON (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Oneida (Iroquois)
Research Date: interview on January 25, 2008; Web site visited on January 24, 2008

This Aboriginal-owned firm offers architecture and interior design, planning, and engineering. It is located on the Six Nations reserve in southern Ontario. The owner, Brian Porter, is from the First Nation with Oneida identity. He started the company with a partner in 1992 but has been the sole owner since 1993. Clients are on-reserve or off-reserve First Nations groups. Two Row Architect also have non-Aboriginal customers, which include different branches of the provincial and federal governments. The number of employees has grown to about 10, out of which 5 to 6 come from Aboriginal communities. Porter used governmental programs in order to expand this business.

According to Two Row Architect, the business reflects Aboriginal traditional values. The architecture on which the company focuses, as its main services, reflects the indigenous lifestyle and culture. Its Web site states, "...indigenous values, similar to the goals and parameters of Two Row Architect, were incorporated into built form...a group's architecture can be ***an accurate reflection of their society***" (emphasis is original) (Two Row Architect, 2008). The name Two Row was borrowed from a weave of beads known as the 'Two Row Wampum,' which represents two canoes on a river and symbolizes Aboriginal and European progresses that are parallel and do not impede each other.

Respect for nature, contribution to the local area, and concern about younger generations appear frequently on the Web site. An architecture that reflects Aboriginal

culture is ecological in essence. "This type of building practice is in keeping with the close relationship Native people share with Mother Earth and the necessary respect they give it" (Two Row Architect, 2008). To "promote the creative and environmentally conscious use of building materials" is one of the stated missions as well as "maximum Native involvement for local benefit." Its concerns about future generations are in the fundamental concept of their design, 'Seven Generations,' meaning designing buildings so that they would be retained over seven generations or 140 years. It states, "Using a Native American Methodology will result in a building that aims at achieving a level of sustainable development allowing for future generations to live with the same natural resources that are available today" (Two Row Architect, 2008).

12. Tammy Beauvais Designs

Name of Participant (Title): Tammy Beauvais (Owner, Designer)
Company Location: Kahnawake, QC (on-reserve)
Tribal Group (Linguistic Group): Mohawk, (Iroquois)
Research Date: interviewed on June 22, 2008; Web site visited on June 21, 2008

Tammy Beauvais Designs is a fashion design company located in Kahnawake, a Mohawk community. Beauvais, the owner, was born and raised in the First Nation. She started sewing when she was 10 and began designing Aboriginal clothing when she was 13, influenced by her grandmother, who made traditional clothing for children and adults. Finally, she founded her company in 1999. Although when she started her business, her customers were Iroquois people only, now Beauvais is selling her designs to a wider range of people in more than 40 boutiques in Canada and the United States, including other Native groups as well as non-Natives. Currently she has 4 employees (one is her

cousin and the other three are non-Aboriginal). Recently Beauvais started the Canadian Aboriginal Business Council. She is also trying to open a store in Ottawa.

Her Web site mentions traditional influence on the business: "Her work has been greatly influenced by her family's connection to the Longhouse, where traditional ways of life, customs, and culture have never been broken" (Beauvais, 2008). The Web site also shows concern about benefiting people of her First Nation:

> Tammy's goal is to raise awareness of the rich and beautiful culture of her people through her designs... Each hand-made Tammy Beauvais Designs' piece carries with it the culture, heritage, and strength to the Iroquois people... Tammy's goal is to increase worldwide awareness of Iroquois heritage and to also create more employment opportunities for members of her community (Beauvais, 2008).

B. Interview Analysis

This section analyzes the interviews with Aboriginal entrepreneurs. The analytical categories spring from the review of literature on Native cultural values. As discussed above, the literature maintains the existence of nine basic values (collective and cooperative behaviour; reciprocity and sharing; consensus; egalitarian; environmental; non-interfering; non-competitiveness; emotional restraint; respecting older and unborn generations). After reviewing the participants' answers, and because some of the assumed Native values are closely linked to each other, this study reduced and arranged these categories into four groups: 1) collectivity, reciprocity, and egalitarian values; 2) respect for nature; 3) non-competitiveness; and 4) respect for elders and concern about the youth and unborn generations.

The Aboriginal values stem from one holistic worldview and can therefore be difficult to separate and distinguish. Since the distinct Aboriginal values identified here are originally based on the same holistic worldview, a behaviour that is characteristic in Aboriginal businesses can be explained with more than one category of the Aboriginal values above. This study also recognizes that using Western typologies to study Aboriginal traditional ways of thinking will inevitably bring distortion and bias. Nevertheless, discussing business activities with using different categorized aspects of Aboriginal cultural values facilitates one's understanding how cultural values are included in Aboriginals' economic activities in an organized way.

The traditional values facilitated to form and maintain social relations over economic benefits in Aboriginal businesses. Consequently, on the one hand, Aboriginal entrepreneurs seek profits, but in a moderate way. Profit making is not a priority for them. On the other hand, Aboriginals are sometimes forced to ignore their traditional values in order to sustain their businesses. They also partially hold economic way of thinking, as well. Nevertheless, the notable tendency of the Aboriginal entrepreneurs is emphasis of social relations in order to respect some of their traditional values in their business practices.[6]

1. Collectivity, Reciprocity, and Egalitarian Values

[6] "Aboriginal (or Native) entrepreneurs" in this section refers exclusively to the entrepreneurs interviewed for this research.

According to previous studies, collectivity, reciprocity, and equality compose an important aspect of Native cultural values (Jules, 1988, p. 7; Brant, 1990, p. 535; Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, p. 175). These Native values seemed to be frequently included in Aboriginal business activities. In the First Nations communities, they provide contribution to or help for other community members. Within organizations of companies, those collective and reciprocal values form collective decision making and closer relationships among workers.

1.1 Contribution to people of a First Nation

Aboriginal entrepreneurs frequently contribute to the well-being of their First Nation community. This contribution can take the form of financial contributions, donation of goods, or provision of services. Among the 12 participants, eight answered that their businesses have made a direct monetary contribution to some members of a First Nation. Seven of them often make financial and non-financial contributions to other members of First Nations communities.

On the one hand, all of the interviewees are connected to a First Nation community in their personal lives. For example, Ben Benedict (of Iroquois Water Ltd.), who likes carving, discloses that one of his private goals is to open a carving school for the people of the First Nation. Doug Henry, the President of NATCO Mechanical Contractors Inc. (and NATCO Ltd.), noted, "For the most part, [...] we respect the decision [of our community] or what the community wants to do" (Henry, 2007). Brian

Porter, who has coached a community lacrosse team for years, believes that First Nation members are naturally community-oriented.

On the other hand, entrepreneurs contribute to other people of their First Nation even as one of their business activities. These contributions can take various forms, such as a fundraising project, sponsoring a community sport team, providing products or services to other community members without charge or at discounted prices, hiring (and training) workers from the First Nation, or supporting an event held in the community. Some entrepreneurs even argue that running a business is in itself a contribution to the economic development of the First Nation to which they belong.

Some entrepreneurs mentioned that their generosity is related to their Aboriginal culture. A Mohawk designer and entrepreneur, Tammy Beauvais, who hired and trained workers from the local First Nation, explained that in doing so she follows her "human nature" saying that she was "raised to give:"

> It is impossible. No, you cannot... [be] working in this community and have a business in this community and not do anything for the community. I think it is impossible. For some people, maybe they can do it. But because I was raised as a Mohawk person to give back to your community, there is no way I cannot do it. [...] You are taught to help your people. You are taught that your people are in a certain way that they are all together and they should be together. [...] I now try to be a woman and a responsible, productive member of my community. I try to do those things that I was taught in my childhood (Beauvais, 2008).

The Native culture she learned when she was young taught Beauvais to value working for other people and giving back to her community. She pursues those values even when she conducts business. As well, Doug Henry states that his contributions to his community are "just part of who and what I am" (Henry, 2007).

Contributing to their First Nation people brings all of the entrepreneurs interviewed emotional satisfaction. Native entrepreneurs described their feeling using different words, such as "feeling proud," "happiness," "enjoyment" or a "feeling of strength." Henry answered that he likes to see the members of his community ball team proudly wearing T-shirts with his company's logo. Such a contribution to his community's wellbeing makes him "feel good and strong" about who he is.

> It makes me feel good [...] I'm doing what's good for me and what makes me believe and what makes me strong, and what makes me feel good about who I am and what I do, you know? [...] [It is] just that you're proud of what you've done and people are proud of you for what you've done (Henry, 2007).

Native entrepreneurs state that they do not mind if their donations and other contributing activities reduce their profit. They represent an important aspect of their work. Mike Coté, the owner and President of Mawandoseg Indian Village, explained that he provides free tours for his community's children:

> Yeah, it reduces profit, yeah for sure. For sure, but I mean, it reduces on one end where you make financial contributions... I am going to send them, like 10 kids down the river; I have to pay three guides to be with them. Now those kids are not paying. I have to pay. But in the end, well, if they enjoyed it, I am happy (Coté, 2007).

Although Doug Henry admits that "it's nice to make a profit, it is. Don't get me wrong. It's nice to," he also emphasizes the importance of making generous contributions. Contributing to the First Nation people, he says, "means more to me than any monetary value... If I don't do it [make any contribution] at all, what is [...] making money [good for], if you can't do the things you like to do?" (Henry, 2007).

The interviewees very often recognize and expect help from other community members. Entrepreneurs know that other business people of the same community also make contributions, as Benedict points out:

> Probably in some way, I think, probably more than 80 % of the businesses – maybe it's higher – contribute in some ways back to the community [...] anytime we have a fund raiser [...] People come out and they help, and they give. It's probably, people you don't need and expect, you know. And they just... they give (Benedict, 2007).

