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**Fishing for Foresters: A New Institutional Analysis of Community Participation in an
Aboriginal-owned Forest Company**

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Canada

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LEGEND

NI	New Institutionalism/New Institutionalist
NIA	New Institutional Analysis
CTR	Coast Tsimshian Resources

ABSTRACT

Aboriginal groups across Canada are looking for new ways to improve the living conditions of their people. Coast Tsimshian Resources LP is a forest company that is collectively owned by the Lax Kw'alaams band, a traditional fishing community in northern British Columbia. This research investigates the collectively-owned company as a possible creative means toward development, but in the process uncovers the significance of community 'embeddedness' in shaping development outcomes. Data was collected primarily through semi-structured and informal interviews with respondents from the community and company, among others. Interviews revealed the problem of a disconnection between the community and company. Through a New Institutional Analysis, which pays particular attention to context, the possible reasons for the disconnect are explored, and community 'embeddedness' is presented as a way of understanding it. Fishing is identified as a culturally salient practice and serves as a point of comparison to explain the lack of participation in the company's forestry activities. Suggestions for ways the company can work within this 'embeddedness' to ameliorate the disconnect are provided, and an elevated appreciation of the "sub-institutional elements" within New Institutional theory is suggested. Finally, the community-owned company is evaluated in terms of its ability to meet the development goals and visions of the Lax Kw'alaams band and First Nations in Canada.

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DISCLAIMER

I have taken great effort to ensure the accuracy of the findings presented in this thesis. However, I wish to acknowledge the potential that some of the information presented here is incomplete, as I am privy to only limited amounts of information as an outsider to both the Lax Kw'alaams Band and Coast Tsimshian Resources. Inconsistencies, errors, or misrepresentations, if they exist, were not intentional, and I apologize profusely if they do occur.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

While their presence extends back thousands of years, the light of the legacy of Aboriginal people has flickered. Aboriginal peoples presently occupy the margins of Canadian society (Frideres 2000; Silversides 2007). Many Aboriginal communities are deeply disadvantaged by low incomes, high levels of unemployment, a lack of formal education qualifications, poor health, and substandard housing conditions, most of which can be substantively linked to their relatively low socioeconomic status relative to the rest of Canadian society (Young 1995; White *et al.* 2007). While Canada places sixth on the global Human Development Index ranking system, the same formula applied only to Aboriginal communities would place the country 76th (Silversides 2007).

This remains true, yet countless academics, journalists, writers, activists and citizens have documented and promoted stories of incredible resilience and vision within and among Aboriginal groups (Wuttunee 2004; Helin 2006; Slowey 2008). The multilayered and complex challenge of how to improve the lives and circumstances of Canada's natives has been one with which policymakers, advocates and the various Peoples themselves have struggled for decades. What has changed in recent years, however, is that Aboriginal groups are more often calling upon their rights as First Peoples, citizens in Canada, and human beings in the world. This is evident in the sheer number of treaty claims and litigations which have been launched to assert native rights, as well as in the emerging business culture of many communities across Canada.

A history of disenfranchisement has resulted in legal regimes that have been both restrictive and conciliatory. While these programs have arguably created varying levels of

dependence on the state, recent legal and social movements focus rather on gaining independence from it (Widdowson and Howard 2008). This unique situation only adds to the challenge of how to negotiate the improvement of socioeconomic indicators in balance of the interests of the people and those of government (Woolford 2005).

This research acknowledges that many Aboriginal peoples and communities have experienced a history distinct from that of other Canadians. This history is spattered with struggle, tragedy, and periods of darkness. The angle with which I have approached this research recognizes this past, but focuses on the present. The aim is to move forward from the past in a manner that acknowledges history, but is not bounded by it. The answer to what lies ahead rightfully belongs only to Aboriginal peoples themselves, and that is what led me to this story.

A new Tsimshian story

For millennia...the Tsimshian have displayed an elegance and elaboration of culture in the midst of changes. Their inherent beauty and subsequent success, based on their abilities, remains apparent. What has complicated the analysis of Tsimshian genius, however, has been this facility to adapt to new conditions by modifying old ones in creative ways. (Miller 1997: 7)

This study focuses on a case of one Aboriginal community, the Lax Kw'alaams Band of the Tsimshian First Nation in northern British Columbia, Canada. Traditionally a fishing village, Lax Kw'alaams has experienced gradual economic declines from fishing, despite attempts to support and subsidize fishing and fish canning in the community (Garry Reece,

John Helin). In 2000, the band council sought to shift its focus through the creation of a forestry enterprise, Coast Tsimshian Resources LP. Since its inception, the company has seen significant successes in regional and even international markets. The community's unique ownership model of the company incorporates band members as limited partners. This business model is not common among Canadian businesses, nor is it well-understood. Theoretically, it puts individual community members at an advantage in determining their collective future. How does it work, in practice? Could it be a new avenue for community economic development in collectively-oriented Aboriginal communities?

What constitutes 'development'?

My interest in researching this topic came from a longstanding frustration over the deluge of depressing material chronicling the past and present plights of Aboriginal peoples. While such negative aspects of our history ought never to be ignored or forgotten, I felt exasperated with the lack of works highlighting more 'positive' action happening within Aboriginal communities. I set out in the hopes of telling a different story that would focus on the creative and perhaps progressive experiences of Aboriginal groups seeking to better their people through community economic 'development'.

The first challenge was to acceptably define 'development'. Many Aboriginal peoples in Canada have very clear ideas about what constitutes successful 'development', and have subsequently created collective visions for their communities (Anderson 1995; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2008; Nunatsiavut 2009). Indeed, "Aboriginal people have adopted and are implementing a predominantly collective approach that is closely tied to each groups [sic] traditional lands, its identity... and its peoples' desire to be self-sufficient and self-

governing” (Anderson 1995: 225). For example, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami recently declared:

“Inuit are an indigenous people of the world with the rights and responsibilities of all indigenous peoples, including the right to self-determination, the right freely to pursue our economic, social, cultural and linguistic development, and the right freely to dispose of [Canada’s] natural wealth and resources.” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami 2009).

Similarly, the Assembly of First Nations developed a vision of community development that is collective and centred upon self-sufficiency, control of traditional lands, improvement of socioeconomic conditions for Aboriginal people, and strengthening traditional culture, values, and languages (Anderson and Bone 1995; Anderson *et al.* 2002; Hindle *et al.* 2005). These two perspectives along with others (Nunatsiavut 2009) are premised upon similar principles. In each case, it is believed that establishing a strong economic base built upon such standards will also be the foundation for the continued cultural and social survival of Aboriginal peoples (Anderson and Bone 1995).

A critical challenge for many Aboriginal groups is to maintain a stronghold on values, language, and other cultural elements while simultaneously pursuing development that is compatible with the contemporary market-based economy. Few cases exist to refute the widely-held belief that in order to develop, a population must abandon many of its cultural traditions. This perspective, termed the *modernization paradigm*, perceives underdeveloped populations as responsible for their lack of development as a result of an inability or unwillingness to change or modernize. This view often defaults to culture as the scapegoat (Blomström and Hettne 1987; Anderson and Bone 1995; Voyageur and Calliou 2007). The question raised by this view is, therefore: Can a community effectively maintain

its values and customs whilst simultaneously running a successful company compatible with mainstream economic practices?

I initially became interested in Lax Kw'alaams as a case study after I was informed that their community-owned forestry company, Coast Tsimshian Resources LP (to which I will refer henceforth as CTR), had garnered profits in the millions in the few years since its establishment in 2000. This was striking, particularly because CTR had outlived many of the existing forestry companies in the interior region of Northwestern British Columbia, in which it operates. Not only had the community been able to glean significant profits despite the boom-and-bust economy of the interior forestry industry, but it had done so through its collective business model. As mentioned, CTR is wholly owned by the Lax Kw'alaams band, which has established an arm's length board of directors to make the company's executive decisions. This arm's length design was a strategic attempt to separate business from politics.

As they have articulated in their respective visions for development, Aboriginal groups often desire control over traditional lands. It is no wonder given that Aboriginal peoples in Canada relied on the land to survive for thousands of years, often in difficult conditions. As a result, they have tremendous social, cultural, and economic ties to the land and its many resources. The Tsimshian Nation is no exception, having strong connections with expansive stretches of the Northwest Coast and the British Columbia interior. The fact that CTR is resource-based and owned by the band presented the possibility, therefore, that a market-based engagement with forests and land in this context might produce the potential for a culturally-informed business practice. Moreover, as Scott (2001) notes, it is

worthwhile to study organizations precisely because they operate as social and cultural systems in themselves (xx).

As a band-owned company intrinsically tied to a culturally-relevant resource (forests), there was also the possibility that CTR as a case example might shake the assumptions embedded in popular (albeit criticized) development perspectives (particularly those of modernization theory). Moreover, CTR has embraced economic development beyond simply engaging with regional markets - true to the spirit of globalization, it has established an international niche market, complete with a regional sales office in Shanghai, China.

How is Lax Kw'alaams negotiating this unique arrangement? What does it mean for community members? Is CTR meeting its community objectives? How is the company shaping people's lives, and how are the people contributing to the company? How do traditional value systems function in the relationship between CTR and Lax Kw'alaams? Can the community corporation be characterized as an effective development strategy? These initial questions led me to New Institutionalism as a guide in conducting this research and analyzing the data that emerged from it.

Theoretical Approach: New Institutionalism in Sociology

The "New Institutionalist" theoretical framework employed in this research is derived from sociology, business management, and economic geography. A challenge to using this theory is finding an acceptable definition of "institutions", as meanings vary not only across disciplines, but also amongst scholars within fields.

In an attempt to synthesize the work of other classical sociological theorists, Parsons (1934) defined the institution as “a system of norms that ‘regulate[s] the relations of individuals to each other,’ that define[s] ‘what the relations of individuals ought to be’” (Parsons 1934 quoted in Scott 2001:15). This framework takes for granted the recognition (suggested by Parsons’ definition) that institutions exist in society, and that they matter in the sense that they shape social actions. Rather than “treating institutions mainly as exogenous variables affecting economic behaviour”, New Institutionalism (NI) views institutions as highly influential and dynamic elements of society, in terms of not only how they impact behaviour, but also how they arise, are maintained and are transformed (Scott 2001: 29). NI seeks to examine, rather than simply acknowledge institutions, arguing that they are constantly moving “to and fro” (Hamilton and Feenstra 1998: 156). Nee (1998) describes institutions as “webs of interrelated rules and norms that govern social relationships, comprise the formal and informal social constraints that shape the choice-set of actors” (Nee 1998: 8). Institutions are thus understood as not only “regulating” relations, but as also creating constraints and influencing behaviour. Moreover, NI acknowledges the fact that institutions both structure and are structured by socially reproductive behaviour.

The focal point of interest in this research is Lax Kw’alaams’ collective ownership of CTR. NI is therefore particularly valuable in its recognition that “real world economies are embedded, have histories (or evolve) and are different” (Hayter 2004:95, original emphasis). NI’s acknowledgement of the “embeddedness” refers to the fact that “Actors do not behave or decide as atoms outside a social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to a script written for them by the particular intersection of social categories that they happen to occupy. Their attempts at purposive action are instead embedded in concrete, ongoing systems of social

relations” (Granovetter 1985:487). An analytical approach based in NI can thus acknowledge and incorporate the community’s rich history and the contemporary socioeconomic context (explored in Chapter 2), and examine how this affects the relationship between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR. Furthermore, this context-sensitive approach can potentially reveal insights into the broader social and cultural context of the region. Giddens’ Theory of Structuration also provides a useful point from which to examine this case, asking how actions become *institutionalized* as “durable social structures” (Giddens 1984; Scott 2001, p. 49).

While I have elected to use New Institutionalism as the primary theoretical framework for this analysis, I emphasize the influential role of the “sub-institutional” on the behaviour of individual actors, precisely because many socially reproductive processes occur at this level (Scott 2008). The “sub-institutional” elements of institutions are the “cultured-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements, that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (Scott 2001: 48). Scott (2001) explains institutions as being transmitted (ie. performed or structured in the social world) by what he terms “carriers”: symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artifacts (48). Scott himself notes in recent work that most New Institutional Analyses (NIA) have paid greater heed to traditional and distinctly recognizable institutions (i.e., organizations/organizational structures), while affording less credit to the sub-institutional elements comprising them (Scott 2008: 438).

Although Scott’s argument is strong, in my view his language is deficient. “Carrier” connotes one-directional movement from one point to another, but we know that symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artifacts are multi-dimensional and multi-

directional, both being constituted by society and simultaneously structuring it (Giddens 1984). There is no term which can adequately capture this dynamism, but I have chosen to use the term “element(s)” in place of “carrier” with the intention of also encompassing the cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative aspects of institutions to which Scott refers. In my view, “element” allows these complex factors a more substantive role in the language of social reproduction, recognizing them as both part of (elements) and critical to (elemental) the structuring and restructuring of social institutions. The analysis presented thus suggests an elevated appreciation of these sub-institutional elements of institutions within NI theory.

This research thus asks: How do institutions operate in the context of Lax Kw’alaams and its company, CTR? What are their corresponding sub-institutional elements? How do sub-institutional elements of institutions shape behaviour? How do institutions and sub-institutional elements shape the relationship between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR? How are institutions similar and different between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR?

Research Methods

This thesis draws its findings from data collected during five weeks of fieldwork in British Columbia, conducted in the fall of 2009. In order to pursue this fieldwork, I was required to apply for ethical approval from the University of Ottawa. In contacting the Lax Kw’alaams band about my research, the band council responded with an invitation to visit. I was granted ethical approval by the research office to the University of Ottawa in October 2009.

My interviews began in Vancouver, BC, where I spoke with CTR’s CEO, Wayne Drury, who works from a Vancouver-based office, and the management of Brinkman Forest, who have an office in New Westminster. Following, I traveled north to the community of

Lax Kw'alaams and the neighbouring town of Terrace (where CTR's office is located). In total, I spent five weeks on the Northwest coast conducting semi-structured, and sometimes informal interviews with band members. Twenty-three (n=23) interviews were conducted.

In constructing my sample group, I sought to include a range of participants from all angles of the community and company. Directed and snowball sampling were determined to be the best method for identifying potential respondents, particularly because Lax Kw'alaams is a relatively tight-knit community, but also because informants were able to direct me to others knowledgeable about the community or company. Snowball sampling in particular provided me with an "in" I might not have been granted with other sampling methods.

Interviews were conducted with the company CEO, members of the band council, members of the board of directors, company employees, community members, and external stakeholders with connections to the community and/or company. Interview questions were customized according to each individual's role in the community and/or company, but generally included questions relating to the person's occupation, band membership, relation to the community and/or company, perspectives on the community and/or company, decision-making around job-search and/or employment behaviour, among others. In addition, participant observation was conducted at points throughout the duration of the research at band council meetings as well as regional community government meetings. The majority of interviews were transcribed and recorded using a digital device for accuracy.

Participants were required to sign forms consenting to the interview and audio recording. They were given the option of having their names included in subsequent publications. Most of the respondents (n=19) chose to have their names appear, and I have

honoured their requests. Where respondents preferred to remain anonymous (n=4), they have been identified with a numeric reference. Appendix A ('Interviewee List') provides a list of interview respondents along with their corresponding positions/roles.

Following the collection of data in the field, the interviews were reviewed and quotations were transcribed. The interview responses were categorized and indexed by respondent type and by theme. Data was initially divided by broad categories (Community, Company, Band Council, Structure, Employment) and more (Fishing, Family) were created according to interview trends. In writing the thesis, the audio interviews and their transcribed counterparts were cross-referenced with written text to ensure accuracy.

Data was analyzed within the framework of New Institutionalism as it is understood within sociology and geography, as outlined in the next chapter. Institutions were identified through comparison with precedents (such as family, region, and so forth). In other cases, phenomena not previously understood as institutions were interpreted as such, according to their fit within accepted definitions as well as their role in shaping behavior and decision-making (seasonality, capital). Understanding these phenomena as institutions allows for new ways of looking at the "everyday" aspects of community life as critical structuring elements, and also creates the potential for theoretical gains.

Lax Kw'alaams' band-owned company is an anomaly among Aboriginal business initiatives, presenting the possibility for development that is collectively-driven, distinctly 'Aboriginal' (based on cultural values and traditions), and based in the contemporary, market-led economy. New Institutionalism was selected as an ideal theoretical approach to understanding this case because it acknowledges context as playing a critical role in how institutions arise, are maintained and transformed, and how they shape behaviour and

decision-making in the real world. Together, this research presents a case of creative community economic development that is reflective of the contemporary challenges and triumphs - the realities - faced by Aboriginal people seeking to improve their lives.

CHAPTER 2: Context

Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian state

The current conditions faced by Aboriginal groups are arguably correlated to the complicated history of the last few hundred years. It has often been asserted that the colonial interference of Europeans into the lives of Aboriginal Peoples “deprived [them] of their cultural pride and community integrity, resulting in the dependency and social pathologies in existence today” (Widdowson and Howard 2008: 24). Early European settlers established a “relationship of equals” with the native peoples, often seeking their advice and partnering with them in trade and other economic activities. Eventually, this relationship was transformed in such a way that Aboriginal peoples became dominated, and eventually subjugated by European colonizers who deemed the natives inferior and primitive (RCAP 1996; Widdowson and Howard 2008). These mistreatments of the past have left a lasting legacy of injustice, shame and resentment among Aboriginal peoples (RCAP 1996; Frideres 2000; Cairns 2001).

In 1876 the Canadian parliament passed the *Indian Act*, which, at the time, was understood as a legitimate way to deal with the Aboriginal “problem”. The *Act* institutionalized what we now call racism, prejudice and inequality, and spearheaded a long period of systemic assimilation, in which the state encouraged and even forced many Aboriginal peoples to shed their cultural identities and to adopt “Euro-Western” values and practices in order to become full members of Canadian society (Widdowson and Howard 2008). Predictably, the problematic nature of this approach gave way to resistance both within Aboriginal communities and outside of them: Aboriginal peoples sought to regain

their cultural identity whilst simultaneously fighting against structural and societal exclusion (RCAP 1996; Frideres 2000; Ignatieff 2000; Cairns 2001; Ratner *et al.* 2003).

This heightened concern with the survival of Aboriginal culture contributed to a new understanding of the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal society. Known as the “parallelism paradigm”, this understanding views native peoples as coexisting alongside non-Aboriginal society, interacting but never converging with it (Ignatieff 2000; Cairns 2001). A weakness in this approach is its focus on a perceived contrast between the two groups, which has the effect of widening distances between them. Many have now begun to point towards the idea that being Aboriginal should not antithetical to being Canadian. The alternative perspective of “Aboriginal Modernization” is more inclusive of this fact, perceiving Aboriginal groups as adapting and evolving to changes in the world rather existing as “traditional” peoples in a modern world (Cairns 2001).

Released in 1996, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) is a 3500-page document providing a multi-stakeholder constitutional vision of, and for Aboriginals. While the report falls short in its exclusion of some groups, including urban native peoples and those without group membership status, some have argued RCAP to be a positive contribution to contemporary political discourse in its emphasis on Aboriginal self-rule. The document helped to set the stage for the many self-government policy frameworks which have emerged in recent years. Additionally, the report outlines a new “nation-to-nation” relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state, particularly significant in its formal acknowledgement of individual First Nations as governments unto themselves (RCAP 1996; Ratner *et al.* 2003). Conversely, some have pointed out that the “nation-to-nation” conception only creates additional hurdles towards the greater goal of

establishing collective citizenry of all Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Ignatieff 2000; Cairns 2001). Whatever its merits, government inaction on almost all the recommendations of this report evidences the relative low significance and priority it has given to its findings (RCAP 1996; Frideres 2000; Cairns 2001).