The Aboriginal entrepreneurs also expect such contributions by other First Nation members, which would benefit their business in return. Doug Henry explains how he expects help from other community members:

> R (Henry):
>
> If you don't give you'll never get, you know? If you don't give [to] the people, don't expect to receive. You know, you shouldn't expect it because that's all part of life, as being generous and giving, because sometimes when, if you give, you may get back tenfold. And when an unfortunate thing happens to me, there's people there for me, because they know I'm a generous giving person. [They] say "You know what? I like the fact that you helped me when I needed help for or whatever, and if you need my help, Doug, I'm there for you." [...] I'm not saying I'm always on top. When the chips are down, people come and help me, they offer help to me. I don't ask for it... They come in and help me. They said "If you need a help"...
>
> I: You don't have to ask.
>
> R: No, they just, sometimes they just show up and ask, offer to help (Henry, 2007).

When someone is confronted with a problem, he or she may rely on some voluntary help by those people he or she has helped in the past. Henry states "that makes you a richer person. And money isn't what makes people rich. It is your quality of life" (Henry, 2007). Tammy Beauvais, the owner of the designing company, talks about her experience of giving a discount to people of her First Nation when they asked for her services: "I guess

I wanted them to be happy but I want them to... I want business from here, you know. If I don't have to go there [outside the community] and spend, you know, hotel and gas and food fee, if I get more business from here that is great" (Beauvais, 2008).

1.2 Collective decision making

These values of collectiveness and reciprocity also appear within the business' organization. Some Aboriginal businesspeople tend to foster consensus building through the decision-making process. This approach is adopted both within the company's organization and in relationship with other workers and customers. Mathieu Sioui identified this feature as a key difference with non-Aboriginal people who, according to him, do not tend to emphasize participation and co-operation:

> Our people, we have them to participate with us to expand the company, and some other company [...] Some other company that I know that they're really closed. They do whatever they want in their company. [When] they change [something], they don't ask their people, [those who] are working in the plant, [their opinion], you know. It's really hard to... They don't have any real human contact with their staff. It's [Our company is] like a family (Sioui, 2007).

Collective decision making is related the workers' close ties. As Sioui's comment above makes clear, the participants who mentioned collective decision making also frequently stated that they and their employees are forming a "family-like" relationship.

Decisions are also made collectively when it comes to dealing with workers outside the company or with customers. Brian Porter explained that he usually tries to involve workers whom are associated with one or another of the company's projects. Using a board game with little puzzle pieces to represent rooms in a building, he and

other staff of this company explain their projects and involve those workers in decision-making processes of the projects:

> We met with [...] the service providers, the people that were going to work inside the building. And, we let them plan out the wrong spaces, using those puzzle piece. Then, we photograph the results [...] so it's an exercise that forces them to participate in the design process. At the end of the day, they can see that we've incorporated some other ideas they buy in [...] It's sharing. They get a chance to understand what some of the criteria [...] We basically do that with just about every job that we do now, involve different resource people [...] I think it is very much like some of the Aboriginal ideas of consensus building (Porter, 2008).

The company provides opportunities to really understand the project. Porter and other staff of his company ask workers who join the project of their ideas and then try to incorporate these ideas. The awareness of the importance of participation appeared in other interviews. Porter explains how he engages in a similar process with his clients:

> I think that one of the things we're trying to do with our clients is to demystify the whole design experience. We'll set up a lot of client participation. We put together gaming exercises; encourage them [the clients] to become involved. We encourage them to draw. We encourage [them] to write. We encourage them [to solve problems]. There's kind of two schools in architecture. There's the school where you hire the firm and you are expecting them [to come up] with the flashlight in the darkness. That leads to the solution. There's another school where you hand everybody a candle. You all stand together and then, as a group, you find your way through darkness. We tend to be more like the latter. And I think that aligns a lot more closely with the notion of Aboriginal consensus building (Porter, 2008).

Through gaming and drawing exercises, Porter's company encourages its clients to involve themselves in the process and find solutions. This collective approach gives "everybody a candle" to "find their way in darkness," instead of expecting the company's "flashlight" to lead everyone to the solution.

1.3 Closer relationship building among workers

Values such as collectiveness, reciprocity, and equality solidify workers. Some participants mentioned that the people working for their company form closer ties. They frequently described their workers with words such as "family" or "team." For example, some participants explained how their workers' family members are connected by strong relationships, through mentioning family orientation in the workplace. Brian Porter of Two Row Architect described it:

> [The] staff that I do have, in some ways, they are more like family than employees [...] Family atmosphere, yeah, I think, [exist] more so than what you would see in a lot of mainstream companies [...] It's not uncommon to see some of the employees meet or they might [...] bring their kids with them for a little while (Porter, 2008).

Some workers share social activities. Saying, "We tend to blur the line between work and play quite a bit" (Porter, 2008), Porter mentioned that he and other workers sometimes play cards in the workplace. Mathieu Sioui explains his workers' companionship by emphasizing their Aboriginal cultural values. He noted that workers enjoy spending weekends together.

> A lot of people that work here, I'm seeing them on the weekends [...] A lot of people here are my friends [... On] weekends we are all together and we go hunting, we go fishing [...] We have to. Because we love it. I love hunting, I love fishing, but I love to go with them, too (Sioui, 2007).

Sioui is proud to note that workers do not care about status differences outside the company. Once work is over, everybody is on the same footing, regardless of one's position and age.

This companionship seems more important than the maximization of profit. Mathieu Sioui shared a story in which the company chose to keep all of its workers, although it was pressured to lay off a few because of a deteriorating economic situation.

> We couldn't be competitive. So we put our price lower to be competitive, so we did not make any money – and on some cases we were losing money [...] our thinking is: we are a family and we've been able to keep all of our staff [...] you've been working with them for many years and you got a problem [...] You can't just think about profit. You know: you are a family. It's like you have to take care of your family. So what we did is we've been working a little bit harder and find a way to keep every person here, and our staff. [...] I mean: our family. I think about the staff, the people working here. So that's why I say "family." We've been working a little bit harder and we've been finding some new processing, and now we are competitive again and we did not put anybody [out of work]. We did not fire people. We kept them here and, you know, we just altogether worked a little bit harder, and everybody was, they were knowing about the situation. We were telling them that it was really hard for us to keep going if we were not making some change in the company, and if the people did not want to change it, we will just tell them that, we're going to be obliged to close or put some people out. We've been explaining to them. We've been sitting with them and talking with them for one hour and a half [...] we just close the shop and talk with them, and explain the problem that we had. And every person, they put their hand in the fire. I mean everybody has worked a little harder to make sure that we were able to continue the company. I mean this is really important to us, and that's why we're really close to our people (Sioui, 2007).

Although Sioui's company, faced with a serious economic downturn, needed to reduce the number of its workers, it chose not to. Instead, it kept all of its workers, but with an understanding that they would have to work harder. The company's frequent assistance to solve "problems" the workers face in their private lives also shows a closer relationship:

> A lot of people, you know, we are a company but the people that work here, they don't have any, I'm going to say, any background in university or education, and those people sometimes they have um...had a bad life. I mean not a bad life. I mean they've been having a lot of problems before and some people, a lot of

> people, they are really great now, but a lot of people too, we have had problems and still have problems. So what we try to do is, even if it's a problem of um [...] psychology, like psychology or financially or, we, I mean we got to take care of them or talk with them (Sioui, 2007).

"If some people," Sioui stated, "they are in trouble, everybody is going to go with the people and help them, help the people." When asked to detail those problems, he answered, "I can't say because it's [their] private life." He then provided a fictitious example.

> So some problem is about that person does not have any money to pay for his electricity and they cut it, and he comes here, and "Could you help me? I got a problem." And you sit with him, and talk with the people [...] you have to know because you're going to pass some money to him. So you want to know the reason and, you know, what we do is making a little contract, and we're going to take $20 each week to, you know, to not strangle the person (Sioui, 2007).

In addition to this example, he told a story in which a worker needed to be absent from the workplace for a month due to some personal problems. Sioui gave him an insurance payment and kept his position until his return. He let the employee concentrate on what he needed to do for himself. Although paying for workers' electricity, even it is only temporary or offered as a loan, and keeping a worker's position might not be the ideal way to maximize profit as well as foreign to Western business practices, this company sometimes offers to graciously help its employees:

> We could just fire him and take care of you and do whatever you want. We give them a chance. You know, everybody can make a mistake, but what we try is,

> give you a chance. We don't ask you to repay us, just do your job, that's all (Sioui, 2007).

Rather than always maximizing its profit, the management of this company may on some occasions prefer to maintain strong and amicable relationships with its employees.

In short, collective, reciprocal, and egalitarian values are included in Aboriginal business activities in the form of: 1) contribution and commitment to other members of a First Nation, 2) collective decision making, and 3) closer relationship among workers in their business activities. Being reciprocal to the First Nation community members, sharing chances to make a decision to many people, and forming close ties among workers are one aspect of their business practices.

2. Respect for Nature

The Aboriginal peoples' respect for nature (RCAP, 1996, pp. 631, 634) is also included in Aboriginal business peoples' activities. This value frequently appeared in the interviews. In many cases, it was directly related to the company's service or products. Among the 12 businesses this research focuses on, five included this value in their business designs: Iroquois Water Ltd., which delivers natural water; Sequoia Arts, which produces hand soaps and cosmetics made from natural materials; The Abor Group, which offers environmental engineering; Algonquin North Outfitters, which provides guides to explore natural areas; and Two Row Architect, which offers sustainable architecture and engineering.