There are a number of issues relating to Aboriginal rights that have become particularly important in discussions about community economic and social development. Treaties, the long-standing historical instruments brought into use in early interactions between the first European settlers and Aboriginal peoples in the negotiation of land use and occupation, are often promoted as necessary in establishing local development (RCAP 1996; Woolford 2005). Today, unfulfilled treaties are being redressed and new treaties are being negotiated on a range of issues from land rights to self-government. Treaties today are understood as “sacred compacts” and are viewed as the principal means for regulating the relationship between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, as well as the state. What is unique about modern treaties is that they are being settled within the modern context of neoliberalism, the market-driven form of capitalism that emphasizes the private sector. Subsequently, Aboriginal people are encouraged to think and develop businesses that fit within this particular framework (Woolford 2005).

While treaties are often touted as provisos for the acquisition of Aboriginal rights, they are also subject to criticism. Cairns (2001) argues that from a social citizenship perspective, treaties have the potential to produce perceptions of “otherness” among non-Aboriginals based on their inherent recognition of particular identities, thus “encouraging their definition as competing, rather than complementary” (94). Politically, treaties are also often positioned as ‘silver bullets’ through which the state and/or industry perceives itself

emancipated from potential future obligations (Woolford 2005). In terms of economic gains, some have argued that while treaties may provide certain benefits, a significant share of monies is often siphoned by lawyers and consultants earning millions of dollars as part of the “Aboriginal Industry” (Widdowson and Howard 2008). In the end, most Aboriginal peoples “simply wait to benefit from these settlements just as people dream about winning the lottery. But as with lotteries, only a few will share in these elusive winnings. The rest will spend their lives hoping, becoming increasingly resentful as the glorified welfare never comes” (Widdowson and Howard 2008).

Land claims, which are also used as instruments for negotiations, take the form of comprehensive and specific claims. Comprehensive claims are based on claims for the traditional use and occupancy of certain land areas, and typically include issues revolving around land title and hunting, fishing, and trapping rights, among others (RCAP 1996; Frideres 2000). Specific claims are set forth in response to unfulfilled obligations under treaties, the Indian Act or other agreements (RCAP 1996; Frideres 2000). To put this in context, Lax Kw’alaams was not part of any treaty processes and rather holds rights based on original and modified land claims.

In 1997 the Supreme Court of Canada overturned a previous decision and ruled that Aboriginal peoples have a constitutional right to use and occupy traditional land as they please; however, while this ruling granted exclusive rights to Aboriginal peoples, it also established that such rights are inalienable and cannot be sold to anyone but the Crown. Additionally, restrictions on “oppositional”, non-traditional use were imposed (Frideres 2000).

These restrictive realities are slowly beginning to change, however. A new, trilateral structure involving the federal and provincial governments as well as First Nations was put in place in the early 1990s to manage treaty negotiations in the aim of “circumvent[ing] the existing legal and financial roadblocks to resolving aboriginal claims” (Frideres 2000: 218). These amendments have had critical implications on the ability of Aboriginal groups to assert sovereignty over land and rights. In addition, the Nisga’a First Nation in British Columbia will be the first self-governing group that will allow individuals to buy and sell private property on reserve land, as a new Nisga’a law comes into effect in October 2010 (Foot 2010).

With the recognition that the law has set limitations on Aboriginal sovereignty, the idea of self-government has emerged in recent years as a policy-relevant principle. Historically, the Canadian government did not generally acknowledge Aboriginal sovereignty based on the argument that only the Crown is sovereign. Beginning in 1985, following a legal suit which challenged this position, the federal government opened up to supporting the idea of establishing Aboriginal self-government. However, this was arguably more of a discursive movement rather than a practical initiative, as the application of “self-government” is both murky and complicated. This discursive shift towards the support of Aboriginal self-rule, which has been defined as the key component to both the “new” relationship between the Canadian state and Aboriginal peoples, has also stemmed from the belief that such arrangements support and even facilitate the economic development of Aboriginal communities (McNeil 2001; Anderson *et al.* 2003; Frideres 2003; Hindle *et al.* 2005).

Despite strong arguments supporting self-government, many perceive the concept as merely a new form of rhetoric meant to ameliorate angst, rather than transform the status quo, or as a tool used to simply delay, or even take the place of real action (Ignatieff 2000). A more critical perspective posits that self-governance (implying economic self sufficiency in the capitalist economy) imposes a new form of domination upon Aboriginal peoples not through political force, but rather through the disciplines of the global economic market (Slowey 2001; Woolford 2002; Ratner *et al.* 2003). Viewing self-government as a panacea for social and economic emancipation from the Canadian state has been criticized as problematic in truly moving beyond past injustices toward reconciliation and a future of inclusivity and plurality in citizenship (Cairns 2001; Widdowson and Howard 2008).

The critical implications sought to be gained through self-government, as evidenced in the aforementioned new Nisga'a law, have the potential to create major change in Aboriginal communities. Its strengths and weaknesses as a practical mode of governance will be revealed as it continues to be pursued by native groups. A more immediate concern for many, however, is the substandard living conditions in which many Aboriginal peoples and groups find themselves.

The (difficult) question of economic development

The marginal circumstance of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (a "First-World" nation), similar to the experiences of indigenous peoples in many other countries, has been called the "Fourth World". The term situates such experiences within broader notions of "development" hierarchy and draws parallels with the conceptions of underdeveloped regions as "Third World". Thus, Aboriginal underdevelopment, in its similarity to

international developing country experiences, is often explained with traditional development theories, which typically take the form of either assimilationist or anti-assimilationist perspectives. The assimilationist *modernization theory* proposes that underdeveloped populations are responsible for their lack of industrialization as a result of an inability, or unwillingness to change or modernize. Anti-assimilation perspectives, including *dependency theory*, critically explain underdevelopment as a result of systemic structures preventing or inhibiting the full participation of marginalized communities in the mainstream economy (Blomström and Hettne 1987; Anderson and Bone 1995; Voyageur and Calliou 2007).

Recent strategies to develop Aboriginal communities have directly resulted from these two important perspectives; particularly the latter. These have ranged from the provision of government services and transfer payments to the founding of private enterprises on reserve land, and more recently toward joint business ventures between Aboriginal peoples and private enterprises (Young 1995; Slowey 2008; Hindle *et al.* 2005; Voyageur and Calliou 2007). The past two decades indicate a shift away from passive approaches to development toward more active approaches focusing on community self-determination (Anderson 1995; Slowey 2008). Results of these approaches to date have met mixed results in terms of market “success” (Slowey 2001; Matthews and Young 2005; Slowey 2008). The ‘new’ leg of capitalist development strategies has been hailed as progressive in its participatory approach to community development; however, some of these models have been criticized as ignoring community sociopolitical contexts in their focus on the pursuit of profit (Young 1995; Voyageur and Calliou 2007).

Strategies for community-driven economic development are being discussed at length amongst Aboriginal groups. The Assembly of First Nations has outlined their ideal process, which involves creating profitable businesses with long-term prospects in the global economy, in collaboration with outsiders by means of joint business ventures and alliances, capacity-building strategies (such as education and institution-building) and the affirmation of treaty and Aboriginal rights to land and resources (Anderson and Bone 1995; Anderson *et al.* 2004).

Other groups and individuals within them have navigated towards entrepreneurship, loosely defined as ‘enterprise creation in response to identified opportunities’.

Entrepreneurship has been described by some as “the heart of the Aboriginal economic development strategy”, particularly in its ability to meet the desired objectives and visions for development as aforementioned (Anderson *et al.* 2002; Hindle *et al.* 2005:3).

Interestingly, however, it is assumed that Aboriginal entrepreneurialism under market capitalism will take the form of traditional norms and rules of non-Aboriginal entrepreneurship (Woolford 2005). According to Hindle *et al.* (2005), the key to indigenous development is in identifying those forces within each unique culture or community that are conducive to development and/or capitalism, and designing business plans accordingly.

While some (Anderson *et al.* 2002; Hindle *et al.* 2005; Matthews and Young 2005) highlight successful real-world examples of Aboriginal entrepreneurship which meets Aboriginal visions of process and development, others (Dana *et al.* 2005) have found these attempts mixed in terms of meeting community objectives. In some cases communities were not able to develop within their preferred vision(s) and processes; in others there were poor rates of participation and/or economic return (Dana *et al.* 2005).

The business formation most relevant to this research is the community corporation, which combines elements of a cooperative and a corporation, in that the business is owned and operated by citizens of a particular community or region (Imbroscio *et al.* 2003). This approach, which allows communities greater leverage in terms of capital acquisition, also allows local band governments the potential to pay dividends to community members. In addition, it increases the likelihood for “cultural match” between a community’s governing institutions and its indigenous culture, which researchers from Harvard University (Cornell and Kalt 2006) found to be a good predictor of business survival and success. The degree of match or mismatch in communities was found to be critical: “where cultural match is high, economic development tends to be more successful”, and vice versa for cultural mismatch (*ibid*, p. 16). The community corporation in theory, then, should have such institutional congruence to its advantage.

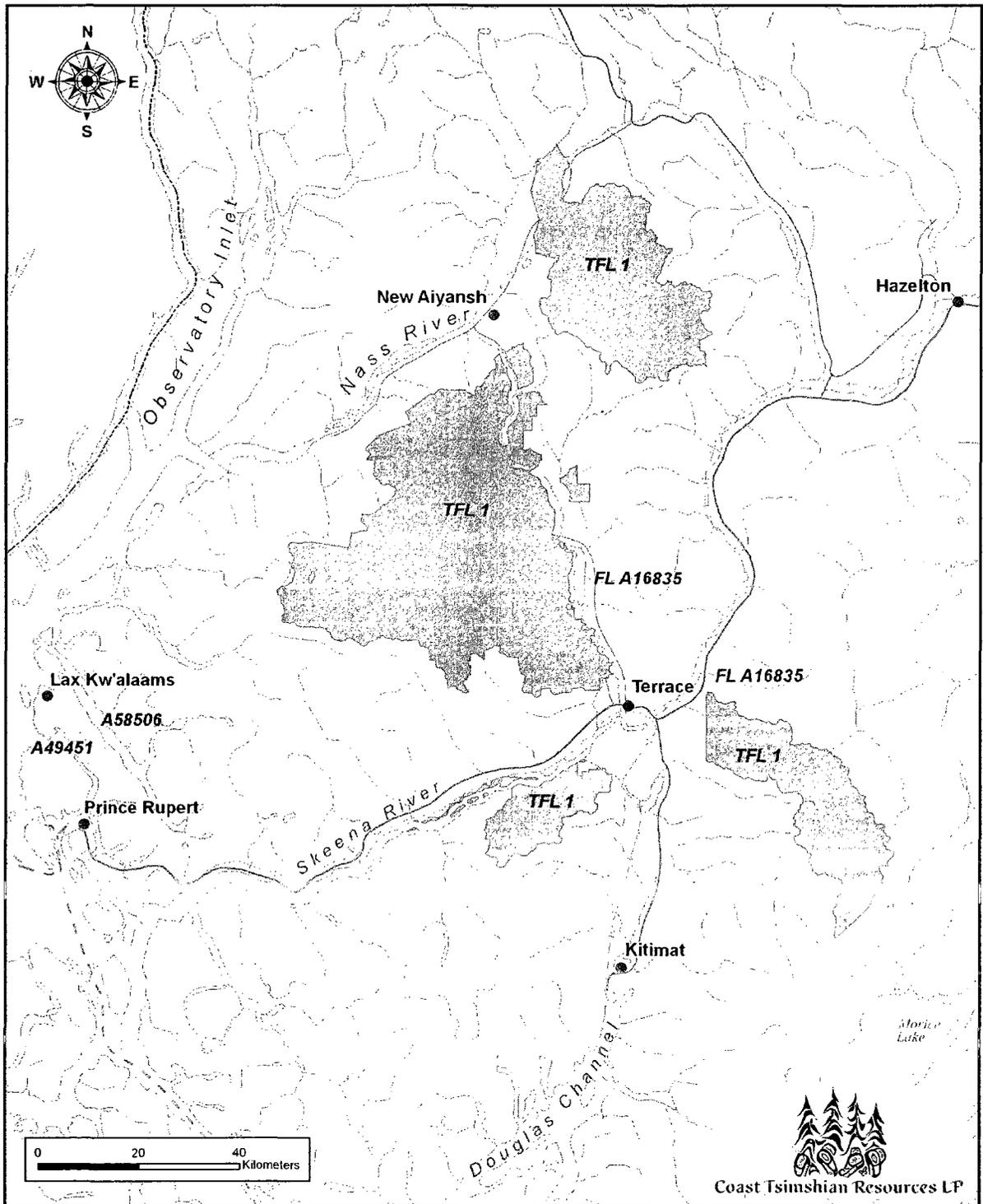
For these reasons, this approach seems to be growing in popularity among Aboriginal groups in Canada, particularly those which have sought out self-government. It is the business approach the Lax Kw’alaams band has used for Coast Tsimshian Resources. A number of additional communities have pursued this formation through the establishment of various companies: the Lac La Ronge Indian band of Saskatchewan (Kitsaki Management), the Inuit of Inuvialuit (Inuvialuit Regional Corporation), the Nunatsiavut Inuit of Labrador (multiple businesses), the Inuit of Nunavut (Nunansi Corporation), the Osoyoos Indian band of British Columbia (Osoyoos Business Development Corporation), among others. Each of these groups operationalizes the community corporation in different ways. Some corporations are wholly owned by an entire ethnic group, such as the Nunansi Corporation of Nunavut, which is fully owned by all individuals of Inuit descent. Other corporations,

such as Kitsaki Management, are owned and managed completely by the band membership and council (the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, in this instance) (Nunansi 2009; Kitsaki 2009). CTR is unique because while its ownership is shared amongst all Lax Kw'alaams band members, it is managed by means of a band-appointed, arms-length board of directors, and an external, non-band members CEO, as explained in the following section.

Brief History of Coast Tsimshian Resources

In 2000, after a low period in BC's forest industry, Skeena Cellulose, a major forest company in BC's northern interior, went bankrupt. The company had been operating in some of Lax Kw'alaams' traditional territory, which is filled primarily with old growth, low quality trees. As the province took hold of the assets for auction, the Lax Kw'alaams band administration recognized a potential opportunity and partnered with the Git'xan, another First Nation, to take the issue to court. The case was based on the fact that Skeena Cellulose had neglected to include the band in their decision-making or operations, a legal gaffe known as non-consultation or accommodation. The court ruled in favour of the bands, and awarded them Forest and Range agreements, which allocated them each a certain number of logs per year for cutting (Wayne Drury, Garry Reece). Figure 1 (below) shows the location of CTR's forestry woodlands.

Figure 1: Woodlands Location of Coast Tsimshian Resources



Map Document: (C:\GIS Maps\Misc Project\CTR_Overview.mxd)
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(Source: Coast Tsimshian Resources LP 2010)

Following the acquisition of Skeena Cellulose's assets, Lax Kw'alaams went on its own to place bids on two Tree Farm Licences (TFLs) in the region. Through a combination of the bands' capital savings, local fundraising efforts and bank loans, the band council was able to raise over nine million dollars for the licences. Thus, it was a combination of "good timing", "readiness" and "resolve" that ultimately positioned the band council in an ideal place to establish a forestry company (Dirk Brinkman, CEO of Brinkman Forest and Brinkman & Associates).

Throughout the court and purchasing process, the Lax Kw'alaams band administration had been in close contact with Brinkman & Associates, a silviculture (tree planting and reforestation) company that had worked in nearby areas since the 1970s. According to CTR CEO Wayne Drury, there was a recognition that Brinkman & Associates had the necessary forestry knowledge that could ultimately help the band to become successful in the BC forest industry. Thus, Brinkman & Associates was invited to participate in a new role, as a forest contract manager. This role, focused on harvesting rather than tree planting, signaled a new direction for business for Brinkman & Associates, and thus, the company established a new arm known as 'Brinkman Forest', to manage the operations of Lax Kw'alaams' company, which had been entitled Coast Tsimshian Resources. Although Brinkman Forest had been closely involved in the development of the company, its role was, and continues to be operational, and its relationship with CTR is one of contractor-employer. Brinkman Forest is neither an owner nor a shareholder in the company; rather, it has been hired by CTR to manage forest operations on the ground.

In designing the structure of the company, it was recognized that funds for the business were being drawn from community accounts, and it was noted that future income

would be re-administered to community members in the form of dividends paid to individual band members. Coast Tsimshian Resources was thus established as a limited partnership, with each band member named as a “limited partner” (or shareholder) in the company. Appendix B (‘Organizational Structure of Coast Tsimshian Resources (CTR)’) provides a diagram of this arrangement.

Soon after the establishment of Coast Tsimshian Resources, many of the region’s local pulp mills went bankrupt, which meant a drastically reduced market for the wood CTR had only begun to harvest. Since then, CTR has had to tread carefully to ensure that its harvest supply matches the demand for its product. This is especially so because the wood available in Lax Kw’alaams Forest and Range Agreement and TFL is primarily low-quality wood, typically only saleable to pulp mills (many of which have also gone out of business, as mentioned). Thus, rather than mass-harvesting, the company has opted to “cut-to-order”, first seeking out markets and buyers, and then cutting according to demand. This reduces the costs associated with losses resulting from overproduction, but also impacts the amount of work available by limiting it according to demand (Cathy Craig).

One of the more recent attempts by CTR to establish markets is its establishment of a marketing office in Shanghai, China. A local person has been hired in Shanghai to recruit buyers for Coast Tsimshian Resources’ wood supply. This approach has proven relatively successful in the establishment of an international market for the company, and has attracted much media attention as a result.

CTR: Community and Market “Success”

CTR’s management and the Lax Kw’alaams’ band council explained that three key goals for the company were/are to (a) hire band members, to serve as a source of employment, (b) pay dividends back to individual partners (band members), (c) establish a land and resource base. However, according to company CEO Wayne Drury, the majority of earnings to date have gone towards paying down the debt incurred in the establishment of CTR, and towards re-investment in the company for long-term survival and growth. Thus, community members have not yet received regular dividend pay.

The chart below, derived from financial statements provided by CTR, details the company’s revenue from the 2006 fiscal year through to 2010, along with its actual profit, and the amount of the long-term loan remaining. Although gross revenue is clearly increasing, varying costs and expenditures (some of which are market-dependent) have resulted in fluctuations in net income. However, the company has clearly prioritized the payment of its long-term loan, as evidenced by decreasing figures at each year.

Year	Total Gross Revenue (\$)	Net Income (revenue - costs and expenses) (\$)	Long-term loan amount remaining (\$)
2006	2, 993, 692	-371, 527	3, 500, 000
2007	12, 918, 443	397, 492	2, 670, 569
2008	27, 333, 985	2, 512, 300	1, 513, 148
2009	19, 955, 106	-1, 083, 013	885, 399
2010	23, 987, 351	955, 040	206, 009

Use of the term “successful” in the thesis is qualified here by noting that the company’s critical accomplishments have been in (a) outliving other, pre-existing forestry companies in

the region; (b) incorporating band membership in its ownership structure (towards the goal of collective well-being); and (c) establishing a land and resource base along with a foundation towards self-sufficiency. The first indicates relative market success, while the second and third relate to the visions laid out by the Assembly of First Nations. The “success” of CTR as a means toward community development is discussed in the concluding chapter.

Lax Kw’alaams Socioeconomic Overview

POPULATION

According to Statistics Canada’s most recent census data from 2006, the population of Lax Kw’alaams is 679, with only a 12 person increase from 2001 to 2006 (Statistics Canada 2006). While these numbers have been tabulated according to the specific requirements of Statistics Canada, they do not present an accurate picture of Lax Kw’alaams’ population profile. According to the Lax Kw’alaams band council, the population of the community is actually about 1,300 persons. The reason for the disparity between the two figures is likely due to factors of migration (for seasonal work, also between and amongst neighbouring First Nation communities), transient residency (returning only for short periods), as well as discrepancies between recorded band membership and actual residency status. Because Lax Kw’alaams is characterized as a “small community”, the rest of the community data is suppressed by Statistics Canada (see “X-area and data suppression”, Statistics Canada).