Participants frequently explained that their company's ecological stances are linked to Native traditional ways of thinking. Following an explanation on how to generate energy from waste, Drew Hill of The Abor Group mentioned the particular relation that exists between Aboriginal ecological values and his environmental business design, saying that the ecological service of his company is because he was "brought up in that culture mindful of your footsteps on the earth" (Hill, 2007). Mathieu Sioui, a director of Prémontex Enr., explained that the "ecological attitude" of the company in which he works is strongly related to his Aboriginal values:

> We don't want to waste anything. We take care about the nature and this is, I think, a quality that we have here. That means we're actually working and thinking all the time not to make pollution, [not to] pollute the environment, and take care of everything that we can save [...] It's like when you've got your dinner. You know, when you eat it, you're not going to waste [anything]. You know that you are lucky to get that, so you take care of it [...] [It's] like [in] our culture. I mean we work that way. I mean we don't waste anything. We do business, but we try to take care about everything that we are doing [...] Nature gives us some material but we have to take 100% of it in doing something, not 50%. So this is the way that we actually work (Sioui, 2007).

The ideas of not polluting the environment and not wasting anything are said to be based on Aboriginal ways of life. In Aboriginal culture, people are raised to respect nature. The emphasis on ecology and sustainability is a source of strength for some companies, because it makes their service or products unique or at least different. In addition, Mathieu Sioui mentioned that he and other workers are "proud" that their production methods do not cause pollution and that they use everything they receive as materials (Sioui, 2007).

3. Noncompetitiveness

Noncompetitiveness has been considered part of the existing Native value system by some scholars (Brant, 1990). Sometimes weakening Aboriginal entrepreneurs' push to advertise their products, services and achievement, this value is also involved in their business activities.

Modest Marketing

Native values of noncompetitiveness can create modest or less-active behaviours in Native peoples' business activities, and, consequently, hinder economic profit making. For Drew Hill, President of The Abor Group, this trait of the Aboriginal businessperson represents a real handicap:

> I'm not a very good marketer. I don't like to talk about the things that I've achieved. I don't like to brag about it [...] my education with a biology degree and then my other, my engineering degree as well. So you know all of that might lend itself to being able to talk more highly of your achievements.
>
> ... Like you'll look at my Web site[7] and you'll see we haven't marketed enough to show what we can achieve for First Nations or even for resource-based industries. So if anything we have to be able to step outside of ourselves and look at our accomplishments from a marketing perspective and say, yeah, this is something that you should focus on and improve. I'm getting better at it because I have to—because otherwise I don't make any money [laughs] [...] in general it's hard but I rely more on word of mouth and doing a good job for my clients [...] It's like, for example, a lot of people say if you have a client, you should give references from [to] them and then you know who else should be speaking to and I find that difficult because I don't want to be so imposing on my clients at that point, because I've done my job for them and if I've done a good job then they'll talk to other people and then I'll get jobs that way (Hill, 2007).

[7] The Web site of The Abor Group, which Hill mentioned here, has been redesigned since this interview.

For this entrepreneur, talking about his achievement on his company's Web site or in conversations with his clients or referring to his achievement is considered bragging about oneself. He knows that his hesitation is "something that [he] should focus on and improve" (Hill, 2007) and that his attitude is a potential handicap for the success of his business. Talking about one's achievements is an important, if not a necessary step to achieve commercial or financial success; as he says, "you have to be able to say I can do this or I will do this for you" (Hill, 2007). However, he also acknowledges that he has not been successful in changing himself so far. He continuously hesitates to refer to his achievements and prefers to rely on word of mouth, hoping that his clients will spread around his reputation as an able and honest businessman.

This hesitation to present one's ability and achievement is related to Aboriginal traditional values handed down from generation to generation. Arguing that this hesitation is a "cultural thing," Hill noted that his reluctance to put forth his accomplishments comes from his parents' education:

> ...if I do that [talking about my achievement], I'll get admonished by my family or my mom or my dad, who almost demand that you maintain humility and humbleness about yourself [...] Not to talk too much about how good you are or how well you are, what you can achieve (Hill, 2007).

Having been taught the virtue of "humility and humbleness," Hill, therefore, does not like to speak highly of what he has accomplished. According to him, being humble and reluctant to look competitive in front of others stems from the Native value of non-competitiveness.

4. Respect for Older Generations' Opinions and Concern about Younger Generations' Life

Respect for elders and concern about youth are reflected in Native peoples' business activities. According to previous studies, Native peoples' holistic and cyclical world view generates greater concern for past and future generations (Dumont, 1993; Jules, 1988, p. 11). In some cases, this generational awareness lead Native peoples to be concerned about their elders; in some other cases, it leads to a greater concern for their children and unborn generations.

Mike Coté, President and owner of Mawandoseg Indian Village, underscored the inclusion of this value in his business operations. In the interview, he explains his great respect for elders. According to him, he and other Natives on the reservation believe that elders are wiser and can convince young people to make the right decision by providing good advice:

> They [youth] do things in a different way. And when your elders talk to you and say "Look at this. [This] is what you need to be doing. And it's just your elders. On the reserve [...] they [youth] could be talking to anyone and they will try and tell you what you should be doing. But when an elder comes and talks to you and tells you this is what you should be doing [...] for example a lot of people have a hard time in leaving reserves, because we are still family-oriented [...] They are just stuck on the reserve. So a lot of the people, a lot of the youth should be going to school. They have [schools] up to high school in their community and then they should be going on to college and getting a life, basically getting the education and bringing it back to the community as much as you can. And no matter who's going to tell you, if you're living in a community, you are not going to listen. But if an elder tells you and just because they've been through that much, for whatever reason that they are that much wiser, they are able to convince youth to go outside and bring back the education to the communities [...] that's just one of the examples I can say of the elders... (Coté, 2007).

For Coté, elders know what young people should do. Because they are respected, they have much influence on Native youth. When young people are not doing what they should, elders, who are considered wiser, can provide good suggestions. Coté gave an example based on his own experience when he was younger:

> Your immediate family could be telling you go to school. When I first graduated [from a high school], I didn't go to a school [college] right away. I took a half a year off. I didn't know where I was, what I was going to do and I didn't know if I wanted to go back to school [...] The elder that was in my family coached me and told me that I should make sure to go back to school and bring [what he is taught] back [to the community] and it changed my mind (Coté, 2007).

Although, at first, he was not willing to leave his reserve in order to pursue higher education, he changed his mind after talking with an elder. His decision indicated a respect for the older generation's teaching. Certainly, the traditional respect Native peoples show for their elders influences the way Coté conducts business. He tells the story that he offered his service to some elders without charging them. He thus created the opportunity to listen to their advice as he was starting his business:

> It was just in the first year. We just had a few people say like "why are they doing that?" I tried to answer them as best as I can. I tell them like "this is what we are doing." I showed them what we are doing and it wasn't to offend anyone. We are showing how to make a big canoe. There is no reason why we wouldn't be able to [show] how to make drums, how to stone shoes, how to climb heights [...] We're not offending anyone. Other people are doing that kind of things, so we are just giving you an example how to do it.
>
> So I did. I invited them. I invited all the elders to come and see inside [of the site he manages] and at the same time they come for free. I don't charge anyone. I wanted them to come and see what we have and what we do. And if they have any positive feedback, good. If they have any negative, I'll still listen to it [...] "Well, instead of doing this like this, maybe you could do it like this."/And that's fine. What I wanted to really show them was that we weren't touching on the ceremony

> or religion. That's what I wanted them to see [...] Then, everyone is okay. So I just, just because we are talking about nature, we are talking about trees [...], it passed. Everyone was okay with that, but I think if it's, like I said before, it's a religious aspect and traditions and stuff like that, they don't want to show that off so much (Coté, 2007).

At first, when Coté started his business, elders in his First Nation did not form a good opinion of his site. He thought that their scepticism was because "they thought I was going to show off ceremonies and tradition" (Coté, 2007). According to him, elders do not like to display the religious elements of their traditions. To gain the elders' understanding and support, he invited them to visit his business's site. This invitation succeeded in changing the elders' opinions.

Some of the interviewed Aboriginal entrepreneurs also seem to be concerned about the younger and unborn generations' future. Coté's main customers come from neighbouring cities and are not, in the majority, Aboriginal. Yet, Coté's goals include a commitment to his Nation's younger population. He claims "to get a lot of the young people in school now and high school, to come through and work for us in summer and then, to become more knowledgeable with their own tradition, with their own authentic tradition, the way we used to work the way we did things." He described his business as "a very good teaching" experience (Coté, 2007).

Sometimes the Aboriginal entrepreneurs' business designs show a concern for Native youth. For example, Brian Porter of Two Row Architect explains how his business' philosophy, which is called "Seven Generations," and the architecture it offers incorporate a dedication to the next generation's well being:

> If you're planning for the seventh generation, you're planning for the generation that hasn't been born yet. So you're continually making decisions about the unborn children, trying to create a better place for them or making sure that the environment can sustain the populations that are yet to come (Porter, 2008).

Inspired by the "Seven Generations" philosophy, this company designs buildings made to last over the life of seven generations (or 140 years). According to Porter, most non-Native companies build buildings designed to last only 10 to 20 years. Their products do not follow any rule of sustainability. Introducing his company's architectural principles, Porter notes, "It's all concepts that are part of the Aboriginal view of the planet or Aboriginal philosophy, or an Aboriginal value system. It has been around forever." Creating buildings that are designed to sustain the following seven generations is in order to "create a better place" for people who are yet to be born (Porter, 2008).

This concern for future generations is sometimes a source of difficulties. Porter illustrates this conflict very well. Although the sustainable approach advocated by Porter's company distinguishes it from among other Canadian architecture firms, its emphasis on a building's durability causes higher price of its projects. Expensive prices sometimes pose a serious obstacle in signing a contract:

> We're trying and we're promoting it [sustainability] with all of the buildings that we do. It's always part of our design philosophy. At the end of the day, we are still a service company and we still want to deliver the project that the client wants. We're trying to convince them to incorporate aspects of sustainability and stewardship. It makes sense [to be] cost effective in the long run. But ultimately if they don't want to pay for that, then we have to decide: are we going to fire the clients or are we going to keep going and deliver the building that they want? So we are [...] always struggling with that. The idea would be that your work would be strong enough, and your sustainable solution would be strong enough [...], so that people will hire us, knowing that's the kind of solution that they are going to get and they come to us for that reason. We haven't reached that point yet. But we were kind of trying moving in that direction (Porter, 2008).