Some information is available through the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. The most recent data from June 2010, obtained directly from the band council, presents a more

accurate picture of the community, counting the registered population as 3, 289 people, but accounting for the significant portion of the band membership living off-reserve (2, 463). It was noted by interview respondents that band members living off-reserve often return to the community for temporary periods, to visit family and friends or perhaps between jobs. These migratory behaviours speak to the socioeconomic circumstances of the community. (Source: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2010)

WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

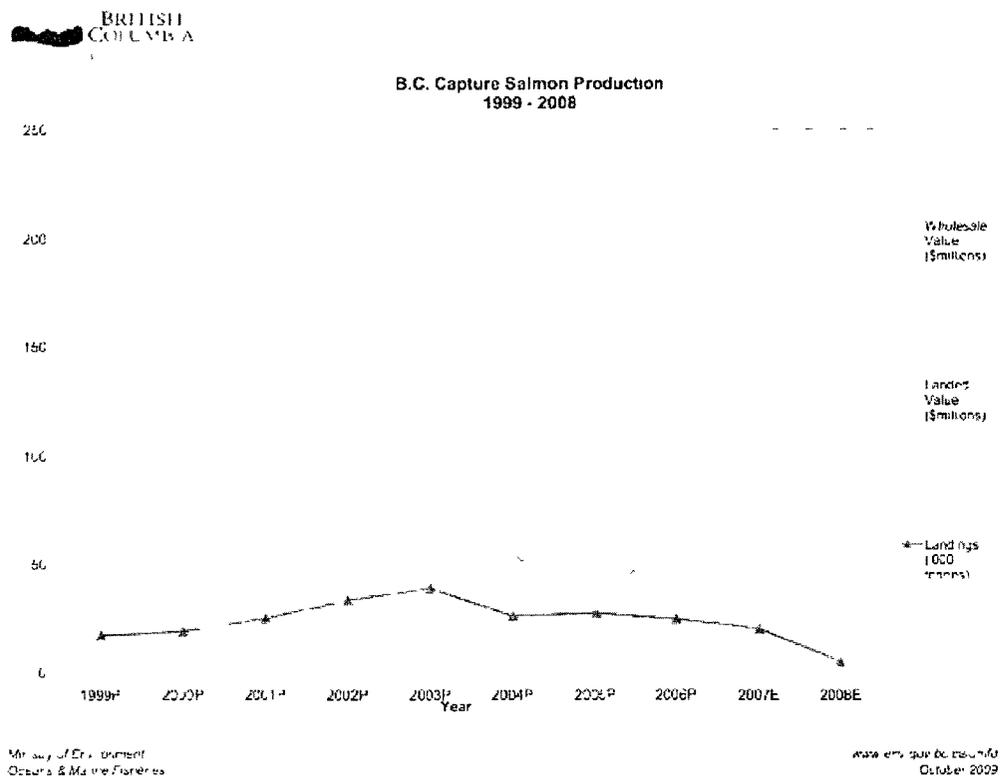
The most recent data on workforce participation in Lax Kw'alaams indicates that the majority of the community still faces significant challenges in obtaining gainful employment. In 1996 the employment rate was 32.6%, and in 2001 it had decreased to 26.5%. Unemployment in 1996 was 47.1%, while in 2001 it increased to 56.7% (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2010). According to the Lax Kw'alaams band council, in 2009 the unemployment rate was about 80%, much in part due to declines in fishing, and to closure of the community-run fish cannery operation (John Helin, Garry Reece). Incomes in the community have also decreased. In 1996 the average income was \$15, 202, while in 2001 it had decreased to \$12, 800. During that time, government transfer payments also increased from 30% of income in 1996 up to 36% of income in 2001. (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 2010)

FISHING ON THE NORTHWEST COAST

Declines in fishing have had significant impacts on employment and incomes in Lax Kw'alaams, and the degree to which it has affected the people is critical to understanding the findings of this research. Between 1990 and 2007, the total landed catch and values of

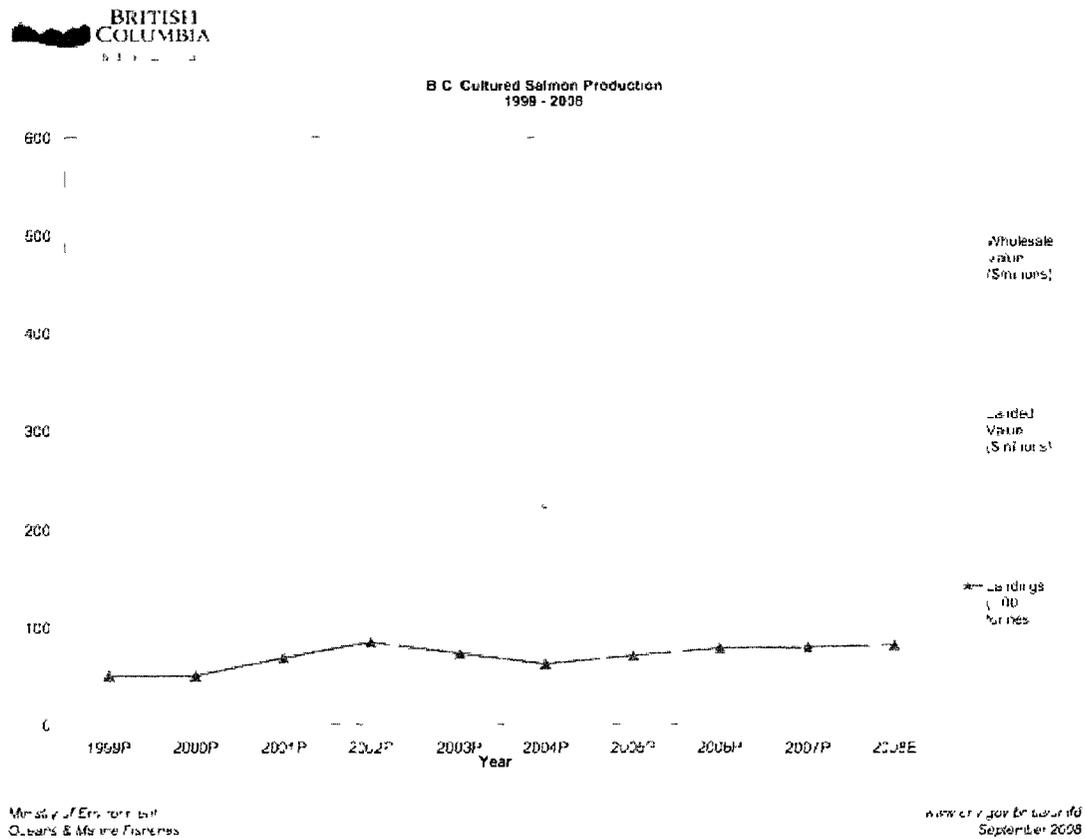
sea fisheries decreased from 1, 624, 792 tonnes to 986, 921 tonnes of live weight fish. The more recent figure in 2007 measures 60% of the reported weight in earlier years (1990). This illustrates a decrease of about 40% in the landed catch of sea fisheries in Canada. (Statistics Canada 2010)

In British Columbia, the economic picture in recent years reveals both boom-and-bust periods along with significant decline over the past few years. A key marker for Lax Kw'alaams is the capture salmon industry, which experienced reductions in landings (weight of catch) and particularly in the wholesale value of overall catch in the past two years, as indicated in the graph below from the Government of British Columbia.



(Source: Government of British Columbia 2009)

It appears that while captured fish landings and value are rapidly decreasing, cultured fish landings and value are increasing, as illustrated by the following graph:



(Source. Government of British Columbia 2008)

This likely indicates a market shift towards commercial fish farms as the preferred sourcing option for seafood in British Columbia. Because Lax Kw'alaams does not operate any fish farms, this would potentially limit its ability to participate in the seafood economy. The industry declines in both British Columbia and Canada as a whole have made life more challenging for fishing villages like Lax Kw'alaams and the people living there, who find their livelihoods, identities and entire way of life affected by this dramatic downturn in the fishing economy.

CHAPTER 3: Theoretical Background

Theorizing Institutions

“Theorizing is about providing explanations of social phenomena – accounts of why they exist and operate in the manner that they do and the form that they take in social life.”

(Layder 1998: 100)

Institutions have long been a point of interest in social studies. Early works on institutions within economics tended to be descriptive accounts of their nature and function, particularly in terms of influencing the performance of individual firms (Scott 2001:5). In sociology, early analyses of institutions understood them as sub-systems that enabled society to evolve and adapt over time (Scott 2001:9). More recent studies of institutions, particularly in sociology, have emphasized the ways in which institutions are both shaped, and shape the normative order of social reality at a number of levels, from the interpersonal to the superstructure of society (ibid).

Neoclassical economics traditionally asserts that individuals and firms make rational decisions based on access to complete information. Decision-makers are therefore understood to behave according to rational self-interest towards economic efficiency, while social relationships and institutions are relegated outside the process and understood to be less, if at all relevant (Nee 1998; Smelser and Swedberg 2005). While neoclassical economics considers the implications of transaction costs in economic decision-making, the sociological approach examines the roots of these costs, understanding them as resulting from social relationships and institutions (Nee 1998; Hayter 2004; Smelser and Swedberg

2005). New Institutionalism (NI), which emerged as a sociological revival of the study of institutions, asserts that it is these specific factors that “make the difference” in shaping behaviour. NI moves beyond the assumptions of rational choice theory’s notion of “the economic man” (which assumes decision-making solely around economic maximization) and instead acknowledges decision-making as taking place within context, and thus as beholden to particular constraints spurred by transaction costs (Nee 1998:2; Scott 2001:2).

One of the principal features of NI is its recognition of “context-bound rationality”. This notion recognizes that context influences behaviour because it places a unique set of formal and informal constraints around decision-makers (Hayter 2004:96). Thus, although behaviour may not fulfill the expectations of rational choice theory, it is still acknowledged as “rational” as it takes place in context, “shaped by a variety of (intertwined) social and political as well as economic motivations and processes, and indeed by different kinds of interlocking institutions” (Hayter 2004:98). Nee (1998) explores further the concept of “context-bound rationality”, describing it as a sort of “thick” rationality structured around context-specific costs and benefits associated with decision-making; this contrasts with economics’ generally “thin” view of rational choice-making (10). As Hayter (2004) notes, the “habits and conventions” of real-world behaviours “are not narrowly economic in nature but socially engrained and differ in varying degrees from place to place” (97).

Historical development of New Institutionalism

The theoretical evolution of NI can be traced to some of sociology’s classical theorists. Durkheim was the first to characterize economic phenomenon, along with other cultural values and norms as “social facts”. His suggestion that “social facts” constitute the

building blocks of the social order laid the foundation for understanding wider conceptions of social structure (Nee 1998:4). Many later scholars built on Durkheim's ideas in conceptualizing the broader social reality, including Merton, Parsons, Homans, Weber and Polanyi. Merton asserted that the social structure itself operates to constrain behaviour, but that it also creates opportunity for social action (Nee 1998:4). Parsons suggested that positive and negative sanctions of a particular society function to influence decision-making, and asserted that such sanctions in fact reveal society's ultimate values (Nee 1998:4). Homans challenged Durkheim's assertion of social structure, pointing out the missing aspect of human agency, and proposed instead a relationship of mutual dependence between individual action and social structure (Nee 1998:5). Weber laid the foundations for what would become NI in his development of concepts, definitions and typologies: "In effect, he pioneered the context-bound rationality approach" (Nee 1998:6). For Weber, customs, conventions, social norms, religious and cultural beliefs, households, kinship, ethnic boundaries, organizations, community, class, status groups, markets, law and the state make up the institutional framework of a given society (Nee 1998:6). Polanyi was the first to suggest the term "embeddedness" to situate real-world economies and economic decision-making in context. This view states that "economic and non-economic factors or processes are symbiotically integrated, only understood in relation to one another" (Hayter 2004:98).

NI has also been recently mobilized within economic geography - not surprisingly, since its emphasis on embeddedness affirms not only the socio-cultural aspects, but also the spatial and temporal factors contributing to "context-bound rationality" (Nee 1998:7).

Known within economic geography as "dissenting institutionalism", NI is described by Hayter (2004) as "a progressive evolving movement which recognizes the importance of

political and social processes without eliminating the economic from consideration and in a way that is acutely sensitive to context, specifically including that defined by geographic distance” (96). He goes on to explain that NI helps to provide “embedded, evolutionary explanations of why places are different” (Hayter 2004:95). The special emphasis on context and geography makes it a particularly relevant theoretical framework for understanding the socio-economic context of the community of Lax Kw’alaams, given its status as a First Nations community and its relatively remote geographic location on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. Barnes and Hayter (2005) note the particular relevance of NI for local models, particularly those that involve resource regions and indigenous peoples, where “institutions do not necessarily match up with neatly defined social spheres – economy, culture, and society – but are mixed up and muddled” (457).

The role of institutions (and the notion of sub-institutional elements)

Although it typically recognized institutions as important in shaping behaviour, early scholarly work tended to assume that they act uniformly or predictably in society, without any reference to their constitution, internal functioning or context. Parsons, for example, conceived of institutions as reproducing “socially structured interests” (Nee 1998:7).

However, if we accept Giddens’ assertion that “actors are at the same time the creators of social systems yet created by them”, we should also recognize the influence that context has in determining the behaviour of actors, and subsequently the structuring and restructuring of the social systems in which they live (Giddens 1991, quoted in Bryant and Jary 2001:45).

Since social values and taste preferences are not simply ‘given’, but are rather “dynamic, socially learned and affected by some sense of collective views, habits and instincts”, both

institutions and the societies they involve will behave differently, depending on context, as expressed in Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' (Bourdieu 1977; Hayter 2004:100). This more mature understanding of institutions, particular to NI theory, thus allows for a more flexible view of institutions as generated and generative forces with diverse forms of influence.

Institutions are defined differently across and within disciplines. Recent studies based on NI theory have generally defined institutions as "webs of interrelated rules and norms that govern social relationships, [and] comprise the formal and informal social constraints that shape that choice-set of actors" (Nee 1998:8). Echoing the perspective of North (1990), Nee likens institutions to the "rules of a game" which "specify the structure within which players are free to pursue their strategic moves using pieces that have specific roles and status positions" (Nee 1998:8). Similarly, Scott (2008) argues that all stable social systems are undergirded by rules, norms and belief systems, and that "institutional processes provide the rules and norms governing competition and the cultural templates providing the repertoires of strategic action" (437).

For North (1990), formal "rules" include constitutions, laws, and property rights, while informal "constraints" include sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions and codes of conduct (discussed in Nee 1998; Ray 2009:88). Nee's (1998) definition of institutions is more flexible, acknowledging that informal elements often contribute to formal institutional structure. For example, he perceives marriage as an institution, comprised of social norms which govern sexual conduct (monogamy), child-rearing (shared responsibility), property rights (equal), conflict, dissolution and child custody (following a divorce) (8).

As mentioned, this research focuses largely on sub-institutional "elements" comprising formal institutions, a topic which has only received peripheral attention within

sociology to date. These elements are the cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulatory aspects of institutions, along with the systems, routines and artifacts in which they are (re)structured and materialized. (Nee 1998). While the sub-institutional aspect of institutions is a relatively recent contribution to NI theory, Veblen touched upon the idea in the 1950s when he suggested that institutions are “settled habits of thought” (Veblen 1957, quoted by Barnes and Hayter 2005: 455). “Habits of thought”, can be understood as relational systems, since they bridge individuals both to each other and to the institutional framework as a whole, but may also be understood as normative institutional processes, in that they create constraints on decision-making (Nee 1998:3). In their analysis of the coercive, normative and mimetic processes of social reproduction, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explain that

"It makes a difference whether one complies out of expedience (to avoid a punishment), because one feels morally obligated to do so, or because one cannot conceive any other way of acting. But at the same time, each is properly seen as providing or contributing to an institutionalized social order: all support and sustain stable behaviour (quoted by Scott 2008:429)

Institutions and their corresponding elements have significant shaping power on individual and group activity and economic decision-making. Through the application of NI theory in the form of a New Institutional Analysis (NIA), this paper argues that sub-institutional elements should be elevated in NIA, to be understood as shaping decision-making to the same degree as formal and informal institutions.

Application of New Institutionalism

NIA is a particularly useful approach towards empirical work, particularly of case studies. As Hayter (2004) explains, “dissenting institutionalism accommodates the need for new insights for different times and places and provides a research tradition in which theory and

empirical work are both vitally important and causally interrelated” (96). However, empirical work based upon the principles of NIA demands openness towards the challenges and complexities of “local modeling”. Barnes and Hayter (2005) explain how, contrary to universal modeling (as in economics), local modeling, which synthesizes theoretical understandings with empirical data, “admits a diverse vocabulary, acknowledges ambivalent definitions and nonlinear logis, allows conceptual ambiguity, and presumes only a limited correspondence between the terms of the model and the world” (455). However, the value in such an approach is that it both demands and creates a sensitivity to context-specific, local “peculiarities”, of which I have already argued the importance in this particular case (Barnes and Hayter 2005: 455).

One of the greatest challenges in the application for NI is the selection of a unit of analysis. The notion of the economic “actor” is one which has incurred some debate across disciplines: While economics traditionally begins analytically with the individual, sociology tends to focus on groups, institutions and society (Smelser and Swedberg 2005). As aforementioned, early sociological studies of institutions tended to focus on the state and firm as key actors (Nee 1998). That being said, sociologists often take the individual-society relationship as implicit, understanding individual actors as “a socially constructed identity, as ‘actor-in-interaction,’ or ‘actor-in-society’” (Smelser and Swedberg 2005:4); put simply, the notion of “the individual” can only be conceived of within the context of “the society”.

Before beginning, I note that this research is rather “one-sided”, geared towards an explanation of Lax Kw’alaams’ institutional landscape rather than that of CTR. Although there are two different levels of analysis in this thesis: the individual (within the community of Lax Kw’alaams), and the organization (CTR as company), this research mainly uses

methodological individualism, understanding individual decision-making as critical to the social reproductive processes that structure upwards towards the macro-level (the community, company and local economy). Decision-making in the context of Lax Kw'alaams is examined at the individual level, while decision-making at CTR is constrained by the structure of the organization itself; it is couched beneath "company decisions". Since the focal point of this research is on the lack of individual involvement in the company, it makes sense to concentrate the analysis at the community level, the context within which individuals make these decisions.

While some would assert that NIA within sociology should therefore rely on groups or organizations we should also recall that methodological individualism is a long-standing tradition within the discipline, demonstrated by Weber (1922) in his study of individual actions. Weber points out, however, that this type of analysis is truly sociological only when actions are understood to "take account of the behaviour of other individuals and thereby are oriented in their course" (quoted in Smelser and Swedberg 2005:4). This research takes into consideration the 'duality of structure' central to Giddens' theory of structuration, recognizing that "the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize" (Giddens 1984). Cassell (1993) notes, "institutions, the most deeply engrained practices, gain their identity and structuring potential only through their endurance in the *longue durée*, the 'long haul' of time" (17). Individual actors thus play a critical role in performing the context-specific socially reproductive processes that both structure and are structured by institutions. This is what Giddens means when he notes that "structures are constituted through action, and reciprocally...action is constituted structurally" (ibid).

I employ methodological individualism in this research, understanding individuals in the context of the small, tightly knit community of Lax Kw'alaams as critical to the 'duality of structure' of the community and the company. Methodological individualism provides a micro-level understanding of the sub-institutional elements that operate as part of the socially reproductive processes that structure the macro-level (the community, company and local economy), and that the macro-level reciprocally provides the cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative systems and scripts that shape individual behaviour. Scott's (2008) work supports this approach, emphasizing "the focus on the study of institutions as they relate to social reproductive processes, (that is, social stability), thus re-affirming the fundamentally individualistic element in the social reproduction of institutions (428).