Although it would be ideal for Porter to only have clients who select his company because of its sustainable approach, this is actually not the case. What he proposes does not regularly meet with his clients' expectations, particularly in terms of fixing a price. If the clients do not agree with his plan after his explanation and discussion, Porter has to decide whether to give up the sustainable approach or to provide the design the clients are asking for. If he does not give up his approach he may not strike a deal with them.

5. Less Prioritization of Profit-Seeking

Following a different set of values from capitalist profit-oriented behaviours, Aboriginal entrepreneurs generally do not consider profit-making as their top priority. Michaelee Lazore of Sequoia stated, "The goal of my business is to stick to my values but at the same time be able to make the profit where I am comfortable financially." She continued:

> [I want to keep] our theme [...]for products, I mean Native-inspired, not to mass. I don't want to have mass products. I want to hire people in my community to help make the products, because I feel that that is important for spreading the economic development of the community. Because if I hire somebody from Montreal, I don't think it does my community any good. Because if I hire somebody from the community, that gives them money to spend within the community and help other businesses [...] If I hire somebody in Montreal they are taking their paycheck and spending it in Montreal. It doesn't really help the community Kanawake in that way. So that's important to me. It is important [...] I really do want to keep all my employees Native as much as possible [...] also, not being mass produced [...] that's something we do not want to do because I want to have Native employees (Lazore, 2007).

Lazore prefers to provide products that retain some Native culture and employ people from her First Nation, rather than to increase her profit by adopting mass production. She believes that when she hires people coming from her Nation, it benefits the community by facilitating its economic development. She chooses to seek "comfortable" but not "maximum" profit.

To the question, "Have you found any difference between Aboriginal businesses and other non-Aboriginal businesses?" Brian Porter referred to different styles of profit-seeking between his and other Aboriginal businesses and mainstream businesses:

> One of the things that I hear time and time again from mainstream culture is this idea that if you are not continuing to grow your business and to grow your profit, you are not successful. Right? It's almost like there's no concept of the right sizing [moderate size of business] and they're driven more and more by the bottom line [...] I think that's one thing that is a little bit different. I'm not obsessed with trying to get more and more employees and bigger and bigger operation every year (Porter, 2008).

Porter seeks for neither unlimited growth of his business nor increasing profit. Based on a flexible and collective decision-making process, Porter's company contributes to the First Nation's development and favours closer working relationships. It also promotes a sustainably conscious architecture. Rather than being inclined to maximize profit, Porter's business seems to prefer reflecting traditional cultural values.

However, this reluctance to maximize profit does not mean that Native entrepreneurs do not care at all about profit. To the question "What is a good entrepreneur for you?" Lazore answered that profit is indeed important. "If you are not in

business to be either making a profit or to covering your cost and all that kind of stuff [...] what [you] are doing is just for fun." She continued:

> So I think there is a little bit of a difference. An entrepreneur, you can have fun as well, but [...] a good entrepreneur would be somebody who has done their homework and they know what they have to do to (either profit or cover their cost) (Lazore, 2007).

Operating a business only for the fun of it without considering expenses and income is, for her, not a good entrepreneurship. Lazore implied that good management is a necessary component for any business, Native or otherwise. Reflecting this financial awareness, she limits the contributions she makes to other members of her First Nation (one donation per month) because she has to follow a strict budget. Even for Aboriginal business people who try to keep Aboriginal values at the forefront of their activities, profit-making obviously is a pressing concern.

In order to respect traditional values while sustaining their businesses, the interviewees seem to balance the two requirements and seek moderate profit. While they try to operate their business in a way respectful of their Aboriginal values, they also do not seek maximum profit. This does not, however, mean they choose to ignore their financial situation and they can decide not to follow traditional Native values when their business' survival is at stake, as explained in the following section.

6. *Abandoning Traditional Values*

Although profit-making is generally not a priority for the interviewees, the entrepreneurs not only watch their business' financial situation but also frequently, when it is necessary, choose to operate their company in a way that disregards their traditional values.

There are, for instance, limitations to their sharing activities. Ben Benedict has often sponsored his First Nation's athletic teams, providing water for community members free of charge and making substantial monetary donations. However, he recognizes his financial constraints. Due to his company's recent difficult financial situation, he had to give up his most costly contributions:

> In the last year and a half, we had to curb that [amount of our contribution] and the only way we can help families, like say, with the funerals or things like that is to provide water instead of monetary help at this point (Benedict, 2007).

Michaelee Lazore of Sequoia explains the limitations she sets on such activities:

> We do one donation per month for any organization that asks us. We donate to their fund raiser (usually it's a fund raiser) or whatever event that they're having, but we do limit it to one a month, because we're getting a lot of requests. And we keep our donations to the people in Khanawake [...] It's so hard because you're starting a business; all your resources are out there. So you don't have much power to give. [...] that's why we're limited, like one for months, or [...] to donate products, because if you donate any money, that's... that's harder! [laughs] I don't mind [giving away products] because we would have this [product] in stock anyway (Lazore, 2007).

Just like Benedict, Lazore limits her financial contributions. She continues to contribute to some of her First Nation people, but only once per one month. She does not make monetary donations, but provides products manufactured by her company. "Once we get

going again," declares Benedict, "then we want to start up things" (Benedict, 2007). Lazore states the same thing: "When you make a profit," she argues, "then you can start giving out more [laughs]" (Lazore, 2007).

Native entrepreneurs can also abandon behaving according to their traditional values of non-competitiveness in order to sustain their businesses. Drew Hill recognizes that he has to some extent betrayed the value of "humility," learned from his mother, in order to manage his business better. This is expressed in his comment about his mother, who followed traditional Native values more thoroughly in management of her business.

R (Hill): My mother was a potter. She made pots in the Native culture, in the Native designs [...] she sold those [...] She was also an artist. She was more of an artist than a business person. She didn't look at the bottom line. [Laughs] She would be embarrassed to charge so much for her pottery. She'd look at a pot that would [have taken her] two to three hours to create and then there's the material involved in it, and the electricity and all the other supplies that she needed to make this pottery, and then she would sell it [...] It did not give her the value or the amount of money she deserved for the amount of time and raw materials that went into making the product that she did. So I did learn, I guess through that mistake if you will, that you have to value your work.

I: Okay. You think that's a mistake.

R: Well, you have to value your work, you know? It goes against that idea of humility, but at the same time, you know, I charge a certain amount of money per hour [...] I have to, you know. I have my overhead expenses. I have my people that I have to employ, and myself. If I don't succeed at bringing home a certain amount of money to my family then my wife will be very upset with me [Laughs] (Hill, 2007).

It is against the Native values of "humility and humbleness" for Hill to value work by charging enough money to cover the time, money and other things consumed in production. However, it is also necessary for him to meet all his expenses for survival of his business. Therefore, he does not hesitate to set the price high enough to cover all the

expenses and even make some profit. Recognizing the necessity to somewhat abandon traditional Aboriginal values regarding non-competitiveness in order to sustain his business, Hill acknowledges that, as an entrepreneur, he has decided to do so.

7. Influence of Economic (Capitalist) Values

While each company keeps some characteristic Aboriginal values and showcases them in their business activities, they also partially operate their business in a profit-oriented way. Participants' answers included comments that do not follow Aboriginal cultural values such as being collective, reciprocal, egalitarian, or non-competitive.

First, in this research, some businesses do not follow a collective, reciprocal, and egalitarian approach in terms of working relations. Although contribution to other residents of First Nations communities was a common trait that appeared in the interviews, some enterprises seek to increase profit at the expense of being collective for the Native community members. Drew Hill underscored that he cannot help other people of his community when he behaves strictly as an entrepreneur:

> As an entrepreneur, you have to be [...] very self-motivated and you have to also be a very – I don't want to say the word "selfish," but you have to be interested in bettering yourself. I think the only difference... I mean, I'm obviously... I'm still bettering myself but, at the same time, I'm bettering myself and I cannot help, benefit my community, the First Nation community (Hill, 2007).

When he follows the economic values and focuses on "bettering" himself, Hill has to abandon benefiting his First Nation members. Reluctantly using the word "selfish," he

recognizes that an entrepreneur should not be afraid of benefiting himself and seeking individual gains.

Some participants reported that they do not follow a collective decision-making process in their organizations. For Benedict, "there is a direction, and then there are rules, coordinating, and there is all a lot about everything. And they [workers] have to respect that" (Benedict, 2007). Mathieu Sioui mentioned that workers need to follow the decisions that the president of the company makes:

> When he speaks, every person listens. He's not strong but, you know, he's got some rules and you have to follow them [...] It would be better for you to speak with him before you do something that you're not supposed to do (Sioui, 2007).

In this company, workers are expected to follow decisions made by the people who are in control. Mathieu Sioui also described the hierarchy that exists in the firm: "You've got my father. You've got the manager, me, administration ([...] I mean secretary and accountant)" (Sioui, 2007). A similar company structure appeared in Doug Henry's comments.

> We're kind of a traditional pyramid. People have tasks to do under me [...] we have our administration people, and we have our people in the shop, and people in the field [...] And it's just like anything, you got to have an organized procedure and path to follow. [...] proper place means proper training, and proper methods, and the better you get, the more efficient you get, then the more organized you get, the more people feel that they are in a happy, healthy environment... (Henry, 2007).