The approach taken in this research was to first identify major institutions, and then to look for their corresponding sub-institutional elements. In constructing my interview questions and analyzing my findings, it was necessary to develop a framework for identifying the main institutions beyond the definitions provided in existing literature, since they are context-specific and dynamic. Why not simply ask respondents what institutions influence their decisions? Ray (2009) challenges the notion that institutions are explicit in providing "rules" that shape behaviour, arguing instead that "the power of institutions to shape my capacity to know and learn is imagined" and based in tacit knowledge (91). Institutions can thus be argued to shape decision-making in ineffable, rather than explicit ways. Ray's notion of "imagined institutions", applied in context, suggests that asking individuals to identify sub-institutional elements shaping decision-making is neither an objective nor a reliable means of understanding: as Ray explains, one can "never be wholly explicit about putative 'rules' that shape [his or her] actions and thoughts", because one

“know[s] such things in ways [he or she] cannot tell” (2009:91). In other words, individuals may not fully conceive of the embeddedness of their behaviour. This is made clear in Giddens’ distinction “between the motivation of action (which may be partly unconscious), the rationalization of action (agents’ articulated reasons for action), and the reflexive monitoring of action (agents’ knowledge of what they are doing)” (discussed by Bryant and Jary 2001:12).

Clearly, the identification of institutions is complex. I applied a basic test to identify prominent institutions by tracking their recurrences in interviews with multiple respondents. However, I took caution: As Parsons asserts, “it is rules and values that constitute an institution, not the concrete pattern of behaviour or social relationships” (Nee 1998: 7). In this way, a single person’s moral or behavioural code does not constitute an institution, nor does a common set of behaviours within a social group. As mentioned in Chapter 3 (Research Methods), social phenomena were interpreted as institutions where they fit within accepted definitions and were shown to provide rules for behaviour. Common behaviours (norms) were generally considered as sub-institutional elements.

I have emphasized that recognizing institutions is methodologically challenging but critical for empirically understanding economic behaviours. Complicating matters further is the inevitable presence of multiple institutions, which often influence decision-making to varying degrees. Different individuals or organizations may emphasize different institutions, or even different elements within institutions. An example might be legal versus cultural institutions: In some contexts legal institutions play a larger role in shaping the behaviour of individuals or groups by necessity, whereas the rules of culture might be considered as extraneous. In other contexts, the legal implications might be much less serious than social

or cultural consequences for behaviour. Scott argues that formal institutional structures might also be argued to be “thinner” and more superficial in nature than “thick” sub-institutional normative and/or cultural-cognitive elements: subsequently, they often have fewer social consequences (Scott 2008: 429).

As mentioned, this research focuses on methodological individualism with the recognition of the ‘duality of structure’. Analysis is geared towards decision-making around employment practices and the labour market (Barnes and Hayter 2005: 455). I suggest that many sub-institutional elements influence social behaviour to an equal or greater degree than many formal institutions. I therefore suggest the need to elevate such phenomena to the level of formal institutions in NIA. This argument will be supported with field data in subsequent chapters.

In conclusion then, institutions and their corresponding sub-institutional elements play a critical role in the lives of human beings at all levels, from the individual and the interpersonal outward to the organizational and societal level. Institutions function within families, communities, regions, and even spatially unbounded entities such as markets to both constrain and enable behaviour. Sub-institutional elements play a critical role in the socially reproductive processes that both constitute and are constituted by the wider society. Institutions and the sub-institutional elements are thus deeply embedded in the fabric of social reality, appearing openly and sometimes covertly behind the clamour of everyday life. Understanding the way in which institutions and their corresponding sub-institutional elements shape behaviour and decision-making provides us with a more complicated and profound view of Lax Kw’alaams, CTR, and the relationship between them.

CHAPTER 4: A New Institutional Approach to Lax Kw'alaams and Coast Tsimshian Resources

The “settled patterns of thought” (Hayter 2004) that shape the social and economic landscape of Lax Kw'alaams and its company, Coast Tsimshian Resources, are as numerous as they are diverse, and the task of uncovering and exploring all of the institutions operating in this context is near-impossible. For me, the ideal outcome of this research was to create a final product that would be tangible, meaningful and potentially useful to both the Lax Kw'alaams band and the field of economic sociology. The following three chapters therefore seek to piece together an explanation of my findings that not only provides: (a) a theoretical interpretation of the real-world context of Lax Kw'alaams and Coast Tsimshian Resources based on NI, but that also brings (b) new insights to this theory resulting from these findings, and (c) practical analysis, which might potentially be useful by the people of Lax Kw'alaams and CTR.

In this chapter I present findings of my field research as they relate to institutions and the theoretical framework of New Institutionalism. It should be emphasized that what I present in this chapter is not an institutional typology, but rather a highly-specific analysis geared towards the presentation of a complicated, yet focused and related set of institutions. The selection of institutions for discussion was limited to those with the greatest impact, determined based on their recurrence throughout the interview process, and on their fit within accepted definitions, as discussed previously. In the next chapter, I explore the sub-institutional elements that function within the institutions as part of the socially reproductive processes structuring them. I begin this chapter with an explanation of the “question” or

“problem” which blossomed into the key focus of my questions as I went from one individual to another, seeking to uncover how institutions shape economic reality for the people of Lax Kw’alaams

The problem I speak of emerged early in the research John Helin¹, the chief councillor at the time, described the economic plight of the community, which had suffered greatly under the heavy burden of a fishing season with an almost insignificant harvest Garry Reece, a band councillor who also sits on the economic development committee, explained that the unemployment rate in the community had reached 80%, with many members now moving back towards social assistance This was surprising Hadn’t Coast Tsimshian Resources (CTR) been the saving grace of its owners, the individual members of the Lax Kw’alaams band?

Interviews with CTR’s staff and the band council revealed that the proportion of band members working at CTR is relatively low, particularly when one considers that the three primary goals in creating CTR were to “create revenue, gain access to a land base, and to employ [Lax Kw’alaams’] own people” (Jerry Lawson) Additional interviews revealed that many band members were rather disconnected from the company, and often barely aware of its existence Some individuals had only heard of the company through external sources

Interviewer	What can you tell me about CTR?
Carrie Blacker	Nothing I know it’s one of the fifth largest logging companies in BC, but I think I learned that on a

¹ The majority of interview participants opted to allow full disclosure of their identity, including their names and association to the community and/or company Where respondents wished to remain anonymous, I have assigned them a randomly generated number

website...like a news website...which is unfortunate.

Um...I really don't know anything.

Interviewer: How do you think the community feels about the company?

CB: Well...I have heard people say things...um...because they don't see any mark of it here - they don't know how it affects them, they don't know how it benefits them, they don't know what good it is to have it, um, you know. If the band's going to do something like that, they [community members] feel that it should benefit them somehow. And I have heard people say things like that. But beyond that, again, for a lot of people, I don't think they think about it...I think they're not informed. I think really, that's what it boils down to. And if they are informed, maybe they don't understand what they're being told.

Often, band members appeared to be uncertain or confused about their relationship to the company:

Interviewer: What can you tell me about CTR?

Respondent 14: I don't know much about CTR, but I know they've put a lot of people to work.

Interviewer: Do people know that they are part-owners of the company?

R14: I don't think so, I don't know. I don't have a clue.

Some explained that they were not aware of their owner-status, while others who were aware of this fact admitted not knowing what that meant in practice, and had trouble expressing the community's connection to the company:

Interviewer: In terms of CTR being owned by the band – can you explain to me how that works?

Wilfred Campbell: I'm not sure how that works. It goes back...4 years ago I guess, when they got CTR. They started that...uhh...I think they were the second biggest company that sold it... and Simpson [the community] had...buy that [sic]...and that's what they're workin' on right now.

Interviewer: Was it explained to the people of the community how the company was owned by the band?

WC: Yeah, I think it was, but uh...I don't think anybody here is, like....uh....fallers, loggers, you know, not very many here. I think there's about a dozen of us that worked in logging. Mostly them [sic] are rigging crew. (pause). And probably a lack of understanding,

too, for, you know, logging... and the people don't understand it.

While some community members knew more about the company, it appeared that others perceived CTR as existing almost completely externally to Lax Kw'alaams. One band member lamented the fact that despite the company's earnings, the community was "not seeing any of it". In attempting to speak with Lax Kw'alaams band members who were employed, or had been employed by CTR, I was informed that most such individuals were gone, having moved outside of the community, either to the nearby interior town of Terrace (where the company's head office is located) or elsewhere (usually in the region or south to Vancouver).

In contrast to community understandings of CTR, many of the company's employees were better able to articulate the relationship between the company and the community. All those interviewed from CTR told generally the same story:

Interviewer: In terms of the band owning CTR - can you explain to me how that works?

Jon Schulz: Each band member is kind of... one of the limited partners. So, each person in the Lax Kw'alaams band owns one share in the company, Coast Tsimshian Resources.

CTR's Forest Manager, Brendan Wilson, explained that the few who had been "gainfully employed" by the company (earning about 50,000-\$60,000 per year) had been able to change their lives in significant ways: "more people now have licenses, own their own

vehicles, have gear, and independence”. However, he expressed that that he felt like the company and the community were “worlds apart”, and noted the impression he got from community members that there is “a lingering disappointment that there isn’t more employment for Lax Kw’alaams members – but the board of directors understands.”

Institutional barriers

The contrast in the responses on either side was indicative of a glaring disconnect between the company and the community, and I began to understand the disconnect in terms of the institutions contributing to it. It is my interpretation that there are a number of barriers that work to impede the realization of a strong connection between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR that might be otherwise expected. These barriers include (a) distance as it is rooted in both location and territory, (b) the importance of family and kin, (c) the structural influence of seasonality, and perhaps most critically, (d) a widespread lack of, and inability to access capital.

As I explain in this chapter, each of these barriers is based in, and shaped by, a range of institutions. In the following chapter, I explore the sub-institutional elements which contribute to the “patterned or recursive character of social practices” that operate over the long term to shape the social structure (Cassell 1993: 13). I argue for an increased attention to such elements, bringing them to the same level of attention as formal and informal institutions in terms of how they inform behaviour. As I attempt to show, from a thorough analysis of these institutions and institutional mechanisms it is possible not only to advance theoretical understandings (Chapter 5) but also to explore how the analysis of these institutions might be utilized to dissolve or decrease these barriers (Chapter 6).

Distance, territory and the notion of place

Port Simpson, home of the Lax Kw'alaams band, is a former Hudson's Bay trading village situated on the rocky coastline of BC, just south of Alaska. The primary means of access to Port Simpson is Prince Rupert, the international port located about 50 kilometres to the south. There are no roads connecting Lax Kw'alaams to the province's highways systems, so access to the community can only be made via the community-run ferry service, Spirit of Lax Kw'alaams, which (generally) runs four days each week, or by a local seaplane operator. Prior to the implementation of the ferry system a few years ago, the primary means of access was via individual band members' boats. There is only one paved road, one school, and no supermarket. This remoteness is a reality that shapes life for the people of Lax Kw'alaams.

John Agnew (1987) made the differentiation between three fundamental aspects of place as "meaningful location" when he highlighted the difference between 'location' ("the simple notion of where"), 'locale' ("the material setting for social relations"), and 'sense of place' ("the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place") (quoted in Cresswell 2004:7). These connected yet distinct understandings of place become important as we begin to unravel the ways in which the 'place' itself is intertwined with many of the institutions operating within and around it. The interconnection of the three aspects of place becomes clearer as we come to understand the ways in which the locale becomes not only the *raison d'être* of the established territory, but also serves as the background against which the people of Lax Kw'alaams have developed a deep-rooted sense of place (discussed

further in Chapter 4). I argue that these three aspects of place are in fact institutions through which the disconnect between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR is legitimized and maintained.²

Location

As Cassell (1993) notes, “the setting of interaction is not some neutral backdrop to events that are unfolding independently in the foreground. Locales enter into the very fabric of interaction in a multiplicity of ways” (19). Indeed, the region in which Lax Kw'alaams settled was an ideal place for permanent settlement, with its long, rocky coastline teeming with a variety of fish and other sea creatures. It was the resources of the area which brought the people to the region, and it is these same resources which have enabled them to survive for thousands of years there (Knight 1996; Miller 1997). The sea provided sustenance for physical and economic survival, and the people of Lax Kw'alaams accepted the place, being its most successful stewards. As one community member noted, “We’re here for a reason; there are resources we can tap into” (Russell Mathers). In many ways, the location of the community is arguably one of its most enduring institutions.

My interpretation here is that location functions as an informal institution, since it operates with implicit (rather than explicit) “rules” that indirectly shape behaviour and economic activity. While sociology has typically considered institutions as being purely social in origin and form, economic geography has led the way for understanding aspects of the physical world as providing implicit “rules” that constrain and shape behaviour (Hayter 2004). The location of the village on the rugged coastline, with a shield of mountains to the north and east, provides constraints that shape the way in which its inhabitants interact with

² As mentioned, CTR’s head office is located in Terrace, BC. Terrace is in the North interior of the province, about 120km, or roughly 3 hours, from Lax Kw'alaams.

the external economy and world. Its relative remoteness and the lack of infrastructure in the area makes it only accessible by plane, ferry or boat, and thus limits the types and range of economic activities in which community members can participate. Since there are no roads that connect Lax Kw'aalams to the mainland, community members are left without the option of a working commute to nearby economic centres. Needless to say, without infrastructure and easily accessible transport, the employment opportunities and economic activities for community members remain rather restricted. In practice, this means that many members are without work unless they are employed by either fishing or one of the band-run enterprises: the band-operated fish plant/cannery, the school, the recreation centre, or the health centre (which employs mainly external health care workers).

As mentioned, CTR's main office and region of primary activity is located in Terrace, 120 kilometres east of Lax Kw'alaams. While the office is located there primarily because of territorial concerns (outlined in the next section), the setup of the office away from the community was also somewhat strategic. Company CEO Wayne Drury (a non-First Nations person) explained to me that locating the office in Terrace was one way in which management could "separate politics from business" by keeping the community and its concerns at a literal distance from the company. Brendan Wilson, Operations Manager at CTR, reiterated this fact, noting that indeed, the community's concerns would be "felt more" by the company if the business had been located in the village. Rather than having community members seeking to influence business decisions, CTR relies on its board of directors, comprised mainly of band and council members, to work cooperatively with the rest of the Lax Kw'alaams band council to make decisions that are balanced both in the interests of the community and the company, (as illustrated in the flow chart on page 45).

While the literal distance between the two locations might benefit business by keeping it at arm's length from community concerns, it can be assumed to negatively impact CTR's objective of hiring Lax Kw'alaams band members as part of its labour force. The relatively low rate of community participation in CTR's activities (about 25% First Nations employment) is not surprising given the physical distance between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR's office in Terrace. This lengthy "commute", which takes upwards of three hours, is neither practical nor realistic for community members, particularly those without driver's licenses or access to a vehicle.

Territory

Through its own legal and political institutions, the federal and provincial governments of Canada acknowledge and define the bounds of the "traditional territory" of the Lax Kw'alaams band. The territory was not recognized through any of BC's treaty processes, but was rather assigned as the government established a multitude of Indian Reserves along the Northwest Coast during the late nineteenth century (Harris 2006).

In 1881, Peter O'Reilly, who had been newly assigned the position of Indian Reserve Commissioner of BC, took a trip across the Northwest Coast for three weeks, during which he allocated 26 reserves. He told the inhabiting native peoples that they, "like their white brethren, [woud] be subject in every respect to the laws and regulations set forth in the fishery Acts of the Dominion" (Harris 2002: 182). While the Coast Tsimshian people sought to receive the entire Tsimshian peninsula, O'Reilly only agreed to the small plot around Port Simpson based on the fact that he believed it to be "for the most part, of a very worthless

character” (Harris 2002:184). However, the drastically decreased access to traditional territory was of such great concern to the people that

In bitter mid-winter weather early in 1887, a delegation of Nisga’a and Tsimshian chiefs, accompanied by two Methodist missionaries, trekked and canoed into Alaskan waters and caught an American steamer to Victoria to press their claims... They had come to see about the land, “which we know is ours,” and wanted bigger reserves and treaties... They got nowhere: their views on title were rejected outright and their claims to land were held ... In sum, Native people resisted in every way they could within an equation of power balanced overwhelmingly against them. (Harris 2002: 205-206)

The early tenacity around the issue of access to traditional land was the precursor to a struggle for territorial recognition that continued through the twentieth century for the Lax Kw’alaams band. In 1979, the band submitted maps to the provincial government with detailed illustrations of what it deemed as its traditional territory; the maps were accepted as legitimate (James Bryant, elder). While lawsuits by external groups have since been launched against these maps by other First Nations, Lax Kw’alaams has fought fastidiously against them, and continues to hold “ownership” over the region. This is part of what Hayter describes as part of the “power of the local and the full implications of embeddedness”, whereby “populations in their various circumstances make choices and create institutions to absorb, adapt, fight and reject globally instituted processes” (2004:108). Indeed, through interaction with not only local and provincial governments, but also the legal sphere through litigation, Lax Kw’alaams has adopted and co-opted a number of external institutions towards the recognition and legitimation of their own socially significant institution of territory.

The true significance of territory to the people is demonstrated in the insistent nature through which the Lax Kw’alaams has continued to struggle for recognition through to the present day. I witnessed this enduring ardour at a “Community-to-Community (C2C)

Meeting” between the municipalities and band councils of the wider region, which I was invited to attend during my field research. Relations between the various bands attending the meeting were amicable until the agenda item of a proposed regional “entrance sign” was tabled, at which point heated disagreement and argument amassed between Lax Kw’alaam and the neighbouring Aboriginal community of Kitkatla (also part of the Tsimshian group). The Kitkatla band was in opposition to the proposed text of the sign, which was suggested by the Lax Kw’alaams band to read: “Welcome to Tsimshian Territories: Home of the 9 Tribes of Lax Kw’alaams”. Kitkatla felt that use of the term “9 Tribes” (of which Kitkatla is not a part) was “exclusionary”, while Lax Kw’alaams argued that the territory has always belonged to the people of the Lax Kw’alaams (and not the rest of the Tsimshian First Nation), mentioning again the 1979 government acceptance of the territorial maps. The fervour with which this argument took place was demonstrative of the people’s attachment to, and the importance of the territory.

An interesting distinction can be drawn here between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR in terms of how the territory is made meaningful. For the Lax Kw’alaams Band, the history of struggle and stewardship has made the territory a fundamental part of the group’s identity. As mentioned, some (but not all) of the territory has been designated as band reserve area. Thus, for Lax Kw’alaams, the territory is primarily an issue of traditional-cultural boundaries.

For CTR, territory plays a critical, though less embedded role in shaping economic practices. In this case, territory refers to the large areas of land and forest have been legally allocated for the company’s use through their ownership of a territorial Tree Farm Licence (TFL). Territory is thus primarily meaningful in the sense that it means access to particular

land (property) and resources. Property rights are the legal and social tools used to institutionalize places and locations. Territory, understood as a form of collective property rights, can thus be viewed as a formal institution, shaping the economic activities of CTR by providing it with both space and quotas for its business in harvesting trees.

Only about one-quarter of CTR's TFL is actually within Lax Kw'alaams' traditional territory, which might help to explain some aspects of the figurative disconnect between the community and the company's operations (Brendan Wilson). Interestingly, while the band council recognized that the TFL was located away from the band's traditional territory, some councilors reiterated that the company's initial attraction to the region was at least partly rooted in the band's objective to gain access to constant and guaranteed land base through CTR.