Developing an organized hierarchy or placing people in different places with different type of work may contribute to a business' efficiency, even if it is at the expense of consensus-building and workers' participation.

Formation of close ties among workers does not always occur in Aboriginal businesses. Doug Henry mentioned that contemporary companies no longer ensure stable livelihoods of workers:

> It's not like the old days where you're loyal to a company and they take care of you forever, and ever, and ever. You've got to be competitive and you've got to stay on top of things. And you've got to keep an edge to yourself, and you always got to sell yourself (Henry, 2007).

He states, "There are times I don't even feel like I'm the top guy around here. I feel like a part of the team." However, he operates his business with the belief that workers compete against each other and are not to be protected by the company they work for (Henry, 2007).

While describing his company as "a team," Ben Benedict said that he cannot be too close to his workers:

> There is a lot of responsibility. Sometimes you have to draw the line, you know [...] you could be close, very close to your workers but ... somewhere you have to have, you know, your own... like a boundary. Like it's not all... um... it's not all... um... I don't know how to explain myself... It's not funny games or anything like that (Benedict, 2007).

While Benedict and his workers are "very close," a boundary still exists when they are working together.

Answering the question, "What is your business' primary goal?" some participants stressed the importance of growing their business. Phoebe Sutherland, who manages an Aboriginal bistro in the city of Ottawa, said, "Doing franchising [...] maybe later, yeah. Maybe have this restaurant grow" (Sutherland, 2007). To the same question, John Sioui, President of Spirit Creative, which is located within the same city, answered,

"To make money. [laughs] That will be great. To succeed and to accomplish what we set out to do. Our mission is to naturally have a profitable organization." He also explained how important profit making is in his business: "We are a profit-oriented company so we have to [...] capture all the business that we can, all the revenues, the potential revenues we have to go and do that, that's our job... we can't rely on anything else. You know, our survival is on profit basically and growth" (Sioui, 2008). For Sioui, it is necessary to be profit-oriented in his business because he "live[s] in a society" and needs to "lead a life."

In short, in business activities, some Aboriginal entrepreneurs do not fully follow traditional values such as sharing, human relationship, and consensus among a group. This does not mean those businesses do not reflect Aboriginal cultural values at all. For example, while Drew Hill recognizes the Aboriginal culture that he learned from his parents and his difficulties in marketing activities due to the traditional values of humbleness and humility, Prémontex, for which Mathieu Sioui works as a director, is a firm that is active in contributing to the First Nation members as well as forming a closer relationship among workers. Henry's NATSCO Mechanical Contractors is also active in supporting various activities within his First Nation. In this interview research, on the one hand, both Henry and Benedict were active in helping other people of their First Nation, which made it seem that they behave according to the Native values of reciprocity and collectiveness. On the other hand, they set a boundary with other workers, which can be construed as being against their traditional values. Sutherland strongly emphasized the need to grow her businesses.

One thing to note here is the difference between on-reserve and off-reserve businesses. This research has not detected any differences on the basis of age, language,

or gender. However, it showed a small difference between businesses located on-reserve and off-reserve. Aboriginal firms located off-reserve, especially in urban areas, provided relatively more economic comments than those on First Nation reserves. For instance, they showed stronger concern for profit-making. Based on only a handful of interviewees, it is very difficult to generalize the answers provided by the participants. Nevertheless, Aboriginal entrepreneurs operating a business in off-reserve areas were, at least in this research, generally more profit-oriented than their on-reserve correspondents. This suggests that exposure to mainstream Canadian society is one factor that develops market-oriented and economic values.

This does not mean that off-reserve businesspeople do not retain Aboriginal traditional values and behave in a completely profit-oriented way. For instance, Laura Milliken, president of Big Soul Productions, a filmmaking company in Toronto, mentioned many times in the interview the Aborigianal values she holds:

> I just keep it [Native values] in my heart. I know who I am. [...] It's intrinsic. It's who I am. It's a part of me. [...] It's for each of us individually. It's very personal, and we all have our own beliefs traditionally and spiritually that we carry with us. [...] We have it personally. Even though it's not on a daily basis, that helps us in some way. I mean, it's form of strength. [...] It keeps us strong. [...] I know that that's what keeps my vision pure for what I want to do (Milliken, 2007).

Compared to the interviewed on-reserve businesspeople, her business management does not include many social activities. Nevertheless, according to her, she indeed follows traditional values, and that they give her strength. Occasionally, traditional values appear in her business activities in different forms such as teaching children on different reserves how to use cameras to make their voices heard in Canadian society.

8. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced 12 businesses that this research selected and has analyzed the interview data according four Aboriginal values: 1) collectivity, reciprocity and egalitarianism; 2) being environmental; 3) non-competitiveness; and 4) respect or concern about other generations. Aboriginal businesses reflects these values in different forms including contribution to a First Nation community, collective and close ties among workers, ecological services, modest marketing, and operation that takes into consideration the influence on different generations. Operating their business with respecting for their tradition, some Aboriginal entrepreneurs seek profits but in a moderate way. On the other hand, it does not mean they do not pay attention to the financial situation of their business at all. Indeed, they might give up their cultural values when it is necessary for their economic survival. The interviews also partially implied rational economic behaviours over social behaviours in their business lives.

C. Theoretical Discussions

The previous chapter analyzed the interview data and discussed how Aboriginal cultural values are reflected in the entrepreneurs' business activities. In order to consider these cases from broader, abstract concepts, and to provide some theoretical views based on the analyzed cases, this section discusses the role of Aboriginal tradition in businesses and how Aboriginal peoples are forming their economy in regards to sociological theories. Although, from one perspective, Aboriginal culture – or, more precisely, its traditional value system – is considered a hindrance to economic activities and development of Aboriginal populations, another perspective argues the opposite and even implies a real possibility for their economic development. In the latter perspective, the Aboriginal businesses' characteristics even represent elements from which the mainstream capitalist economy can learn. By mentioning Weber and Polanyi, among other authors, this chapter aims to provide a few sociological ideas to better understand the situations of Aboriginal peoples in their quest to develop a future society that would respect their values and traditions.

1. Aboriginal Traditional Values that Hinder Capitalist Economic Practices?

Amongst those who argued that non-Western cultural values hinder the development of capitalism and economic prosperity, the most prominent scholar was Max Weber. Weber argued that the development of capitalism is shaped not only by economic but also non-economic factors. He identified the ways of thinking (or ethos) supposedly characteristic to modern capitalist societies, such as promptness, prudence,

honesty, and saving with earning more and more capital. He argued that this "peculiar ethic" (Weber, 1958a, p. 51) originated with the Protestant ethic (Weber, 1958a, p. 35).

Weber argued that in Eastern societies such as China and India, in which other forms of religion are dominant (Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, etc.), capitalism did not develop because their religious ethics prevented rational gain-seeking that would result in the growth of capitalism. In China, for example, because of the idea of the existence of actively evil spirits, when commercial improvement through the introduction of rational means of transportation was planned, many people feared the evils and objected to the plans; that is, they created obstacles for rational economic activities (Weber, 1961, p. 265–7). In India, for example, there are economic restrictions applied to certain religious castes and members of these castes are prohibited from practicing commercial activities. Changing occupation and changing work methods are, for these (lower) castes, considered ritual degradation that is deserved by their members. Members of such castes cannot increase their earning through those changes. This ritual law is "certainly not capable of giving birth to economic and technical revolutions from within itself, or even of facilitating the first germination of capitalism in its midst" (Weber, 1958b, p. 112).

In short, Weber argued that social and cultural contexts, especially religious ethics, influence the development of a capitalist economy. Whereas the Protestant ethic facilitated the expansion of capitalism, at least some non-Protestant religious ethics prevent the rational behaviours of individuals and hinder economic growth. Weber states that, in those non-Western societies, "the particular spirit was lacking" (Weber, 1958a, pp. 52–3).

This research has provided some arguments in favour of Weber's thesis. While partially determined by material conditions, the Aboriginal entrepreneurs interviewed are also influenced by their traditional cultural values. On the one hand, many Aboriginal entrepreneurs partially demonstrated economic behaviours that are in conflict with traditional Aboriginal values. Some of them sometimes abandoned traditional values to avoid bankruptcy. According to their evidence, not donating to other people of the Aboriginal community reduces the expenses of the company and contributes to the yielding of more profit. Setting different roles in the organization and adopting a top-down approach speeds up and streamlines the decision-making process, which contributes to efficiency and, therefore, enables profitable management. Such a division of labour is typical of capitalism. As John Sioui, President of Spirit Creative located in Ottawa, states, "our survival is on profit basically and growth" (Sioui, 2008), indicating it is important for at least some of the Native entrepreneurs to "capture" all of "the potential revenues" and maximize their gain.

However, on the other hand, some traditional Native values certainly influence the behaviours of the interviewed Native businesspersons. Being collective, reciprocal, egalitarian, ecological, non-competitive, and having respect for different generations are included in their business activities. Those values are respected, even when they are opposed to the particular values of capitalist society.

Values of collectiveness and reciprocity hinder maximization of profits through encouraging redistribution of wealth. As well, such actions as avoiding reducing the number of employees even when the company is not doing well and helping an employee when he or she encounters private trouble, make it more difficult to accumulate monetary

wealth. Entrepreneurs can be hesitant to exercise their ability and skills to the fullest potential, which reduces the possibility to gain opportunities to do business with other companies or to attract customers and following the elders' preference is not always the most profitable option. A firm that attempts to focus on sustainability for unborn generations might gain fewer contracts for their business than they would have if they continuously held a sustainable approach. When entrepreneurs operate their businesses with consideration for later generations, they might need to spend more money and time to realize their business design. Finally, seeking profits in a moderate way, which the participants implied in the interview as a result of respecting those values, would be most representative of the fact that their traditional values hinder their profitable economic activities; in other words, being successful in a capitalist economy. As Drew Hill described the influence of traditional values of "humility" on his marketing activities as something "to focus on and improve" (Hill, 2007), taking this attitude can be a hindrance to the success of his businesses. The influence of Aboriginal cultural values can hinder the development of a capitalist spirit and, therefore, success in a capitalist economy, as explained in Weber's works.