Despite the fact that territory ultimately means very different things for Lax Kw'alaams and CTR, the institution - in both cases - ultimately complicates the distance between the two locations. The different meanings attached to "territory" create different behaviour-shaping rules and structures. Hypothetically, the distinction between the two conceptions would make both Lax Kw'alaams and CTR more rigid and less amenable to change, since both are tied to separate land bases (Lax Kw'alaams to Port Simpson and the coast, and CTR's Tree Farm License to the Terrace region).

Family

The notion of family in Lax Kw'alaams extends much further than the prototypical "parents-and-children" household unit. As with many Aboriginal groups, it is not uncommon to find multi-generational households amongst the community. Parents live with their children,

their grandchildren, perhaps their sisters, brothers or in-laws, cousins, and even other “adopted” family members. This might be interpreted as a corollary of the traditional kinship arrangements in Tsimshian culture, which “was not exclusively a matter of family relationships...Instead, kinship was the matrix of social organization – a pervasive complex of role, duties, and expectations which were ascribed to individuals by their position in the kinship system” (Knight 1996: 30). The kinship social matrix was socially institutionalized through the house or clan system. Muckle (2007) describes how “people of the coast were recognized as belonging to specific houses or clans. A house was a group of related extended families living together in one of several cedar plank houses making up the winter village...Clans were groups of related houses from different villages within the territory of the nation” (50-51).

When interview respondents in Lax Kw’alaams were asked about their most important values, almost all mentioned family (n=19). It was not made explicit whether this referred to immediate family, or whether it referred to kinship-based social arrangements. It seems that individuals have different conceptions of family, depending on their circumstances. Some “families” were prototypical “units”, while others were made up of in-laws, cousins, and “adopted members”. Thus, for Lax Kw’alaams, the notion of family is rather fluid, being that it can be manifest and interpreted in a multitude of ways, many of which are not formalized in institutional structures.

Community members’ strong connection to family - however it is conceptualized - is clear. John Helin, Lax Kw’alaams’ chief councillor at the time, explained:

JH: If you have a big family, you can't [leave] ... if you're
 the breadwinner and you gotta go outside the community

to work, that puts stress on your relationship, so...they end up coming back home, or if the family does move with them they have to rent somewhere else.

Helin's point is suggestive of the powerful ways in which the connection to family shapes economic decision-making, particularly around job-seeking behaviours: While work might be available outside the community, there is a general reticence against pursuing these opportunities, because doing so either means leaving one's family, or if the family follows, it means renting outside of the community. In a community with an unemployment rate hovering around 80%, some part of the hesitancy likely stems from financial insecurity, particularly since Registered Indians maintain some financial "benefits" by staying on-reserve³. Registered members tend to own their own homes on the reserve (where houses are often band and government subsidized, to some extent), and they are not required to pay tax on income earned while working on a reserve or on goods purchased on reserve (Muckle 2007:3). Moreover, moving off-reserve is accompanied by what might be perceived as an intimidating set of new responsibilities, not only economically, but also socially and culturally.

Holly Edwards, a CTR employee⁴ described to me what she thought deterred many from coming to work for the forestry company: "The issue is that people are away from their families. The cost is high - with your family you have strength and support." In addition, she noted that the prospect of leaving can be frightening because it means leaving behind a

³ I share the view of many whom I interviewed regarding the supposed "benefits" of living on-reserve. While I acknowledge that some conciliatory financial allowances are granted, it is my view that the drawbacks to living on-reserve, such as a lack of adequate housing, health services, education, employment opportunities, policing, and quality food, typically outweigh such so-called "benefits".

⁴ Edwards is married to a Lax Kw'alaams member, and is a member of the Nicomen Indian band.

well-established support system of non-related, “adopted” families in the community. Herb Pond, the band manager (a non-member band employee), also noted, “As much as they may have internal differences, they are almost one gigantic family...there is a real strength of character, of coming together...a sense of community”. Edwards’ comments supported this view. She emphasized that most people in Lax Kw’alaams abide by the philosophy that “it takes a whole community to raise a child”.

A strong attachment to family and community is an enduring characteristic of the Tsimshian people. For centuries, it has shaped employment behaviour. Miller (1997) explains such patterns over the past several decades:

For a time, Native people from all over the coast and the southern interior came to work in the canneries and fisheries at the mouth of the Fraser River. But eventually they went home. They were a deeply attached labour force, one more than prepared to work away for a time...but expecting to return whence they had come, often abruptly because the time had come to catch and preserve a winter’s food supply...A permanent move to the city...reasonable enough for a less attached labour force, was not one that, even in the mid-1950s, more than a handful of Native people were willing to make. Their reasons may have been at least partly economic. A move to the city was away from a familiar support system that, however truncated, still partially functioned and provided a fair portion of basic subsistence needs. Coupled with seasonal work away, people could hope to get along, and as long as this combination was available it hardly made sense to risk not only the cultural isolation but also (for them) the economic uncertainty of urban life. Different cultural values towards work? Perhaps, but at least equally a deep attachment to place and to an economically rational survival strategy based on a combination of local subsistence activities, and, when it could be had, part-time work away.” (186-187)

Clearly, family has long been an important institution for Lax Kw’alaams, particularly because of the significant ways it continues to structure employment and economy for the people.

The significance of family to Lax Kw’alaams is obviously quite different than it is for CTR. However, based on conversations with CTR management and employees, it does appear that the attachment to family has translated to the workplace to a certain extent.

Firstly, the company was described to me by several of its employees as “like a family”.

CEO Wayne Drury described how there is a sense of “closeness and community” within the company, and described how, in some ways, the business is run like a family, with clear “rules and consequences” for behaviour.

Holly Edwards felt that during her years employed by the company, she had made some strong connections and had developed a support network within it, much like the company itself was an “adopted family”. She told me how the company has a deep respect for events which hold a strong “cultural” significance to its employees, such as feasts, for which employees can request time off, or following the death of a family member or loved one, when grievance leaves of 3-4 days are encouraged. Cathy Craig, CTR’s general manager, described how the company’s operations had been designed to respect some of the key values of the people, particularly in terms of the “importance of family” and the “respect given to elders.” She noted how there is a special effort to accommodate concerns relating to these important values, and that doing so requires a certain flexibility from the company.

Another aspect of family which appears to have been integrated into the management style of the company is the way in which CTR attempts to “train to build capacity” in its employees (Wayne Drury). Cathy Craig explained that one of the goals of the company is to “empower people to see work as a career and to grow into it”. Moreover, she noted that a critical component of the company’s success could be found in the mutual respect with which the company and Lax Kw’alaams interact. She explained that, CTR has “never taken for granted the wisdom of the people. Both parties bring a lot to the table, and we are empowered together by our strengths.” Brendon Wilson, CTR’s Operations Manager, noted that one particular way the company has co-opted a “cultural attribute” of Lax Kw’alaams is

in its “greater degree of patience for poor performance and substance abuse. There’s more tolerance for problems, and a greater willingness for second chances”. Certainly, parallels can be drawn between these types of goals and relationships and those of a family, particularly where “empowerment” and “growing” are priorities.

Seasonality

Tied to their families in ancestral lands, they could take seasonal work away, even in some cases spend a year or two away, but then they would come home. (Miller 1997:188)

As elder James Bryant explained, the people of Lax Kw’alaams “move with the four seasons of the year”. This has always been a key characteristic of the Tsimshian people, who set up numerous camps throughout the region according to the availability of resources at particular times of the year (that is, according to which resources were “in-season”). As economic activities of the Northwest coast shifted away from traditional trade and barter systems towards a monetary-based economy, Lax Kw’alaams settled permanently in Port Simpson, which eventually developed as a seasonally active fishing community. While seasonality is certainly an extraneously imposed constraint (of nature), I argue that it has also become *institutionalized* as a defining element - a “cultural template” - of local customs towards work and livelihoods through its enduring influence in shaping the economic and social lives of the people (Scott 2008).

The influence of seasonality on economic decision-making and behaviour is distinct, yet implicit. Historically, resource industries in northern BC were generally characterized by seasonal or fluctuating operations”, and as Miller (1997) explains, “industries such as

salmon fishing and canning operated for no more than four to five months in the year, and rarely that at a single cannery” (124). For Lax Kw’alaams, whose primary economic activities have been largely based around the sea, the changing of the seasons has always elicited a particular schedule for harvesting marine plants and animals. James Bryant described to me in detail the order in which salmon spawn: Steelhead in April, Chinook in June, Kohl and Dog primarily in August and September, and so forth. Bryant also described how when the “red tide” (spawning season) occurs, “you don’t touch seafood at that time of year”⁵. In practice then, seasonality means a fishing season (and therefore an employment “season”) that is restricted to certain months and times of the year, which vary according to the type of fishing and species harvested. These are the implicit “rules” of seasonality, which, along with its lasting influence, make it important for consideration.

These features of seasonality might therefore be taken into consideration with respect to the deficiency in band member employment with CTR. Unlike fishing, forestry is a year-round activity that is not shaped by the seasonal “rules” that both constrain and enable the routines that are embedded into the community’s economic and social life. Thus, it is possible that the embedded patterns of seasonal employment play a role in shaping the way individuals approach employment with CTR. While the company does offer a number of short-term, contract jobs, many of the more desirable roles tend to be the year-round, full-time positions.

A way of life embedded in seasonality has tremendous implications on economic and social life; it would require almost a paradigm shift to transition into full-time, year-round employment, particularly where it means shifting from owner-operator to wage labourer. Most fishermen in Lax Kw’alaams are very experienced, having learned techniques from

⁵ James Bryant’s comments were only transcribed by hand and not tape-recorded.

their parents and grandparents. In addition, they often own their own boats (either through inheritance or purchase). Fishing is often more self-directed, with fishermen perhaps reporting only to the community cannery. A fisherman can decide how many hours per day, and how many days per year he wants to fish, and so on (Respondent 14). Conversely, for a band member to enter into employment with CTR, he or she is likely to come into an entry-level position unless he or she has some practical training or experience in forestry (Brendan Wilson, Wayne Drury). Entry-level positions in CTR subject an employee to structured demands including rules and responsibilities, direction from authority, proper etiquette, and a regular working schedule. In effect, individuals must trade a high level of economic autonomy for the ability to earn a wage income: “the possessor of labour-power, instead of being able to sell commodities in which his labour has been objectified, must rather be compelled to offer for sale as a commodity that very labour-power which exists only in his living body” (Marx 1990: 272).

The shift from flexible, capital ownership to full-time, wage labour is a sharp transition for many band members who have not had experience with this type of “full-time, year-round” employment (Brendan Wilson). Since most of the entry-level positions tend to be the least favourable ones, in which employees endure hard physical labour and are subjected to poor weather, long days, and rough working conditions, this lack of experience is understood to be a contributing factor to employee lay-offs, dismissals and leaves (Brendan Wilson).

Seasonality is clearly embedded not only in the lifestyles of individuals, but also in the way in which work, and by extension, the local economy of Lax Kw’alaams is

structured. The transition from part-time (seasonal) owner-operator to full-time (year-round) wage-labourer arguably involves a transformation tantamount to a paradigm shift.

Capital

“In order that a man may be able to sell commodities other than his labour-power, he must of course possess means of production, such as raw materials, instruments of labour, etc. No boots can be made without leather. He also requires the means of subsistence.” (Marx 1990:272)

Perhaps the most critical barrier impeding band member employment with CTR, alluded to in the previous section, is the general lack of human and physical capital in the community, related to the institution of economy. Brendan Wilson described how, despite CTR’s policy of preferential hiring toward band members, it can be difficult to meet this objective largely because most people lack the experience required to work in the forestry sector. In addition, past hiring of band members has resulted in a high turnover rate, with members often being dismissed because of absenteeism or alcohol abuse, or leaving because the job “just isn’t for them” or because it’s “not interesting” (Brendan Wilson). Respondent 12, a band member and CTR employee, described how the work can often be unpleasant, with “long days, bad weather, and bugs”. Wilson emphasized that many of the entry-level positions open to band members “only appeal to a certain subset of the population: it’s a hard job, it’s dangerous, and it’s uncertain”. Employment with CTR is thus not only non-seasonal (year-round); it also requires experience (know-how) along with the physical and mental capacity to work in difficult conditions.

Complicating matters further, many of the jobs at CTR require human capital, primarily in the form of certifiable education and relevant work experience, both of which tend to be challenging for community members to obtain. Within the institution of economy, capital is understood as a prerequisite to employability, making up a person's "qualifications". I asked Carrie Blacker, the principal of Coast Tsimshian Academy, why she thought that people were not seeking out job opportunities in the community. She remarked:

CB: People don't have the skills, and/or they don't have the information. I did testing on adults in the community that wanted jobs in the school, and there were very few adults that had grade 8 or higher reading levels. So, you know, I feel that people are scared to try, even if they have the skills, and some of the people don't have the skills.

Those who were gainfully employed by CTR had all undertaken post-secondary training in some capacity. Management tended to have advanced post-secondary degrees, while administrative staff attended college. Field staff tended to have post-secondary technical school training and/or certified work experience in their relevant work areas. Two CTR employees interviewed attended the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology⁶ (a school which has been set up for the advancement of education for First Nations people) to obtain their Registered Forest Technician (RFT) certification, and both explained this as a critical step to advancing their careers.

⁶ More information about NVIT can be found on the website: <http://www.nvit.bc.ca/>

While CTR has instituted a policy of the preferred hiring of band members and other Aboriginal peoples, the policy notes that they must be “qualified”. The lack of human capital is therefore critical in explaining the dearth of community participation in the company. Though it is understandable from a business perspective, this clause has the effect of discouraging or inhibiting the employment of individuals who might be interested in the work but who lack the appropriate educational background. Several community members interviewed either alluded to, or explicitly expressed fear of failure in attempting to pursue forestry or other activities outside of their range of skills and experiences. A fear of the unknown was a common theme among interview respondents, undoubtedly inhibiting the confidence and strength at which they approach new or different positions. Respondent 13, a CTR employee and band member, noted that for the people of Lax Kw’alaams: when it comes to work, “the devil you know is better than the devil you don’t know”. Respondent 12 explained that even with a background in silviculture (tree planting), he had been apprehensive about the training required for the certification that led to his position with CTR:

Interviewer: When did you decide to pursue the natural resources management program?

Respondent 12: I was working in silviculture back in 93/94...up to late 96, and I was offered to go to the course, and they said they needed a couple of people, so I was one of the selections. And, I didn't know what I was getting into, like, I had never been down that way there - down south. And I figured, geez, you know, I don't know if I

can do it. And well, the guy kinda encouraged me and persuaded me to give it a try, he said you got nothin' to lose, and enhance my career [laughs]. So what I did was I said, yeah, I'll go for it, I'll try the first year. And the first year I struggled of course, because I had to learn all my academics all over again, and I had to redo some courses, and that came through [laughs].

Interviewer: What were you most nervous about?

Respondent 12: Just learning the academics again, you know it was, like going back to school.

Interviewer: Did you graduate high school?

Respondent 12: No, I didn't. It was mathematics, and biology, and english that were the hardest part...It just took a lot of studying. It was hard work...I wonder why I'm not wearing glasses with all the reading I had to do [laughs].

Another prerequisite for most positions (entry-level to advanced) within CTR is access to, or ownership of physical capital, including individual “gear” (required as for outdoor employment), equipment, vehicles, and so forth, most of which come at relatively high costs. Holly Edwards told me her “gear” alone, which included a raincoat, steel-toed boots, and other outerwear cost about \$250. On the upper end, a logging truck can run upwards of \$40,000 (used) to \$150,000 (new) (Wayne Drury). For any family, and

particularly those living off of social assistance, an investment even on the smaller end is a sizable contribution of income.

Even if an individual is “qualified” in terms of education and physical capital, an additional concern for employment is his or her physical capabilities. As mentioned, most out-of-office employees must have the ability to work hard physical labour in sub-optimal weather conditions:

Respondent 12: If you’re a Lax Kw’alaams member and you want to give it a try, you know...It’s not always easy finding the right people, like a lot of them want to try, but then they find it’s actually hard work...the hours get long, the days get long, you’re battling weather and bugs and all that kind of stuff. They find out soon enough that it’s not for them [chuckles]. But we always give them opportunity.

Interviewer: What kind of person does really well in this kind of work?

Respondent 12: The people that are workin’ right now are physically fit...the ones that like to work, you know, they can adapt to the work, adapt to the physical and mental part of the work, and they’re quick learners, but you have to be honest, like, uh, not everybody goes out there and comes in whistling at the end of the day [laughs]...everybody has their bad days, one way or

the other The other ones are the ones who have had some education and training for workin' in the bush, whether they were trained for natural resources or had some experience workin' in the bush

Interviewer In your opinion, what makes [CTR] a good place to work?
Respondent 12 Well, I like workin' in the bush! [laughs]

The comments from Respondent 12 reinforce that in addition to a having a disposition that is “adaptable” to challenging work circumstances, employees must possess the physical and mental fitness levels to partake in much of CTR’s work activity Unfortunately, Lax Kw’alaams is part of the Aboriginal demographic which has a high representation of many of North America’s chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes, in addition to obesity and other health issues (Health Canada 2010) These health issues are worth mentioning because they typically mean reduced ability to participate in activities involving hard physical labour⁷

A related challenge for CTR as employer is the number of employees who are hired on, only to be dismissed soon after, due to workplace issues relating to substance abuse Hazel Trego, the community’s consulting psychologist, expressed these issues as “unmet needs”

HT There are probably unmet needs that need to be addressed before [some people] can be expected to hold down a regular job

Interviewer What kind of unmet needs?

⁷ These health issues should be acknowledged However, it would be unwise to attribute the lack of employment solely to such health issues, as there are evidently many other factors coming into play

HT: Well, addictions, trauma, family violence, all that stuff.

Trego explained that many of these cases can be directly linked to an oppressive past and institutionalization through the residential school programs, a fact that is recognized in literature (Knight 1996:100-103). Clearly, these are issues which need to be dealt with at the community-level, not only for individuals' well-being, but also because these are categorical reasons for exclusion from employment.

Beyond Barriers

There are a number of barriers which impede a more streamlined integration of Lax Kw'alaams members with CTR. As I have shown, the most critical barriers which emerged are rooted in a range of institutions embedded in the social, economic and physical context of Lax Kw'alaams and CTR. These include distance (resulting from the institutions of location and territory), family, seasonality, and a lack of sufficient capital. In the following chapter, I explore the sub-institutional elements operating within the institutions presented here, arguing that these aspects play a critical yet underestimated role in shaping social and economic life. In the final chapter, I will show how a more complicated understanding of the institutions presented here can be used to develop potential tools for decreasing the barriers identified and bridging the disconnect between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR.

CHAPTER 5: The Sub-Institutional Connection

As mentioned in earlier chapters, this thesis argues for an elevated level of consideration for the sub-institutional elements that are part of the institutions favoured in analysis in NI theory. The preceding chapter (Chapter 4) suggested that there are a number of barriers that currently impede a thorough integration of the Lax Kw'alaams band with its company, CTR. Using NIA, I argued that these barriers are rooted in a number of institutions that are embedded in this history and context of Lax Kw'alaams. This chapter will elucidate the sub-institutional elements comprising these institutions.

Earlier in the thesis, institutions were described as “webs of interrelated rules and norms that govern social relationships, [and] comprise the formal and informal social constraints that shape that choice-set of actors”, and were characterized as enduring and durable, formal and informal structures (Nee 1998:8). The purpose of this chapter is to show how sub-institutional elements, as the *cultural-cognitive*, *normative*, and *regulatory aspects* of institutions, along with *systems*, *routines* and *artifacts* operate at the level of socially reproductive processes to contribute to the ‘duality of structure’ of Lax Kw'alaams and CTR.