Although this perspective explains at least parts of the research data, it is based on a European ethnocentric notion of economic development. Prior to the 1970s, most interpretations of Aboriginal peoples were similarly from the viewpoint of the modernization theory. Not only federal policies but also research studies by scholars were based on the idea that Aboriginal peoples failed to achieve economic development to the same degree Euro-Canadians did and attempted to identify the cause of the "failure." Some of them argued that it is because of the hindering function of Aboriginal cultural

traditions, while others claimed that Aboriginal peoples themselves do not have any problem. The latter included researchers who explained that the failure of federal policies caused the Natives' poor economic situations.

A recent group of scholars, which emerged in the 1990s, has questioned the fundamental belief that Aboriginal peoples should achieve the same development in the way same as Euro-Canadian society, trying to find a form of development that is unique to Aboriginal peoples. Their argument is based on the belief that Native peoples can seek a different path of development from the one followed by the rest of the Canadian population. Recognizing the failure of previous federal policies to force Aboriginal adaptation, researchers have increasingly sustained this argument (Frideres and Gadacz, [1993] 2008, p. 382–390). Therefore, it is important to discuss the research data with this newer theoretical perspective.

2. *Aboriginal Traditional Values for an Alternative Development*

According to some scholars, Aboriginal culture can be the basis of an alternative form of development. In this view, Aboriginal peoples can form a distinct economy, embedded in social relations as Polanyi suggested.

Karl Polanyi claimed that people tend to act from a variety of motives and that these motives are one of the things to play an important role in the making of society. He challenged Marxism by constantly emphasizing people's agency. This does not mean that Polanyi interpreted society in an idealistic way; he believed that values determine human society, and vice versa. Instead of considering modern capitalism the high-point of historical development, he questioned the state where the "self-regulating market" came

to dominate and transform the society in the early twentieth century. For Polanyi, the market-centred economy is an exception in the long history of humanity in terms of relations between the economy and other social aspects. In all previous human societies, the economy was submerged (embedded) in social relationships. The general interests of societies or groups of people, that is, "social interests," had much greater importance than the money interest of each individual, or "economic interest." He states, "Gain and profit made on exchange never before played an important part in human economy" (Polanyi, 1957, p. 43).

However, since England originally introduced a completely new type of economy in the nineteenth century, everything became determined by the market. "*Instead of the economic system being embedded in social relationships, these relationships were now embedded in the economic system*" (Polanyi, 1968, p. 70; emphasis in original). Economic life has been disembedded from social, political, and cultural relations during the past 200 years. He called this the "self-regulating market" (Polanyi, 1957, p. 249). Although Polanyi rarely used the word "capitalism," what he meant by the term "self-regulating market" was capitalism (Cangiani, 2000, p. 32).

In Polanyi's view, the market is just one of several forms that economic transaction takes place. Polanyi proposes three types of exchange or "forms of integration:" *reciprocity, redistribution,* and *(market) exchange. Reciprocity* exists within small-scale symmetrical groups such as families, kinship groups, and neighbourhoods. *Redistribution* is the politically determined allocation of goods in stratified societies with a centre-periphery structure. Goods are distributed from the centre in the community, while collecting them from the periphery in the form of taxation. The community

historically includes different units such as tribe, village, and the state. *Exchange* is the distribution of goods through price-setting markets. Usually in any economy, there is a mixture or a combination of the three forms (Polanyi, 1971, pp. 250–256). The market was historically never superior to the other two (Polanyi, 1944, pp. 43–55; 1957, p. 256). When a market-centred economy develops, reciprocity and redistribution are undermined by the growth of market exchange.

Polanyi argued that the "disembedded" or market-centred economy is dehumanizing and can lead to a catastrophe. The predominance of the unregulated market removed people from the socio-cultural framework which constitutes their human existence. He states, "... self-adjusting market... could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society." (Polanyi, 1957, p. 3).

Polanyi further explains the destructive impact of the new economic system by focusing on the transformation of labour, land, and money into market commodities. In the market-centred economy, labour (human beings), land (the natural endowment) and money are converted into goods to be bought and sold on the market. Those "fictitious commodities" (Polanyi, 1957, chap. 6, esp. 72-73) are, in his argument, originally not true commodities or goods produced for sale on a market. Treating them as real, which is required by an economic system based on the notion of a self-regulating market, brings a destructive consequence to society (Polanyi, 1957, pp. 72–73).

First, labour is linked to human life, which is not to be sold. When the value of labour is determined by the market, people whose labour is evaluated as low are consequently more likely to be in poverty. In some cases, this evaluation causes serious consequences for their living conditions. Since a market society treats individuals as

commodities rather than human beings with values, interests and non-marketable capabilities, human relations are bound to undergo degradation. Social relations such as kinship and neighbourhoods, which traditionally functioned to protect the people, do not work in this economic system. Polanyi states, "To separate labour from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all forms of organic existence and to replace them with a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one" (Polanyi, 1957, p. 163).

Second, to make land into a (fictitious) commodity and subject it to the laws of the market threatens the cultural basis of human beings. For human beings, the economic function of land should be just one of its many purposes. According to Polanyi, land is part of nature, which is not produced by man; in fact, land produces, on man's behalf, a variety of sources of human life. It "assures human survival and upholds the community's rootedness in nature" (Baum, 1996, p. 16). "What we call land," he writes, "is an element of nature inextricably interwoven with man's institutions. To isolate it and form a market out of it was perhaps the weirdest of all undertakings of our ancestors" (Polanyi, 1957, p. 178).

Lastly, the reduction of money to a commodity consequently threatens human life, as well. Using the word "money," Polanyi meant neither real capital – the structures and machines used in production nor financial assets – but "the money values of real capital, and the money used to buy real capital" (Schaniel and Neale, 1999, p. 98). It is a symbol of purchasing power, but not a product. Being the medium between the productive and consumptive organization of society, money is too fundamental to society to commodify. Such treatment causes deflation, which causes confusion and poverty in society.

Therefore, Polanyi concludes that the economy needs to be "re-embedded" into society in order to avoid these destructive effects. "An all too narrow conception of interest," he emphasizes, "must in effect lead to a warped vision of social and political history, and no purely monetary definition of interest can leave room for that vital need for social protection" (Polanyi, 1957, p. 154).

However, Polanyi did not provide a specific way to realize the reformation of society that is exclusively controlled by the market economy. De-commodifying the fictitious commodities of labour, land, and money would be one of the necessary conditions for re-embedding the economy and there is a need to discuss ways to re-embed economic relations into society.

Polanyi's approach considers Aboriginal values not a hindrance of their business activities, but rather a source for their alternative form of development. The behaviours of the studied Native entrepreneurs can be a representation of their economy, which is submerged or embedded in other social and cultural relations of human society. The economic activities represented by the entrepreneurs' business operations are, in the Polanyian perspective, considered not exceptional but one of the general shapes of economy in society.

Various kinds of respect for social relations – which are discussed in the previous chapter – instead of the maximization of profits among the interviewed entrepreneurs show some aspects of their embedded economy. Contribution to a First Nation community reflects the entrepreneurs' values of nourishing relationship with other community members rather than gaining the maximum amount of profit. When they

include collective decision-making processes in their management practices, form closer relationships among the workers, and try to include them as a part of their business style even when it is opposed to profit making, it means that they value relationships with workers rather than maximization of profit. Furthermore, Aboriginal entrepreneurs' ecological business activities reflect their respect for other, non-human, beings in the environment. In other words, they consider relationships with other beings in nature. When Aboriginal entrepreneurs do not promote their skill, achievement, products, and services actively through considerations of modesty, their behaviour is focused not on profit making but on maintaining harmony in relationships with other businesspeople and customers. Doing business in a way that is within tribal elders' understanding respects one's social relationship with the elders over conducting rational profit-making. Moreover, this practice is a form of respect for connections with people of other generations to consider the influence of their business on younger and even unborn generations, even if it is not rational as a business design.

The Aboriginal entrepreneurs also described the social and cultural relations the businesspeople value over rational profit-gaining in some ways in addition to the parts cited in the analysis above. One of them is the relationship-based business style. Many of the entrepreneurs interviewed treat each customer in a very personal or individual way. This "client-by-client basis" or "relationship-based business" enables them to conduct business while forming and keeping a personal relationship with each customer. Brian Porter explained the difference between working for non-Aboriginal clients and Aboriginal clients:

> There's a lot of difference [...] When we do work for the First Nations, it tends to be a lot more relationship-based, you know. They might trust me more. It's more difficult to build a relationship with any federal agency than in this, a First Nations chief in council. I don't, I wouldn't say more difficult (Porter, 2008).

Although he works with non-Aboriginal customers in a "more systematic way," as is their preference, when Porter caters to Aboriginal clients, his work is "relationship-based" and, therefore, more likely to build a trusting relationship with clients.

Another way of describing Aboriginal entrepreneurs' social relationships over profit gaining is their prioritization of satisfying customers. Lorraine Montrevil, the owner of Algonquin North Outfitters, explains this as follows:

> I think we put our values before [profit] and maybe that's why we're not that good [at doing] business [...] [laughs]. I think we put our values ahead of business and I think that's why it takes us longer to grow because it's more important that we please our customers and we put ourselves out first to please our customers. We think of customer service before we think of the dollar [...] business value puts the dollar first and I think the Native values [put] people first (Montrevil, 2007).

Offering different services for each customer and prioritizing his or her satisfaction would be because of the entrepreneurs' respect for their relationship with their customers. These kinds of business styles might sometimes hinder the rational profit-making ability of their businesses. However, they do maintain these aspects in their business practices.

While their behaviours are partially determined by the profit-making aspect of their business similarly to others in the market-oriented capitalist economy, Aboriginal entrepreneurs' moderate profit-seeking with respect for social and cultural relations suggests their economic aspect is embedded in other social aspects. For Polanyi, the state in which economic relations dominate other relations is exceptional; in other words, to

have the economy embedded in other social relations is human society's original or general state. Therefore, the studied Aboriginal entrepreneurs can be considered as showing one form of the general state of human society. As is made evident in Brian Porter's statements that unlike "mainstream culture," he is "not obsessed with trying to get more and more employees and bigger and bigger operations every year," Aboriginal entrepreneurs typically do not seek growth in a way that threatens the maintenance of other relations in their society.

When the researched Native business practices are discussed with the concept of the three forms of integration or ways to stabilize an economy, they can offer a type of combination of the three, which is different from the current market-centred economy. In the three forms of integration, in other words, *reciprocity*, *redistribution,* and *market (exchange)*, the first two are undermined in a capitalist economy. It is a fact that the studied Aboriginal businesses are involved in the form of market exchange through doing business in a market, as are other non-Native businesses.

On the other hand, the interview results suggest that the market exchange is not exclusively superior to the other two forms in economic activities. Active contribution by many of them to members of their First Nations, which is discussed in the last chapter, indicates that reciprocity is working in the Aboriginal economic activities. Instead of being individualistic and seeking for accumulation of individual profit, they value giving and helping each other even in their economic practices. Their recognition and expectation of help and contribution by other community members suggests that the reciprocal transactions are working among many business people, as well.

Reciprocal transaction appeared in interviews in the ways addition to the discussed contribution activities among First Nation peoples. Tammy Beauvais described the reciprocal trades she often conducts in her business activities:

> At the show [...] a month ago in Ottawa, there was this Ojibway guy. [...] He said, "Tammy, Tammy, my daughter needs a grad dress." She is graduating from high school, and she wants a formal gown for the graduation. [...] "Can you make her a dress? You have 6 weeks to do it. But I have no money. I don't have money. I mean, I am not a rich guy." So, I am like, "All right." Then I said, "What are you going to give me then?" [...] We ended up by making a dress. We sent it out and ended up discussing baskets [...] because his people have a lot of that in Ontario. And I could sell them for a decent price. So, I [made] the dress and sent it out, and I said that this is how [many] baskets I want for this amount (Beauvais, 2008).

Since the Ojibway buyer could not make a monetary payment, she provided him with a dress for graduation in exchange for baskets he could more easily provide for her. She stated that she conducts this type of reciprocal and nonmonetary exchange: "helping each other" or "creating ... cooperation" (Beauvais, 2008) in her business.

This research did not imply that there is a system of redistribution or a regular allocation of resources or materials by a political entity over the studied Native entrepreneurs. As to First Nations' band councils, their conversation did not include anything to imply systems or networks that are regularly working in the Native economic activities to distribute monetary wealth or goods. Out of the 12 cases, only two, at the initial stage, and one, at the later stage, of their businesses received financial support from a Native band or its organization. Another entrepreneur received a material donation for him to open his office. Most of the financial assistance that many of them received, especially at the initial period of their businesses, was more from non-Native sources. In contrast to donations to people of the same First Nation, none of the companies have

made a financial donation to the band council or its association, except for a few cases of offering them their services with either regular or discounted prices. Although two entrepreneurs are involved in the administrative activities of their tribal council, the rest are not. What this research implies is that, while the Aboriginal businesspeople are involved in the market exchange, they also formed reciprocity; that is, one of the other two forms of integration.

The Aboriginal businesses also imply that some kinds of "fictitious commodities" in capitalist market-oriented economies are not treated as commodities in the Aboriginal economy. The interviews show that they do not consider human labour to be a commodity. The closer relationship among workers of some of the businesses and, especially, the case in which the participants avoided reducing the number of employees in a harsh economic climate implies that Native entrepreneurs do not consider the labour of their workers as commodities. If the entrepreneur treats the human labour of his workers as other commodities, he would not hesitate to fire some of his employees.

As well, land or natural environment is not considered a commodity by the interviewed Native entrepreneurs. Their concern about any influence of their businesses on the natural environment and efforts not to produce any pollution indicate that they do not think of it as a commodity that can be sold, bought, or owned by someone. As Mathieu Sioui describes, they try to use "100% of materials nature gives" them without wasting anything and "take care of" it (Sioui, 2007). They consider nature not a commodity, but that which gives things for them to use for their life.

As well as human labour and land, the Aboriginal entrepreneurs seem to treat money not as a commodity. Because they are involved in a market that is dominated by

non-Aboriginal economic organizations, their businesses operate and trade with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal companies using money. However, considering the fact that the entrepreneurs' primary goal is not monetary accumulation, their way of using money is more tied to building human relationships. While this was not directly asked of the entrepreneurs researched, it appears that money, for them, is not a commodity that they can use in order to make further profit, but are more like a tool to evaluate the labour their workers provide.

In sum, the researched Native entrepreneurs are, when considered from a Polanyian perspective, providing a form of human society in which economic relations and values are submerged to other social and cultural correspondents in society. Based on the standpoint in contrast to Weber's argument of additional cultural influence, his perspective, while considering human agency, poses a question about the capitalist market-oriented economy as being an exceptional state and argues for its reformation to an economy that, much like the Natives', is submerged within other social, political, and cultural relations. The Aboriginal businesses' various activities, which reflect Native cultural values, suggest they do not exclusively value economic success but have respect for forming and maintaining other social and cultural relations even in their business practices. When one considers their business practices in light of his concept of the three forms of integration, they constitute a combination of the three, unlike the capitalist economy with its superiority of market exchange. Reciprocity works among them in a way that is never inferior to market exchange. Unlike in the capitalist economy, Aboriginal economic activities do not treat human labour and land as a commodity. They try to not take from the land more than they need. The businesspersons who own the

companies studied consider the human aspect of workers, rather than exploiting them through taking profit from them, as much as possible.

In the discussion above, Native values play a role as a basis of their unique social and cultural economy. Values of collectivity, reciprocity, egalitarianism, and having respect for nature and different generations create characteristic aspects of their embedded economic relations. In other words, in this perspective, they are a source of a possibly unique form of Native development, rather than being obstacles to their economic development.

While the interviewed entrepreneurs are involved in economic relations that are submerged to other relations of society, they also showed how difficult it is for one to be continuously involved in an embedded type of economy while joining and surviving in the market as an individual business. As mentioned in the analysis, the Native businesspersons tended to enjoy their activities with a respect for social or cultural relations but within a scope which does not seriously affect the financial health of the businesses. Some entrepreneurs abandon their unique business style based on their cultural values when they judge that it is really necessary in order to sustain the business. When they recognize that the business encounters difficulty in surviving, they do not stay in the economic life submerged to other non-economic spheres of society. In the interviews, while some of them mentioned the difficulties they encountered in obtaining external support, two-thirds of the participants have had an experience of receiving some kind of external financial assistance to start up their business. In contrast, as to the financial situation in the later phases of their business history, many of them emphasized the current tight financial condition. In order to sustain their "embedded" business style

for long periods, the individual Aboriginal businesses might need to be provided further financial support, especially when they struggle with financial difficulties.

Some of the interviewed entrepreneurs might feel the destructiveness of the market economy when they abandon traditional values and start to behave more economically. Tammy Beauvais shared what she felt after she started to select the kind of contribution she makes. She was "trying to be idealistic and trying to give to ... [her] community and expect everybody to cooperate." However, she started to think that it was difficult to realize the cooperation, because she encountered the reality that some of other community members are reluctant to be reciprocal and cooperative. After 4 years of greatly and generously contributing to and working for people of her First Nation and their development, she recently had to decide to be less active in most of these social activities. Feeling "bad," "sad," and "guilty," she continues her contribution but in the form of selective donations, unlike what she used to do. She disclosed her feelings:

> The thing is that it gets lonely when you're doing something different [from] what everybody else does. And when you're an entrepreneur in your community, and when you don't have ... support [from other members], it gets lonely. You feel like you have to fight the world (Beauvais, 2008).

Her descriptions such as "lonely" and "like you have to fight the world" demonstrate the negative and harmful influence of an economic or market-oriented society on people.

As well as the approaches previously discussed in this chapter, this discussion on the Aboriginal entrepreneurs from a Polanyian perspective includes limitations in terms of ownership and operation of the researched Aboriginal companies and other aspects. The next chapter will sum up this research with some concluding remarks and mention

these and other limitations of research and offer suggestions based on the limitations.

Chapter 3. CONCLUSION

What implications does this study provide? What are the answers to its research questions? This conclusion offers further implications based on the interpretation of the Aboriginal economic activities. Finally, it also mentions limitations of this research and provides some suggestions for future research studies.

Summary of the study

This research has discussed how Aboriginal cultural values are reflected in the Aboriginal peoples' economic activities, and how they are forming their own economy within a larger mainstream economy in relation to their cultural values. An analysis of interviews with Aboriginal individual private entrepreneurs identified different kinds of their social behaviors facilitated by traditional values. Aboriginal cultural values, while sometimes prevented by material or economic conditions, influence the Aboriginal economy in different ways. The data suggests that Aboriginal peoples, while involved in the marketplace with the non-Aboriginal population, participate differently to the economy. From a Polanyian perspective that questions the market-oriented economic system, the business activities of Aboriginal entrepreneurs indicate possibilities for an alternative form of Aboriginal development that emphasizes social relations over economic relations. This research argues that alternative Aboriginal development is possible in a form that respects their traditions and, therefore, emphasizes social relations.