To illustrate the ways in which the sub-institutional elements function in powerful ways (at the level of social reproduction) to shape economic behaviour, in this chapter I draw on the findings from my interviews and tie the significance of these findings to elements of NI and Giddens’ theory of structuration (1984). I argue that these sub-institutional elements have significant shaping power over individual and group activity and economic decision-making, and that where sub-institutional elements have been considered

peripherally in the past, they should be moved to a more central place within NI theory as the framework continues to evolve.

Defining the sub-institutional

In this chapter I seek to make distinct the role of sub-institutional elements in terms of the ‘duality of structure’, whereby social structure is understood to have a “two-sided existence – as both the medium and the unintended outcome of social practices” (Cassell 1993: 13). I argue that sub-institutional elements are fundamental to the “patterning” of social practices, which “is linked to highly generalized forms of motivation” (ibid). Giddens notes that “ordinary day-to-day life – in greater or less degree according to context and the vagaries of individual personality – involves an *ontological security* expressing an *autonomy of bodily control* within *predictable routines*” (Giddens 1984: 50; original emphasis).

A sub-institutional approach to institutions, emphasizing the systems and routines constituted and expressed by them, can be understood within the framework of Giddens’ notion of “ontological security”, whereby individuals “draw on rules and mobilize resources to re-enact practices that are found comforting” and where “it is the routine, taken-for-granted nature of tactful procedures that enables actors to enter into encounters with a degree of confidence” (discussed by Cassell 1993:14, 26). I argue that it is less the structured institutions themselves (as discussed in the preceding chapter) which shape decision-making, but more these sub-institutional “routines”, or “settled habits of thought” that motivate behaviour.

The “sub-institutional” has not been given great attention in academia, though the notion is not new (Nee 1998). As mentioned in Chapter 2, Veblen (1957) noted that “settled

habits of thought” underlie institutions. However, where Veblen’s understanding came up short was in his neglect in differentiating these “settled habits” from the organizational and structural aspects of institutions to which they belong. To give an example from this research (elaborated further in this chapter), family is an informal institution. However, while the organizational and structural notion of family certainly shapes behaviour to a certain extent (ie. necessitating the amount of food purchased, the type of home lived in, the social rules and arrangements between family members and so forth), much can be gained by going deeper - by scrutinizing the particular ‘habits of thought’ which influence decision-making at a more subtle level. These ‘habits of thought’ include family values, family routines, local/community norms, habits and traditions, and other forms of tacit knowledge (stemming from embeddedness).

One of key characteristics of NI is that it rejects the “thin” view of economic rationality, whereby individuals make rational decisions to maximize economic gain, and is rather in favour of a “thick” view of rationality, in which there are context-specific costs and benefits that weigh equally into decision-making. Scott suggests that formal and informal institutional structures can be conceived of as “thinner” and more “superficial” than normative and cultural aspects of the sub-institutional, which tend to be “thicker” in terms of social consequences (2008: 429). By this conception alone, we can see that there is a place for an elevated consideration of the sub-institutional within NI theory and practice.

To help argue this point, I also seek to highlight the “interlocking” nature of institutions. As Hayter (2004) points out, behaviour is “shaped by a variety of (intertwined) social and political as well as economic motivations and processes, and indeed by different kinds of interlocking institutions” (98). In this chapter I attempt to bridge sub-institutional

elements to one another and to the institutional framework, or social structure, as the whole. In my view, the interlocking nature of institutions and their corresponding sub-institutional elements strengthens the range of influence they have on decision-making: My suggestion is that where institutions and institutional elements interlock, overlap, and intertwine, behaviour is more likely to be affected.

As I will show, fishing is a practice through which a number of institutions overlap in Lax Kw'alaams. I use the term "culturally salient" to describe it, suggesting that because it brings together, or "carries" so many institutions and sub-institutional elements, it has a stronger influence on decision-making than other practices - forestry, in this case - which does not carry as many culturally relevant institutions and thus finds itself less meaningful to community members (Scott 2001). The term "cultural" is used to underscore the fact that communities, groups and organizations, through history and habit, build up ways of thinking and navigating the world that are distinct and embedded in context, and part of the 'duality of structure'. It is not meant to imply that a community (Lax Kw'alaams, in this case) is pre-disposed to particular ways of thinking *because* of its culture, as the sweeping generalizations of Modernization Theory would imply. In other words, it is my view that collective patterns of individual behaviours function to enable and construct what I call community "culture" (similar to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus'). These behaviours work are part of the social reproductive processes that shape the wider social structure (Bourdieu 1977; Granovetter 1985).

Revisiting institutions through the sub-institutional

Capital: Asking the right question

As I interviewed people about their connection to the forestry company, my questions were often diverted and responses were angled towards the downfall of fishing in the community. The sheer volume of explanations and lamentations about the fall of fishing was so overwhelming that I came to understand how the apparent triviality of my questions about forestry were so easily lost to bigger, seemingly more important questions about fishing and its connection to ideas about the perceived decline of a people.

The preceding chapter ended with a discussion of how many people in Lax Kw'alaams lack and have difficulty accessing the kinds of human and physical capital that would position them well for gainful employment with CTR or otherwise. As mentioned, CTR's employment policy requires a certain level of relevant knowledge, experience, and certifications for hiring into most positions, save for a few entry-level roles. In this section, I argue that where Lax Kw'alaams band members lack these qualifications with respect to the forest industry, they in fact possess them within the bounds of the practice and livelihood of fishing. Fishing is not only a historical tradition for the community, but is also tied closely to the peoples' values, habits, and sense of place. It is deeply embedded with family, location, and seasonality, examined in the previous chapter. Through time, fishing has become an economic routine and has contributed to the development of social norms. As mentioned, because the practice brings together (or "carries") a range of sub-institutional elements, it has a strong influence on decision-making. This is particularly so in terms of individuals' decisions to pursue employment with CTR.

It is easy to be persuaded by the illusion that there is something about fishing itself that is dissuading people from seeking work with CTR. In my view, a more accurate explanation is that it is the sub-institutional elements of fishing, taken collectively, which have the strongest influence on behaviour. The different strengths of influence between fishing and forestry are best understood by way of comparison. Fishing is a “carrier” of many important sub-institutional elements in the context of Lax Kw’alaams, while forestry carries fewer aspects, and is thus a practice with less cultural salience. The next section, along with Appendix C (‘What makes fishing a “culturally salient” practice? Fishing and forestry compared’) explore these differences.

Forestry and fishing compared

Forestry is a relatively new economic concept for the Lax Kw’alaams people. Historically, the Tsimshian relationship with the forest was multifaceted: Trees, wood and plants were used to create shelter, tools, art, and transport devices, rivers were traversed and followed, and animals were hunted, their flesh eaten and their fur used or traded to external Aboriginal bands or Asian retailers (Knight 1996; Miller 1997). The notion of forestry as the harvesting and sale of wood from trees (i.e., as an economic activity) is therefore new to the Lax Kw’alaams people both in concept and practice. Knight (1996) describes how the rise of commercial forestry did not offer continuity with traditional practice in noting that “there was very little similarity between indigenous woodworking and the requirements of commercial logging” (Knight 1996:15).

In contrast, fishing is an economic activity that has stronger linkages with historical practices and traditions:

“A belief that life and work in the canneries and commercial fishery is merely a minor modification of traditional subsistence practices can only be sustained by a wilful romanticism or an ignorance of what commercial fishing and canning were all about. And yet, Indian commercial fishing entailed greater continuity with traditional roles than obtained in most industries in which Indians worked” (Knight 1996: 10)

The continuity to which Knight refers can be seen in the way that many families continue to make a special point to teach their children how to fish and harvest marine plants and animals, despite the fact that fishing is not critical for subsistence as it once was (Carrie Blacker, Holly Edwards, Respondent 21). This “passing on” of knowledge around fishing is illustrative of what Holly Edwards termed “the chain of knowledge” within Tsimshian culture. This contemporary continuity of fishing and sea-based practices, along with the supposed reticence to work outside of the fishing industry, suggests that the Lax Kw’alaams people have values embedded in fishing; that is, they have an attachment to it. I asked Carrie Blacker about the community’s connection to the practice:

CB: I see the attachment as being really pragmatic, and really, the hesitancy to get away from it is that they know nothing else and they feel good doing that. It’s what they’re good at, it’s what they know. You know, there’s satisfaction from doing it. And if you give up fishing, and that’s all you know, and that’s all you have, then what do you end up with? There’s not a lot of options. I don’t see it as a cultural thing. On one level certainly there is - of course these are fishing people, they live on the ocean, people do their food

gathering - but a lot of the kids don't eat traditional foods. A lot of the adults don't eat traditional food.

Blacker, an external First Nations person (now residing in the community) provides an interesting perspective on the attachment to fishing. As an outsider, she has the advantage of viewing the behaviours of the community members more objectively and without the influence of the tacit knowledge that comes with a lifetime within it (Ray 2009). However, her close engagement with the band through her role as principal of the community school and her involvement in the close-knit village allows her a more profound understanding informed by time and immersion.

The “pragmatic” appeal of fishing to which Blacker refers speaks to the sub-institutional overlap of culturally salient practices. Respondent 12 (CTR employee, Lax Kw'alaams band member) elucidated these overlaps when he explained that people would rather work in fishing than in forestry:

Respondent 12: Fishing was good. If there was money involved...but it's really tough to stay, too. I think fishing would be a lot easier for them than coming out here.

Interviewer: Why's that?

Respondent 12: It's closer to home.

Interviewer: Any other reasons?

Respondent 12: It's seasonal. You don't have to put up with winter conditions. And it probably has a lot to do with the fish

– like, everybody loves fish down there. The fishing industry was what Port Simpson was all about. I shouldn't say the fishing industry – natural resources. Everything they do out there, a lot of food they get out of the ocean.

This explanation reveals that fishing is indeed “pragmatic” in context because it allows access to family and seasonality, which evidently go a long way in influencing involvement in the practice. The response from Respondent 12 also sheds light upon the value of fishing in the community, and the customs (“everything they do out there”) connected to the practice. Blacker’s comment that fishing is not a “cultural practice” might be interpreted to mean that its prevalence is not purely out of “cultural tradition” for its own sake. However, as I have argued, fishing can still be considered a “culturally salient” practice, since it operates as a carrier of many sub-institutional elements . What makes the difference is the distinction between activities that are culturally salient (in the present) and those that are culturally-rooted (in history and tradition). My interpretation is that fishing tends more towards contemporary salience, though its staying power as a practice stems from its roots in history and tradition:

For BC First Nations, their claims to allocation of fish rest on their Aboriginal rights. For centuries Aboriginal peoples along the coast and the major river systems structured their communities and lives around the fisheries resources in their traditional territories, where they developed rites and customs to govern access to fish and conducted communal and family-based enterprises. They were the great traders of Aboriginal Canada, and fish constituted a prime item of trade among villages and regions and later with early Europeans in British Columbia. (Gallaughier and Vauden 1999:283)

This excerpt highlights the tremendous role fishing has played in shaping the lives of Aboriginal peoples on the coast, touching upon several important institutional structures including Aboriginal legal rights, resource access and governance, the development of communities, the importance of traditional territories, and engagement with economy and markets. It reveals how fishing had a largely economic angle (that can be contrasted with the historical subsistence angle of forestry). The authors also point out fishing's connection with rites and customs, sub-institutional elements which are arguably more longstanding than any of the more structured institutions.

This quotation also brings special attention to the ways in which fishing has come to hold great value for the people of Lax Kw'alaams. The importance of fishing as an economic practice, evidenced in its contemporary continuity, no doubt stems from the way in which it enabled the people to survive and become successful traders and stewards on the Northwest coast, and is further arguable as it has become an integral part of Tsimshian customs and norms that continue to proliferate today (albeit arguably less so than in previous eras). In addition, it is my perception that the attachment to fishing (as a value-laden practice) inhibits community participation in other economic activities, despite the fact that many community members say they would "rather work for their welfare check than not" (John Helin, Chief Councillor). To give an example, one community member described how fishermen are generally not interested in other work (even when it allows them to stay in the community):

Interviewer: Are fishermen who are not working here interested in other jobs?

Respondent 14: No, no. [pause] It's hard to change. Hard to try and get them to change. Like they offered these roofing renovation deals for the fishermen, and anybody to bid on them and whatnot, but even that...it's not worth it when you think about it because the contracts are so low, eh.

This respondent's comment rather contrasts the aforementioned view that individuals prefer to work rather than to receive social assistance. Moreover, the suggestion that fishermen reject contracts "below" their perceived labour worth suggests that fishing may be understood in the community as an elite activity. Even when the social value of fishing is left aside, the monetary value of the practice is noteworthy. Hazel Trego, a consulting psychologist with Coast Tsimshian Academy, explained:

HT: I remember when I first came up here in 1979, the fishing was so lucrative that they were weighing stacks of cash – bills - rather than counting them...Cash was changing hands in big cartons. I would go into the Savoy Hotel after work and it would be jam-packed with fisherman and they would be buying rounds for the house...it was like they didn't know what to do with their money there was so much of it.

As fishing offers both social and monetary value, it is easy to understand how an elevated view of fishing as an economic practice. Few (if any) other economic

practices parallel its cultural salience in its connections to abovementioned sub-institutional elements. Moreover, fishing is not only central to livelihood, but is also a source of food/sustenance and is an avenue through which tradition and ritual can be (and often still is) practiced. The same cannot be said for forestry or logging, which received minimal attention, both in the interviews conducted and in the literature reviewed in this thesis. This fact alone evidences the lesser extent to which it has mattered to the Aboriginal people there.

One additional feature of fishing that deserves greater discussion is the embeddedness of the practice within contemporary community life, part of the reason the practice is still a fundamental part of life for the people of Lax Kw'alaams today. This is particularly evident in considering the tradition of passing on knowledge as well as tools, boats and other forms of physical capital to children, grandchildren, and other community members. The embeddedness of fishing in the lives and life cycles of the people in Lax Kw'alaams arguably facilitates new entry (of community members) into the occupation. In contrast, positions in fields outside of the fishing industry require a certain level of initiative from community members, who, rather than “evolving” into their careers, must actively seek opportunities for education and economic advancement. Respondent 12 explained that he had to make a conscious effort to “seek out info” about not job opportunities with CTR, but also with educational offers from the band. He noted that doing so was critical to his eventual employment with the company.

Thus, while Lax Kw'alaams community members appear to lack the capital required for gainful employment in CTR and other industries, it is arguably not the result of a deficiency in capabilities or motivation, but rather the result of a set of “social reproductive

processes” tailored specifically towards the economic and social survival of a coastal community (Scott 2008). Giddens (1984) remarks that “the reification of social relations, or the discursive ‘naturalization’ of the historically contingent circumstances and products of human action, is one of the main dimensions of ideology in social life...the knowledge [that members of society] possess is not incidental to the persistent patterning of social life but is integral to it” (26). This process has resulted in a community that has been historically conditioned towards its primary economic activity, fishing. In this case, the ‘duality of structure’ has led to a context in which “the product of history produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history” (Bourdieu 1977:82).

Family: Deconstructing the unit

I used the example of family at the beginning of this chapter to clarify the differences between family as institution (ie. the organizational and structural household unit) and family as made up of a number of sub-institutional elements (ie. attachments to family, norms, family values, tacit knowledge, habit, historical traditions, etc).

In separating our understanding of family as a *structural unit* from the notion of family as a *social institution*, it becomes clearer how the sub-institutional elements embedded within it influence economic behaviour and decision-making. For example, the household is the socially and legally recognized unit through which economic behaviour takes place. While property rights may belong to individuals, it is the household which occupies them. The household income is another key example which illustrates the ways in which this institution is wrapped up with external institutions including money, government and

economy. Consumer behaviour, including the range and volume of goods purchased, is directly shaped by the characteristics of the household. In contrast, attachments, values, routines and tacit knowledge play a significant role in the way individuals pattern their economic decision-making as they connect more closely with tastes and preferences, which shape the types or kinds of goods purchased. A clear example of the power of the sub-institutional component of family is evident in community members' strong attachment to family and/or family members, which may serve to discourage employment that would remove them from the family. The community's habit of working seasonally and "taking off" months of the year is another more subtle example of the ways in which sub-institutional elements combine and overlap to shape behaviour. In this case, community members are deciding to pursue the opportunity which gives them more time with their families.

An issue was tabled at a band council meeting I was able to attend that illustrated the strength of the normative element of family. The problem raised was the common scenario in the community, in which children have to move away in order to complete their high school diplomas. Because Coast Tsimshian Academy only has resources to educate students to grade 10, those who wish to pursue the remainder of their education must leave the reserve and attend an alternate school, typically in Prince Rupert, the closest city. The primary concern raised at the band council meeting was the issue of relocation – parents were lobbying the band council for funding in order that entire families might be able to move to Prince Rupert with their child and/or children. Of particular concern were single parent/multiple children families, who do not have the resources to adequately provide for children in two locations. Moreover, there was the concern that some children would be

forced to live alone, and that their quality of food and health would subsequently decline. This example makes clear the normative understandings community members have of the family arrangement, and also evidences a strong attachment to family, undoubtedly rooted in enduring routines and practices of keeping the family together.

This example is also illustrative of the interlocking nature of institutional elements. First and foremost, Lax Kw'alaams' lack of a complete high school program poses an obvious challenge for young people in the community. If one has to leave his or her family at the age of 15 or 16, he or she might be easily persuaded to start working (perhaps in fishing with the parent, as it would be both customary and the norm) after grade 10 rather than to leave his or her family to board and attend high school in Prince Rupert. This would certainly be the case with many young people, but it can be assumed to an even greater degree in Lax Kw'alaams, where family is evidently highly valued. This type of situation likely has spin-off effects on community, decreasing the average level of education and subsequently inhibiting the personal and professional development of young people that would give them the skills and abilities to make them employable. Thus, we can see how the sub-institutional elements of attachment to family, custom, and norms interact and overlap with the institutional structures of the educational system, locale and the household unit to create a context where it is easier for young people to stay at home rather than leaving to pursue education and employment.

Examining fishing as a celebrated, customary, historical and traditional practice also opens additional windows on the sub-institutional elements of family. To this point I have neglected to discuss the economic role of women in Lax Kw'alaams. Partly, this is because my field research indicated that only a narrow, if distinguishable economic role exists for

women in the community. Most of the women I spoke with worked were unemployed or worked in one of the band-operated organizations (the band council, at the school, at the recreation centre, or in the medical centre). Another woman I spoke with ran a “restaurant” out of her living room, while a couple of others managed the counter at their family-owned “stores”. I did not meet a female fisherman, nor did I hear of any in the community.

Thus, we must recall that employment in the Northwest Coast has tended to be rather gendered, as in other coastal regions (Neis 1999). As much of the work available in the region is connected to resource industries, often requiring demanding physical labour, the workforce tends to be male-dominated. While this has certainly shifted as the region has begun to urbanize (in places like Prince Rupert), in isolated locations such as Lax Kw’alaams it appears that this is still the case. Complicating matters further is that women of working age tend to be disadvantaged when compared to their male counterparts, who were generally given some employment training through the residential school system. In contrast, “female students received no vocational training in residential schools, under the presumption that they would become wives and mothers after leaving school” (Knight 1996:103).