How Aboriginal peoples' culture shapes their economic activities and their development has been a continuous question in academia. For a long time, it was the assumption among scholars that Native peoples can develop their society only by following and assimilating into the Western capitalist way. While some researchers argued for the cultural impact, some other scholars disagreed about it. In the former group, the cultural influence has been considered a cause of the lower economic conditions among Aboriginal peoples.

However, studies regarding Aboriginal economic and social development are shifting to a view that their development is possible in an alternative way based on their cultural and social traditions. Whereas some researchers have continuously argued about Aboriginal possibility for economic development in the similar way as mainstream Canadian society, other scholars have recently recognized the importance of forming a way of development based on Aboriginal cultural values. Although they are composed of different arguments in terms of the extent of Aboriginal initiative in Aboriginal development within a larger global economy, they commonly argue for an autonomous and unique development of Aboriginal society. This alternative path is still developing in various aspects including reflection of a traditional worldview, which is considered distinct from the non-Aboriginal ones. Their unique holistic view creates specific values such as reciprocity, collectivity, egalitarianism, non-competitiveness or humbleness, and respect for nature and other generations.

Based on the fundamental cultural distinctiveness of Aboriginal peoples, this study has explored the research question about how Aboriginal traditional values can shape or be reflected in their economic practices and how they can form a distinct

tradition-based development in the mainstream Canadian economy. It tried to find answers to these questions through analysis of twelve interviews with Aboriginal individual entrepreneurs in southern Quebec and Ontario.

The interviews showed some Aboriginal cultural reflection in their businesses activities. Native values of collectivity, reciprocity, and egalitarianism take the form of contributions to other members of a First Nation, collective decision-making in the organization, and closer relationships among its workers. Respect for nature is frequently included in the design of the service or products the company provides. The value of non-competitiveness might cause the modest, less aggressive advertising activities of their services. Respect for elders can be facilitated to include their concerns and counsels in the business. Concern about unborn generations might generate additional costs in the producing processes. As a result of these cultural influences, Aboriginal businesspeople do not ordinarily prioritize profit-making.

It is true that the interviewed Aboriginal entrepreneurs abandon their traditional values when they encounter financial difficulties. While the Aboriginal traditional values compose part of the researched Aboriginal companies, their business activities also partially included some characteristics that are more economic and opposed to the Aboriginal cultural values. Some of the interviewed Aboriginal entrepreneurs mentioned their more economic (or capitalistic) values.

Nevertheless, it is important for the Native entrepreneurs to behave in the way to following their traditional values in their business activities. Michaelee Lazore stated that her goal is "to stick to my values but at the same time be able to make the profit where I am comfortable financially." She additionally listed "being able to make a profit,

hopefully, a very good profit eventually" as another goal. However, for her it is based on the premise of keeping her "values" in business (Lazore, 2007).

From Weberian to Polanyin perspective

The Weberian approach explains this Aboriginal cultural influence as at least partial hindrance to or obstacles in their economic activities and, therefore, capitalist development. This perspective suggests that Aboriginal peoples participate in the capitalist economy, however with a cultural handicap. It even implies that they need to abandon their tradition in order to realize economic prosperity.

However, limitations of the Weberian and other perspectives based on modernization theory have been pointed out and recognized in Native and other development studies. The failure of Canadian federal policies seems to empirically prove that this ethnocentric approach should not be applied to the development of Aboriginal societies. After World War II, Canadian federal government officials believed that the only way for Aboriginal development to succeed "was to bring them into mainstream Canadian society where their children would be able to participate in the wage economy" (Bone, 1994, p. 101). However, their plan failed:

> Over the years, recurring efforts involving huge amounts of money have been directed toward achieving these "modernization" objectives. Contrary to the expectations of the modernization perspective, these efforts have failed to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people of the First Nations and instead have had a deleterious effect (Anderson, 1995, p. 311).

Considering the failure of policies based on modernization theory and development of scholarship (as reviewed), there is a need to shift the perspective of this study, from one based on modernization theory to an alternative.

As an alternative perspective, this study adopted the Polanyian standpoint. According to this perspective, the Native cultural values are, rather than obstacles to their development, the basis of their distinct economy and development, thus creating their characteristic aspects. They are even considered as an approach to realize a non-destructive type of human society through preventing the destruction subsidiary to a market-oriented economy. Aboriginal businesses are considered to be forming their economy in a way that is not destructive, which is different from the mainstream market economy, while existing and operating within the larger global market.

Rather than accumulation of individual property, it is more important for Aboriginal peoples to build and maintain relationships and connections with others. In a profit-oriented economy, the primary goal and the criteria of personal success is accumulation of individual property. However, the economy that Aboriginal businesses propose criticizes this notion. For them, success as a person is not the same as success in capitalism. Instead, the goals of their economic life focus on social aspects such as maintaining peace, trust, and harmony in relationships with others, who are not only individual persons but also other lives in the natural environment. What the researched Aboriginal businesses provided was one illustration of this socially oriented type of economy.

The Polanyian interpretation of the interviewed Aboriginal businesses and Aboriginal economy provides some implications for contemporary market-oriented

economy. Based on the concept of an embedded economy, scholars have argued since the 1980s about the "disembedded" aspect of globalization. Polanyi suggested that the self-regulating economic system that had grown since the nineteenth century collapsed over the period of the two world wars. At least for some analysts, the welfare reforms and market and industrial regulations that many European countries conducted after World War II represent undergoing processes of the re-embedding of society. However, more scholars in the 1980s and more recent times have explained that, by reversing those reforming policies, "globalization" is disembedding the market again (e.g., Altvater, 2003; Bienefeld, 1991; Blyth, 2002; Falk, 1999; Helleiner, 1995; Hettne, 1995; Mittelman, 2000). What these scholars have commonly argued is that, due to the dominance of economic relations over other relations of society, the contemporary globalizing society has increasingly produced a destructive effect on human society.

With a situation in which possible ways for a less-destructive or more "embedded" type of economy to exist are explored, this discussion on the Aboriginal economy can propose a limited but possible positive implication for the globalized society. Maintaining various kinds of relationships, instead of allowing them to be exclusively determined by prices in the market and profit-making, might be a suggestion of the Aboriginal economy to the contemporary market-oriented and globalized society. It is true that a material basis is necessary for Aboriginal businesses to exist, as well as for any other companies. It is also an essential foundation for the Aboriginal economy. Nevertheless, beyond being completely determined by material conditions, the study's results indicated a possibility of an alternative form of development in place of the mainstream profit-oriented society.

This Aboriginal economy also provides an implication to the Polanyian discussion of economy, which is absorbed in other social relations. While Polanyi pointed out the destructiveness of a market-oriented or "disembedded" economy, he did not mention in what way one realizes an economy submerged to other relations of society. The Aboriginal entrepreneurs in this research suggest that emphasizing stable and unfailing social relations in society can be a basis for the construction of the "embedded" economy.

Research limitations and suggestions for further research

This study includes some limitations that provide some suggestions for future research. First, instead of considering cultural diversity among different Aboriginal languages or cultural groups, this research focused on cultural aspects common to those smaller groups. The risk is to over-generalize ethnic and cultural groups. Depending on the First Nations groups, Aboriginal entrepreneurs may show very different cultural influence in their business. To reflect this diversity in studies about the Aboriginal economy, this research suggests focusing the study region on one or more places that are composed of a particular cultural group.

The second limitation of this study is not to have considered differences among industries. The answers of Aboriginal entrepreneurs might be different among sectors. Focusing on a particular sector will enable researchers to examine the differences among industries and might provide other findings stemming from one of them.

Thirdly, only conducting research in English in a French-speaking region excluded some potential participants. Fourthly, this research could not realize an ideal

selection of participants in terms of company size. Due to the current situation of individual Aboriginal businesses in which a majority of them operate with a relatively smaller numbers of workers, it could not include many larger firms in its participants. Researching small-scale Aboriginal companies inevitably caused a limitation in determining that the some characteristics of the researched businesses are from their Aboriginal culture but not the smallness of their business. It is possible that other non-Aboriginal small businesses includes similar traits (such as contributing to a (non-Aboriginal) community to which they belong, valuing closer relationships among workers, or collective decision-making) As previously mentioned, one characteristic of Aboriginal businesses is that they are younger than other non-Aboriginal companies. After some years, it might be possible to analyze more number of larger-size companies, which can provide more information, especially about the organization of and relationships among workers.

It is also possible that the studied Aboriginal entrepreneurs share some characteristic behaviour with other non-Aboriginal businesses located in rural areas. Research that is particularly focused on Aboriginal companies located in urban areas might show if some of the social characteristics that appeared in this interview research stem more from the location rather than the Aboriginal traditional values.

This study also includes a limitation of not directly conducting a research on any Aboriginal political entities, such as the band council of a First Nation. A future study that is designed to include these entities would enable researchers to theoretically interpret the Aboriginal economy even further. In particular, a study that focuses more on allocation of monetary and material wealth by a political authority, which includes

associations or organizations of First Nations band councils, would realize in-depth theoretical discussions. It would enable researchers to discuss Polanyi's concept of the forms of integrations, especially the redistributive type of the three forms further than the discussion of this study.

Finally, this research suggests future researches on Aboriginal community-owned or operated businesses. Studying individual private businesses would has offered a relatively more realistic implication than research on Aboriginal community-owned or operated businesses, which are not forced to encounter market situations because of the governmental financial support they receive. On the other hand, considering that some Aboriginal traditional values such as collectivity and reciprocity might better fit to the concept of community-operated businesses, researches on such collective Aboriginal businesses would also provide significant implications about society- or culture-oriented Aboriginal economy.

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