As mentioned, it is my perception that while women are generally not fishermen, they are involved in the spin-off activities resulting from the fisheries, such as preparing, smoking, and preserving fish. Fishing thus emerges yet again as a culturally salient practice, as one of the few economic practices which can, and often has included women, and is distinct from forestry in this way (MacDonald *et al.* 2006). I met a handful of women who continue to participate in some of the traditional activities of the coastal economy, including collecting and preparing clams, cockles, seaweed and other food resources. These activities,

which have endured somewhat to the present today, appear to stem from many of the customs and traditions of the Tsimshian people. Coastal activities have had space for, and have continued to create a place for women's participation in the subsistence economy (MacDonald *et al.* 2006; Cresswell 2004). Women on the coast were able to participate as important contributors to their community's food supply:

“While hunting and trapping were predominantly male activities, women participated under certain conditions. Among the northern band societies it was usual for women to set snares for small animals and to tend fishing nets near the trapping camps. Along the coast women dug clams, gathered mussels and harvested a variety of other marine resources. This seems to have been an important alternate food resource” (Knight 1996:45)

Thus, the customary, traditional and historical practices around fishing, as well as the coastal location of Lax Kw'alaams, have made meaningful participation possible for both men and women. Again, fishing is an economic activity that offers family members the opportunity to support one another, work together, and most importantly, stay together. Family norms, the attachment to family, and historical customs supporting the household unit are the types of “moral pressures” that Scott argues work to “cement social order” and contribute to “social stability” (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Scott 2008).

Seasonality: a structured life

As discussed in the previous chapter, resource industries on the west coast generally operate under the restrictions externally imposed by the changing of the seasons (fishing, in particular). I thus characterized seasonality as an institutionalized feature of coastal living, which operates to shape economic behaviour for the people of Lax Kw'alaams, particularly in terms of structuring the harvest of fish and other sea resources. I also showed how the structural aspects of seasonality diverge from those under which CTR operates, which, as a year-round industry, is not as rigidly constrained. I also pointed out the other structural

differences between work in the seasonal industries on the west coast and work within CTR, which operates under its own time-related structures. In this chapter I argue that behaviour is further constrained by the sub-institutional elements of seasonality, which I characterize as a “way of life” rooted in habit, custom, tradition and history.

A prime example of the sub-institutional level of the seasonal way of life is evident in the resource harvesting philosophy of the people, which Lax Kw’alaams elder James Bryant described in broad terms to be: “Take only what you need!” The way in which fishing and hunting practices are carefully carried out reflects a deep understanding and respect of the ecological aspects of animals’ lives: Hunters are only to shoot male, never female animals. When harvesting clams, the rule is: “Don’t take the little clams, only take the big ones...the little ones need time to grow” (James Bryant, elder). Knight (1996) notes that “there is no reason to be amazed by the broad and subtle knowledge about animal ecology acquired by Indian hunters and fisherman”, suggesting that “knowledge of the behaviour, habitat, and cycles of the animals hunted was as crucial as the technology that was used. The knowledge employed by a single hunter or fisherman would undoubtedly have filled a fair-sized book” (45). Bryant described the stark contrast between the philosophy of the people, which respects animals’ life cycles and moves with the seasons, and the year-round, “clean-sweep” practices embodied in the commercial fishing industry.

The sub-institutional elements of seasonality have clear overlaps with other institutions, including economy and family. The deep embeddedness of seasonality in Lax Kw’alaams has contributed to a population which has become accustomed to a particular, seasonal way of life, where employment and income-generating activity takes place only during certain times of the year for concentrated periods. In the past, when fishing in the

region was a relatively lucrative activity, fishermen could earn upwards of about \$10,000 a day, and considerably more over the duration of the respective fishing seasons, which allowed them to return home to their families for months at a time before the next fishing season began (Hazel Trego). A community consultant I interviewed made the observation that the community has adopted an “EI culture” whereby community members aim to earn enough during the fishing season to fulfill unemployment insurance requirements and collect during the “off-season”. This “coping mechanism” allows individuals to “hang on” to the traditional activities in decline (MacDonald *et al.* 2006: 201, 206). The band’s other economic operation, the fish cannery, which also operates seasonally, employs a proportion of the community that is otherwise without work. A cannery representative noted that the goal is to make sure the cannery’s employees work enough hours during the fishing season so that they can claim unemployment insurance once it closes down. The consultant suggested, on the other hand, that the “EI culture” is less of a ‘safeguard’ and more of a ‘resting place’ for some community members, allowing them to “take off” a significant amount of time during the year. The wish to keep up this way of life is part of the desire to maintain “ontological security” (Cassell 1993:14).

Examining seasonality as being comprised of a number of sub-institutional elements it becomes clearer how it influences decision-making beyond the structural constraints it imposes. People actively shape their lifestyles around the habits and traditions of seasonality, which affords them access to the sub-institutional elements offered by the seasonal way of life, such as time spent with family, fishing and marine ecosystem values, customs, traditions. Moreover, it allows band members to work within normative ideas of work, family, livelihoods, and community.

Sense of place: the context of action

The sense of place engendered by the community of Lax Kw'alaams is a critical element which underlies many of the other aforementioned institutions and sub-institutions. The Tsimshian Nation prides itself as being an aggressive and industrious people who fought lengthy battles for the territory from which they drew abundant stocks of animal furs, fish and other marine life⁸. The thousands of years spent in the region have contributed to a powerful and diverse accumulation of knowledge about the natural environment there. As mentioned, the Tsimshian people are known as skillful traders, with a long history of exchanging furs and marine goods from their camps on the coast across the Pacific Ocean with Asian buyers and sellers⁹. Suffice it to say, the collective history and socio-cultural legacy of both the Tsimshian Nation and the Lax Kw'alaams band is based almost entirely on its connection to the location they inhabited, the territory to which they anchored their identity as a people, and to the place to which they remain emotionally connected. This attachment (or sense of place) is a key sub-institutional element of the institutions location and territory, playing a critical role in shaping decision-making.

Unlike territory, which is defined and characterized by institutional structures that are both external (government laws and recognition) and internal (traditional naming system and identity structures), the notion of place is a more subtle element that plays a particularly strong role in the lives of the people of Lax Kw'alaams. Unlike territory, region, or other institutions, place is not beholden to formal rules; rather, its significance can only be seen in its “symbolic” value - through the anecdotes of individuals whose existence is embedded in

⁸ As told to me in separate interviews by Russell Mathers, art and culture teacher and Herb Pond, a non-First Nations person currently employed by Lax the Band Council as Band manager

⁹ As told to me in separate interviews by James Bryant and Respondent 21, elders

it, both in terms of the literal and figurative place (Scott 2001). The place in this context is the conceptual component of the territory, in which there are “common values, processes of valuation and regulations, modes of through, and distinct grooves to local life” (Hayter 2004:107)

The cultivation of sense of place out of location or territory is a continuous practice. This becomes evident in considering the discussion (in Chapter 3) of the band’s attempt to recreate place through a recognition of territory by means of an entrance sign reading: “Welcome to Tsimshian Territory: Home of the 9 Tribes of Lax Kw’alaams”. Indeed, place-making is a dynamic, evolving activity and the routes through which a location can be made meaningful beyond its physical or geographical attributes are many (Cresswell 2004:5, 37). Identities of place may be “multiple, shifting, possibly unbounded” (Massey 1994:7).

The establishment of a sense of place out of a location is rooted at the heart of Tsimshian culture. Roth (2008) explains how, for the Tsimshian, identity is bound to place: “Traditional Tsimshian personhood is constructed on radically different premises than is personhood in white North American society”, particularly as Tsimshian people are named according to “the past and to the territory on which that past unfolded” (30). Roth here highlights the peoples’ connection not only to the ‘location’ (territory), but also to the ‘locale’ and ‘sense of place’ (alluded to in referencing the past and the place in which it took place). The importance of the past in shaping contemporary understandings and emotional attachments as they relate to place is critical for the people of Lax Kw’alaams, who believe that “Where you come from is more important than where you’re going” (James Bryant, elder).

Jay Miller (1997) notes, “For the Tsimshian, human descendants circulated through a series of fixed identities, based in a household, whose pedigrees and characteristics were described in hereditary chronicles where these names engaged in specific practices at *specific locations*” (129; emphasis added). By examining traditional Tsimshian culture, we can see the ways in which the sense of place is tied to other very important sub-institutional elements such as history, customs, tradition, norms, and other social matrices, while simultaneously providing a linking point between institutions such as territory and family.

The sense of place discussed here serves as the context upon which all action takes place. Formal and informal institutions operate within and around the place, but the way in which individuals interact with them is directly informed by their attachment to it, which, as I have argued, is made through not only place-making activities, but also by means of the history, customs, traditions, rituals, and habits. Place, like many of the other elements raised, connects with and across other institutions and sub-institutional elements.

The sub-institutional factor

While institutions play a strong role in shaping economic behaviour, sub-institutional elements are the systems and practices that underlie them. This chapter has illustrated that within the structure of every institutional “barrier” in Lax Kw’alaams, there are sub-institutional elements that can help to explain many of the decision-making tendencies.

These sub-institutional elements both shape and contribute to the “embeddedness” factors of Lax Kw’alaams, and thus provide us with a more nuanced understanding of its context. To put it plainly, they help to show us why things are the way they are.

CHAPTER 6: Application of Analysis

This chapter seeks to synthesize data with theory in order to suggest practical ways in which CTR and Lax Kw'alaams might apply the findings of this analysis. In Chapter 3, I presented the theoretical approach of this research, which emphasizes the role of institutions and sub-institutional bases in shaping economic decision-making. I suggested that an understanding of the sub-institutional elements within them provides a deep level of insight into the behaviour-shaping factors embedded in the local context. In Chapters 4 and 5, I explored the institutionally-rooted barriers which currently prevent a close integration of Lax Kw'alaams with CTR. I presented findings of my field research in Lax Kw'alaams and illustrated ways in which the sub-institutional bases provide a way of understanding how social systems and structure shape decision-making and vice-versa, revealing that the sub-institutional level of the barriers discussed can provide a deeper understanding of the community-company dynamics. Here I present the results of my data and analysis towards the possibility of the practical application of this research.

Distance, location and territory

One of the more immediate concerns for many members of the Lax Kw'alaams was the issue of distance between the community, in its location at Port Simpson, and CTR's main office in Terrace, BC. As mentioned, Port Simpson is currently only accessible by boat or seaplane, which only adds to the challenge of navigating the roughly 120km between the two locations. Some interviewees reported a lack of a vehicle or driver's license as an issue further preventing ease of access.

I asked Respondent 12 (CTR employee and band member) about his perceived connection to the community:

Interviewer: Do you feel like you're connected to the community through working with this company?

Respondent 12: Somewhat. I don't go home a lot but when I do, a lot of people know me back there and I know a lot of them...I know a lot of people and everybody in the band council...go back there for meetings, go back there for some events that go on. But you know, the thing about that, if it was based out of Simpson, I'd be there. And if they had a road access I'd probably go back there every weekend and live there instead of Rupert.

The response from Respondent 12 echoed the sentiments of other community members I interviewed regarding the challenge of the distance and the desire to return to the community regularly. While a daily commute is simply not feasible, a weekly commute might be possible for some individuals or families who have gainful employment with CTR and the financial means to pay for the cost of living in two locations. An immediate suggestion for dealing with the distance would be to arrange a carpool or 'ride-share' service back and forth between the community. This could be advertised on the Lax Kw'alaams community website, in the newsletter, at band council meetings, and could be announced over the CB radio system (currently installed in most households). This could be easily arranged by a band council member and/or a member of staff at CTR.

A long-term strategy to reduce the perceived distance between Lax Kw'alaams and Terrace could be to support the understanding of Terrace as part of the community's sense of place. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the cultivation of a sense of place out of location or territory is a continuous practice that occurs through place-making activities that make the physical locale meaningful (Cresswell 2004:37). While the Tsimshian are historically connected to their traditional territory on the coast, this connection does not presuppose the potential of meaning-making in new places. That said, there are no clear-cut methods for creating meaning, and thus some creativity must be applied. One way to increase the community's connection to Terrace and the surrounding region would be to increase their exposure to it. Carpool and/or ride-share programs to and from Terrace would support more community exposure to Terrace. The school, Coast Tsimshian Academy, could organize field trips to the Terrace region to explore the natural resources of the area along with the history of other Tsimshian groups in the region. The Lax Kw'alaams band council might also support community member "field-trips" to CTR's office and forest area a few times a year, which would give the Band Council and CTR the opportunity to explain the community ownership of the company, along with the practices of CTR to community members in a practical way, allowing them to internalize and understand the operations as they happen in practice. This would be a relatively inexpensive way to expose band members to both the Terrace region and CTR's activities in general.

Family

A behaviour-shaping institution that is inherently tied to both the location and the community's sense of place is family. As mentioned throughout the paper, there are a

number of reasons why close ties to family inhibit a closer relationship between the community and CTR. As Respondent 12 explained to me, the separation from family was a requisite sacrifice for the pursuit of work:

Interviewer: Was it hard for your family to see you go off during the week?

Respondent 12: To them, I guess, they're used to it because, you know, I've been doing it all along, and I'm still doing it. I'd rather focus on work, I mean that's what it's all about. I phone, I talk to my family a lot on the phone, but...you have to survive, and work is work.

Interviewer: Do you have another apartment here?

Respondent 12: Yep. I bunk in with a couple of friends and share the food, share the rent.

There is no straightforward way to deal with the separation from family aside from moving the entire family to Terrace, which, as mentioned, is not often considered by most families, who maintain strong ties to the community. However, this barrier is buttressed by the fact that many families cannot afford to make the move off-reserve, where their status benefits do not apply, making housing, education and medical care more costly. One suggestion, inspired by Respondent 12's industriousness in finding a cooperative living situation, would be the creation of subsidized housing and/or community housing in Terrace for band members and/or families who are interested in relocating for work with CTR. This endeavour could be supported by both the band council and CTR and might be a good

incentive for recruiting band members to work for CTR. Supported living could be continuing or on a trial basis (ie. for the first six months of employment).

The band council and CTR can continue to support the functioning of the company “like a family” as an indirect way of ameliorating the separation from family and the community. A simple suggestion is to host events to bring CTR employees together in Terrace, and/or between CTR and the community (ie. on holidays, for traditional events, etc.), which could improve relations and engender a sense of community both within the company, and between the community and CTR.

It is my view that the most critical step in making CTR a more appealing place for Lax Kw’alaams band members is simply to increase its appearance in the community. While CTR supports some school events, such as basketball tours and field trips, it should seek to target those outside of the school system as well. This could be accomplished through community events, public meetings, information sessions to community members, business representation, or any other public appearances which might facilitate increased interaction between the company and the community, particularly on Lax Kw’alaams’ territory.

Seasonality

The “seasonal” structure that has characterized the economic and social lives of the people of Lax Kw’alaams throughout much of their history is a barrier that cannot be “overcome” in the same sense as some of the other barriers. That said, one of the sticking points of structuration theory is that “at each point of structural reproduction there is also the potential for change” (Cassell 1993:13). This could be interpreted to mean change in the

way in which business is structured, or change in the routines, behaviours and cultural-cognitive systems embodied by the community.

One suggestion might be to acknowledge the seasonal way of life in the structure of community programming. For example, mentorship and job-training programs could be designed to ease individuals into the full-time, year-round mentorship program. Placements could start as part-time, seasonal assignments, with a gradual increase in work periods towards the development of a year-round, full-time employment practice.

Lack of capital

The problem of a lack of capital with respect to the forestry industry has more direct solutions (that may, however, be equally as challenging to implement). Since many band members cannot afford the immediate investment into physical capital such as tools, vehicles, working gear and so forth, the creation of loan and/or lease programs would facilitate the acquisition of such work necessities. The band council and/or CTR could support a fund to loan new employees the necessary “gear” for working in the field, or the funds to purchase their own gear, with collateral or an ‘agreement to pay’ signed in return. An additional option is the creation of a lease program for physical capital, which would give employees the option to pay incrementally for termed-use of tools, gear, and other supplies. This could easily be arranged through either the band administration or CTR’s main office. Finally, CTR could invest in some new or used physical capital that would be available for rent on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis, for those community members with only short-term contracts. Decreasing these immediate costs of working for CTR, in

combination with other suggested options, could have a beneficial impact on increasing the attractiveness of CTR's job opportunities.

As expressed in Chapter 3, it is clear through the responses of several interviewees that one area that should be given special attention within the community is supporting the development of human capital, particularly as a number of people in the community reported a lack of post-secondary education and training, along with the relevant work experience that would provide them with necessary background and employability skills. In the previous chapter, I showed how many community members' lack of training and work experience in forestry is largely the result of the embeddedness of fishing in Lax Kw'alaams history. Although I emphasize this perspective as important in understanding the reasons behind the apparent lack of interest in CTR's forestry activities, the reality of the changing economic landscape of the Northwest Coast must be acknowledged in offering suggestions for the future. There is no doubt amongst community members that the fishing industry is no longer a reliable source of income, and that the economic future of fishing looks grim.

Carrie Blacker, the principal of Coast Tsimshian Academy, explained:

CB: People really know the end is near, so to speak. So I hear parents and grandparents all the time, they're encouraging their kids: You *need* this education...because they can't see a future for children in fishing. Certainly families are still teaching their kids traditional food gathering and traditional fishing, you know, making sure they can...um, you know, provide that way. But as far as a job, I think everybody is well aware that's a time gone by, and that, you know, it would be

wonderful if we could all be fishermen, but we can't. It's just not gonna work.

Having said that, CTR should not be understood as a panacea for socioeconomic improvement in Lax Kw'alaams. It seems that much of the company's market success comes from its structure as a business organization (as opposed to being a social organization or cooperative). Thus, it is important to be sensitive to the limits of CTR's employment capabilities as a profit-seeking venture. Respondent 13, who handles some aspects of employment at CTR, explained:

Respondent 13: In this economic picture, the way it is right now, it's not really feasible to get all our contractors to hire Lax Kw'alaams band members because they would have to be trained, which costs more... But if it ever picks up to the point where they could hire new people, we really try to encourage them to employ Lax Kw'alaams band members. And if markets were better, we would have more money to pay them where they could train individuals... We try to get as many Lax Kw'alaams band members employed right now... but a lot of them are really short term projects, projects that don't require a whole lot of training.

Interviewer: How do you make these positions known when they come up?

Respondent 13: I'll do a posting, I'll email it out to any Lax Kw'alaams band member I have an email for, plus I'll fax the posting to Lax

Kw'alaams band council, Lax Kw'alaams fire department, Lax Kw'alaams leisure centre, and ask them to post it in their buildings. And depending on the projects, if it's a larger one, we'll also put it in various newspapers.

According to Respondent 13, CTR is attempting to go through several avenues in an effort to make it known within the community when there are jobs available. Considering the band office, the fire department and the recreation centre are three of the most prominent community organizations in Lax Kw'alaams, CTR is doing a fair job at reaching community members. On the other hand, it is also the responsibility of job-seeking individuals to keep up-to-date with these organizations and with CTR about postings that are available. Once postings have been made public, the onus is on individuals to respond.

With regard to the community members' apparent lack of interest in pursuing such opportunities, Blacker noted: "I think what's missing...there's no encouragement that I can see in the community to encourage their own people to get involved in that company, or whatever else." The "fear of the unknown" in combination with a lack of skills and abilities, as mentioned in Chapter 3, is likely the root of at least some of the disconnect between the employers offering positions and the people who say they want jobs. Thus, it might be suggested that this gap be bridged through additional community programming. Band members would benefit by increased programs and opportunities designed to encourage participation in forestry and other economic activities. A range of basic skills training programs in the community (perhaps run by the band council, or through the recreation centre), along with opportunities for mentorship and even job-shadowing, might assist

individuals in fostering the skills and confidence to pursue new and/or different work experiences and employment opportunities.

Both Carrie Blacker and Herb Pond (the band administrator), expressed at different times the need to encourage and support young people in particular throughout their education and youth towards entry into the fields in which they have the greatest interests and strengths. Blacker emphasized the need to “tap into kids’ potential”, while Pond suggested targeted funding for specific students towards specific career or educational goals. Lax Kw’alaams does not have to be path-dependent. On the contrary, the economic “crossroads” facing the community presents a valuable opportunity for the support of skills development, both within forestry and outside it.

In addition, the community would benefit by increased programs designed to deal with some of the “unmet needs” in the community, as expressed by community psychologist Hazel Trego. Alcoholism, drug abuse, family violence and other psychological and psychosocial disorders can inhibit meaningful participation in the local economy. A regular, onsite psychologist (as opposed to the “consulting” status of those already visiting the community), along with the introduction of healing and rehabilitation programs would benefit such individuals greatly.

NI and practical solutions

In sum, there are a number of steps that could be taken to try to reduce the figurative (and in some cases, literal) distance between Lax Kw’alaams community members and CTR. I have attempted to show through these suggestions that an approach to social and economic contexts based in NI can shed insights into both problems, and can provide a framework for

devising their solutions. The ideas presented here are by no means exhaustive, but could serve as a starting point for additional discussion amongst the band council and the management staff of CTR.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusions

In the one-year period from the time I began my research on the Lax Kw'alaams Band in the spring of 2009, Coast Tsimshian Resources has made headlines in *The Vancouver Sun* ('First nation leads Northwest economic revival'), *The Ottawa Citizen* ('B C native village goes global')¹⁰, *The Edmonton Journal* ('Native village's forest company goes global')¹¹, *The Victoria Times Colonist* ('First nation shows way', 'Coastal first nations loggers land China export deal')¹² and *Macleans* magazine ('Gold in them hills')¹³, among other publications. This is evidence that this research is only one small part of the beginning of a much larger story about Lax Kw'alaams and Coast Tsimshian Resources, which is already attracting attention across Canada. Thus, the concluding thoughts I offer here are by no means 'conclusive', but are rather reflections on the small part of the story that I have told.

In the early stages of research in Lax Kw'alaams, I discovered that many Lax Kw'alaams community members seemed uninformed or disconnected from the company CTR, despite sharing in its ownership. While I had initially been interested in explaining the constitutive influence of the community and the company on one another, it became clear that the issue of this disconnect between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR would need to be

¹⁰ Hamilton, G (2010, March 19) Native village goes global. Retrieved from June 14, 2010 from <http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/todays-paper/native+village+goes+global/2699962/story.html>

¹¹ Hamilton, G (2010, March 19) Native village forest company goes global. Retrieved June 14, 2010 from <http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Native+village+forest+company+goes+global/2678624/story.html>

¹² Hamilton, G (2009, October 13) Coastal First Nations loggers land China export deal. Retrieved October 20, 2009 from <http://www.timescolonist.com/business/your-money/BI/Coastal+first+nations+loggers+land+China+export+deal/2098215/story.html>, also, Hamilton, G (2010, March 12) First Nation shows way. Retrieved March 12, 2010 from <http://www2.canada.com/victoriatimescolonist/news/business/story.html?id=ec9ab231-cd69-474b-9e6e-936bd5f10dae&p=2>

¹³ MacDonald, N (2009, December) 'Gold in them hills: It's natives and suits versus greens in this new war in the woods'. Retrieved April 2010 from <http://www2.macleans.ca/tag/coast-tsimshian-resources/>

addressed. Thus, this “problem” became the lens through which I began to understand the relationship between Lax Kw’alaams and CTR, and it subsequently informed my research.

It also became clear that there were a number of factors that were having an impact on the way in which community members could relate to, or become involved with CTR. I identified the most prominent of these issues, suggesting them as “barriers” that impeded a more close connection with the company. Working from the framework of New Institutional theory, I discussed these barriers as rooted in a number of institutions, and raised Giddens’ notion of ‘the duality of structure’ as an intermediary principle to understand the co-constitutive nature of institutions and social structure (Giddens 1984). The barriers identified included location, territory, family, seasonality, and a lack of capital. What these all have in common is their enduring nature as “durable structures” with clear “rules” implicit within them that function to shape economic behaviour in the community.

An analytical approach based in NI allows for the possibility of a more nuanced understanding of the ‘embeddedness’ of institutions within the social and economic context. I argue that these more profound understandings can lead to deeper insights that can potentially be useful to ameliorate the disconnect. In the second part of the paper, I explored the idea of the “sub-institutional”: the symbolic systems, relational systems, routines and artifacts that operate as part of socially reproductive processes (Scott 2001). I distinguished the structural characteristics and effects of formal and informal institutions from the more profound ways in which their corresponding sub-institutional elements, as embedded “habits of thoughts”, operate to shape behaviour in ways that are simultaneously less obvious and yet very powerful (Hayter 2004).

One of the critical findings of this research came out of the deduction that community members' lack of capital with respect to the forestry industry is not the result of an overall deficiency in skills and abilities. Instead, it became evident that although a number of band members lack the qualifications for participation in the forest industry, their knowledge of fishing is extensive, gleaned from thousands of years of experience along with strong social, cultural and economic ties to the practice that have been carried rather strongly through to the present day.

I introduced the notion of "cultural salience" as a way to talk about fishing as a practice that functions as a "carrier" of many of the community's most prominent sub-institutional elements, including history, tradition, family, seasonality, and location, among others (Scott 2001). I argued that where sub-institutional elements interlock and overlap (as in fishing), their influence on decision-making is more profound. Thus, while it is clear that there is something about the community's attachment to fishing which is inhibiting them from pursuing employment with CTR, this analysis has argued that in fact it is the many sub-institutional elements that are "carried" by the practice of fishing that influence community members' job-seeking behaviours. Crucial to this point is the understanding that sub-institutional elements influence decision-making at the very level where behaviours "constitute and reconstitute" the activities that "reify" systems, contributing to the 'embeddedness' of practices and behaviours, a critical recognition in NIA (Giddens 1984:25; Hayter 2004).

This matters for two key reasons: first, it gives value to the knowledge and skills that community members do have; and second, it provides an answer to the question of why individuals may be lacking in some other skill sets. The 'embeddedness' of fishing within

Lax Kw'alaams has created a context where fishing is the most valued skill, practice, and economic activity. The 'duality of structure' has perpetuated the perceived importance of this knowledge and practice to the present day, leaving Lax Kw'alaams band members with a highly-refined skill set, geared almost exclusively towards fishing and other coastal activities.

The key implication of this particular finding is the fact that sub-institutional elements play a critical role in shaping decision-making around broader institutional structures, which in turn contribute to the overall structure of society. Giddens' (1984) concept of the 'duality of structure' is a useful lens for understanding this influence, as it recognizes that "analyzing the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts are produced and reproduced in interaction" (25).

Finally, in order to show the practical applicability of NI theory and analysis, I presented a number of suggestions towards ameliorating the disconnect between community members and CTR. These suggestions were based on the results of my findings in combination with theoretical support. I hope that the community of Lax Kw'alaams and CTR's management will find these suggestions thought provoking, and perhaps useful.

Revisiting the (difficult) questions

My purpose in pursuing this research was to learn more about a successful First Nations' enterprise, to build a case study from my findings, and to analytically examine the elements of the business and community, along with the relationship between them, that function in

this arrangement. While I have learned more about the CTR and have created a case analysis, I have come short of my own goals of revealing the “keys to success” in this case, particularly because I highlighted the problems within it.

That said, I must return to my hopes as laid out in the introductory chapter, where I discussed my desire to tell a “positive” story of Aboriginal development success and resilience. I criticized the lot of literature emphasizing the failures and challenges in Aboriginal studies, and development literature, in particular. Reflecting on this research, I must honestly ask: Have I done any differently?

Perhaps not, as I have fallen into the research angle common in Development Studies, emphasizing problems and trying my hand at offering solutions. That said, this research has revealed to me one great insight, and that is that a “positive” story is not necessarily a “perfect” story. Instead, what I have presented here is a case study of a community and company that are testimony to the fact that all institutions and the societies in which they exist are beholden to their own context-specific embeddedness, which means strengths, weaknesses, and all those things that fall somewhere in between. Is Lax Kw’alaams collectively-owned forest company “successful”? The answer to this question is threefold: Yes, somewhat, and no (or at least not yet).

Certainly, in terms of its ability to outlive other forestry enterprises and to garner significant earnings in its first decade of operation, it is a market success. While CTR’s profits have, to date, primarily been reinvested in the business, the company has made a name for itself in the Canadian forest industry, and even internationally, as the aforementioned news articles indicate. It has also put Lax Kw’alaams on the map as a First Nation that is effectively engaging with local, national and international economic markets.

Has CTR met the objectives established by the Lax Kw'alaams band in creating the company? Recall that the community goals in pursuing CTR were: (a) to hire band members, to serve as a source of employment, (b) pay dividends back to individual partners (band members), (c) establish a land and resource base. The first goal has only been partially met (with 25% First Nation employment). CTR's management indicated that the hiring of band members is a continual goal, although they emphasized problems of a lack of qualifications of community members. It was also noted by management that once economic indicators (impacted by the global economic crisis) have improved, there may be greater efforts to train and recruit band members. The second goal, to pay dividends to CTR's owners, has not yet been accomplished. According to the Lax Kw'alaams band council and CTR's management, the first priority has been paying down company debt and reinvestment in the company. At the time of my interviews, there were no immediate plans for paying dividends to band members; thus, the second goal has not been met to date. The third goal, to gain access to a land and resource base, was met in the establishment of a company. In sum, then, the community goals in the establishment of CTR are being met only somewhat.

Finally, with CTR as a case example, is the community-owned company an effective means to community development? If 'development' is understood within the framework outlined by the Assembly of First Nations, the answer is no, at least not yet. This framework emphasizes self-sufficiency, control of traditional lands, improvement of socioeconomic conditions for Aboriginal people, and strengthening traditional culture, values, and languages (Anderson and Bone 1995; Anderson *et al.* 2002; Hindle *et al.* 2005). With an unemployment rate that continues to waver between 50-80%, along with continued low levels of education and capital, Lax Kw'alaams cannot be characterized as increasing its

self-sufficiency and socioeconomic indicators. In addition, the comparison between fishing and forestry highlights the fact that CTR's activities do little to support the strengthening of traditional culture and values, and contributes nothing towards the strengthening of traditional languages. Although the establishment of CTR effectively created a land and resource base for the community, only part of this woodlands area in fact belongs to Lax Kw'alaams traditional territory. Moreover, the distance between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR (in Terrace) asks community members to further separate from their territory.

That being said, CTR as a case example has contributions to studies of Aboriginal economic development. Cornell and Kalt's (2006) work on institutional congruence as a feature of successful Aboriginal businesses is supported by this research, through inverse findings on a disconnect that exists between a community and a company that are too institutionally different. This study revealed that community members have significant social and economic attachments fishing, a culturally salient practice, while forestry remains too distinct from the institutional elements that are important to the people of Lax Kw'alaams. The problematic decline in the fishing industry has created significant challenges for community-driven economic development, and the Lax Kw'alaams band should be recognized for its attempts to diversify *despite* its traditional ties to fishing. However, as detailed Chapter 6 ('Application of Analysis'), there are ways in which the community and company can work together to build on institutions and sub-institutional elements important to Lax Kw'alaams to increase forestry's palatability to community members.

In addition, this study challenges one of the fundamental assumptions of Modernization Theory, which blames underdevelopment on the fact that groups refuse to

abandon their culture and “modernize”. It does not necessarily refute this hypothesis, but it reveals that embeddedness precedes culture, thus challenging the assumption that culture is something that can be “cast off”, “put on”, or changed in the sense that is suggested. Instead, seeking out alternative ways of development that build upon the aspects of culture which are the most enduring and important amongst a particular group, and which are conducive to development (and perhaps capitalism) should be prioritized, as Hindle *et al.* (2005) have pointed out. Examining those institutions and sub-institutional elements that are important to a group is a good place to start.

Additional research in the area of Aboriginal economic development could incorporate other community-owned companies and enterprises towards a comparative study of different business arrangements. It might be well-suited for a sociologist proficient in business, management, or organizational studies to undertake more specific research into the exact business practices which make CTR, or other such companies financially “successful” in their respective businesses. The obvious suggestion from this theoretical side of this research is that future investigations that use NI as a grounding theoretical framework should consider incorporating an analysis of sub-institutional elements into their research design.

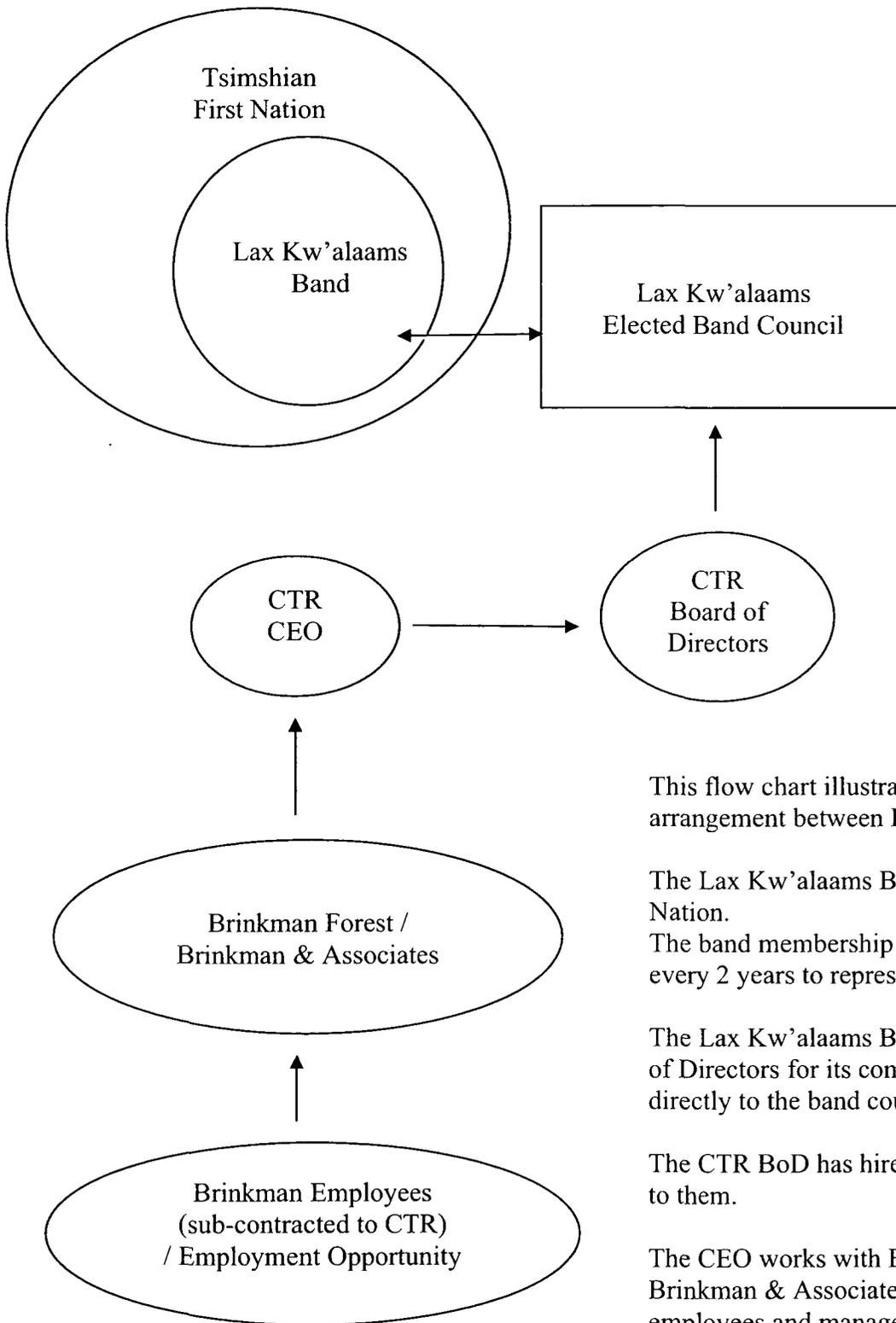
One of my chief goals was to create a sociological profile of Lax Kw’alaams and Coast Tsimshian Resources that would be useful to them. I hope that what I offer here will be enlightening, or perhaps helpful to the community and company in some respect. What I offer readers and academics, however, is (a) the privilege of hearing the story of a First Nation group which has taken bold advances towards its own well-being; (b) a new community-level case study based in New Institutional theory; (c) a way of understanding

institutions and their corresponding sub-institutional elements in terms of Giddens' notion of the 'duality of structure'; (d) a fresh appreciation of the insights that a more nuanced understanding of embeddedness can offer to real-world scenarios and problems; and finally, (e) further evidence that "problems", however they are conceived, are the things that compel us to keep asking more questions.

Appendix A: Interviewee List

Name	Role	Band Member? Y/N
COMMUNITY AND BAND COUNCIL		
Carrie Blacker	Principal, Coast Tsimshian Academy	N
Garry Reece	Council member, Lax Kw'alaams Chairman of the board of CTR	Y
Herb Pond	Band Administrator	N
James Bryant	Cultural Ambassador, Lax Kw'alaams Band, Board of CTR	Y
Respondent 21	Elder, Community Member	Y
Jerry Lawson	Band Council Member, Economic Development Chair	Y
John Helm	Chief Councillor, Lax Kw'alaams	Y
Respondent 14 (Anon)	Community Member	Y
Russell Mather	Cultural coordinator, Coast Tsimshian Academy	Y
Wilfred Campbell	Community Member	Y
OUTSIDERS/EXTERNALS		
Respondent 18 (Anon)	INAC regional representative/coordinator	N
Hazel Trego	Consultant, school and community psychologist	N
Stewart Ladyman	Consultant with Coast Tsimshian Academy, former Superintendent of Schools in BC	N
COAST TSIMSHIAN RESOURCES		
Respondent 13	Employee, Brinkman Forest (Terrace)	Y
Brendan Wilson	Forest Manager, Brinkman Forest (Terrace)	N
Cathy Craig	Operations Manager, Brinkman Forest	N
Dirk Brinkman	CEO, Brinkman & Associates	N
Respondent 12 (Anon)	Employee, Brinkman Forest (Terrace)	Y
Holly Edwards	Compass Assistant, Registered Forest Technician	Member of Lytton band, married to Lax Kw'alaams band member
Jon Schulz	Planning Forester	N
Richard Chavez	Technical Forest Operations	N
Ryan Keswick	Operations Forester	N
Wayne Drury	CEO, CTR CEO, Lax Kw'alaams Economic Development Corporation	N

Appendix B: The Organizational Structure of Coast Tsimshian Resources (CTR)



This flow chart illustrates the structure of the arrangement between Lax Kw'alaams and CTR.

The Lax Kw'alaams Band is part of the Tsimshian Nation. The band membership elects its council members every 2 years to represent the interests of the band.

The Lax Kw'alaams Band has established a Board of Directors for its company, CTR, which reports directly to the band council.

The CTR BoD has hired a CEO who reports directly to them.

The CEO works with Brinkman Forest and Brinkman & Associates, its subcontractor, to hire employees and manage its forest licenses.

Appendix C: What makes fishing a “culturally salient” practice? Fishing and forestry compared

	Fishing	Forestry
Institutions		
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family business/skills passed down through generations - allows more time spent with family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - requires individuals to move their family, or move away from family - less time available to spend with family
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes place close to or in traditional territory - key reason for settling in that particular region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - over 120kms away from community - no expressed attachment to the location/territory
Seasonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - congruent with the lifestyles and worldview of Tsimshian people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - full-time, year-round economic activity not commonly pursued
Capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human capital passed on through generations - Physical capital passed on or easily acquired - Lower financial cost of entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human capital needs to be obtained via formal education/training - Physical capital must be purchased, leased - Higher financial cost of entry
Sub-Institutional Elements		
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fished for subsistence and for trade as market commodity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wood used in the past for construction, but not as a market commodity
Tradition/Customs/Rites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional economic activity - customary food choice, - customary economic commodity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some customs using wood
Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity tied to success in fishing, known as “fishing people” - Distinct roles for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No identity connections - No specific roles for women
Routine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long family lines of fishermen - Community members established their families and homes through income from fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not typically the type of work engaged in by most community members
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Passed through generations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be obtained through educational training/certification

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