Original Ways: An Exploration of Tiv and Inuit Indigenous Processes of Conflict

Resolution and Peacemaking

By

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Msugh Ter u sha Ter u henban a ger, Ter u utor man Ter u uma cíí sha erdoo man iwasen na hen mo.

Abstract

In exploring Tiv and Inuit conflict resolution processes, this study found astute principles in operation. The case study groups afforded expanded understandings of human conflict and conflict resolution based upon time tested cultural approaches. These approaches recommend people oriented models to problem solving, which reach beyond problems to transform the parties involved in the process. These are purported to be durable means to deal with issues; for if people change positively, their issues are easily transformed as well. Indigenous ideologies of conflict also challenge conventional processes of legal adjudication and offer traditional wisdoms with potential to assist in mediating seemingly intractable and deadly conflicts.

Although separated by thousands of miles, Tiv of the Benue Valley in present day Nigeria and Inuit of Northern Canada provide fascinating case examples in their converging cultural ideologies. They have key conditions in common; the use of creative conflict resolution tools and methods within quasi egalitarian social arrangements. Also, while faced with rapidly changing social dynamics, both groups have tenaciously held unto their original cultural tenets for conflict resolution and peacemaking.

Their differences are just as compelling; of immediate significance is population size. Inuit are much fewer in number, less than a hundred thousand people and live in smaller settlements. The Tiv group is larger, almost three million people who live in larger urban or rural settings. Inuit brave extremely cold weather conditions for much of the year while Tiv find ways to survive extremely hot weather conditions. Each has shared worthy wisdom for resolving conflicts facing their peoples at various levels; interpersonal conflicts, intergroup violence, youth violence and aggression, as well as cultural principles to prevent social vices such as suicides, murder and generally deteriorating social competencies.

This qualitative inquiry integrates narrative, ethnographic and indigenous methodologies to investigate Tiv and Inuit use of original conflict resolution and peacemaking processes usually accomplished through creative means such as storytelling, dance, songs, games, ritual, proverbs, sayings and community processes. Specific attention is paid to the strengths and challenges faced in the practice and application of indigenous theories of conflict and peace. Findings are then incorporated into the contemporary discourse on conflict, peace, justice, conflict resolution and peacemaking. The study is informed by theories of decolonization, indigenous legal theory, post colonialism and conflict transformation.

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Chapter 1 - An Exploratory Journey Begins

Introduction

Conflicts abound in indigenous communities including of the Tiv and Inuit. Tiv communities have been embroiled bitter in inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts for nearly two decades; there is fighting among sister clans and with other ethnic peoples around them (Vaaseh & Ehinmore 2011; Onwuzuruigbo 2010; Alubo 2006; Nnoli 2003; Otite & Olawale 1999). Inuit are turning against themselves, committing suicides and other forms of domestic and (alcohol) related violence (Kral *et al.* 2011; Kral *et al.* 2009; Kirmayer *et al.* 2009; Kirmayer 2007, 1994; Tester & McNicoll 2004; Kirmayer et al 1998). Some explanation of this phenomenon has been attempted by scholars and practitioners alike; some credible suggestions include arguments to the effect that identity confusion and acculturation stress following colonization and oppressive post colonial regimes are to blame for the resulting conflicts (Lawson-Te Aho & Liu 2010; Kulchyski & Tester 2007; Alfred & Corntassel 2005; Tester & Kulchyski 1994; O'Neil 1986; Fanon 1961). In the Inuit case, difficulty managing emotional and sexual relationships has also been cited as possible cause for social stress leading to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts (Kral 2013).

An interesting study conducted by Christie Laird and Joel M. Halpern (1990) also posits that psychological pathologies have paralleled improvement in physical health because Inuit have difficulty adjusting to imposed Eurocanadian technical time constructs. They reason that Eurocanadians operate a chronometric time based on the mathematical clock with events occurring in linear dimensions. Inuit on the other hand, purportedly understand time in non-chronometric, cyclical terms (not oriented to the

mathematical clock) that are temporal in nature, qualitative and oriented to sequences. Therefore Laird and Halpern's arguments suspiciously seem to suggest that Inuit (indeed all indigenous peoples) are culturally or mentally trapped in time and are struggling to accommodate faster paced changes imposed through colonization hence some of the resulting conflicts.

In general, all of the arguments are laudable attempts at diagnosis. What is clear and undeniable, is that indigenous peoples including the Tiv and Inuit have serious problems to deal with and the sooner solutions are found, the better for their survival culturally and on a societal level. To this end, this study has sought responses to important questions including, what can indigenous people do about the problems they face? What resources could these groups apply to tackle conflicts and build peace within their communities? This study addresses itself to these and other questions. It is a pursuit of indigenous responses to conflicts and thus my exploratory journey begins.

Objectives of the study

This study set out to investigate the conflict resolution and peacemaking processes of the Tiv peoples of the central region of present day Nigeria and the Inuit of Northern Canada. In an attempt to understand the social processes and structures that regulate interpersonal conflicts, intra- and inter-community discords and disagreements in those two cultures I sought to examine whether or not a transnational discourse is possible between two vastly different indigenous groups. The study found that significantly different cultures and communities could indeed have a sensible dialogue on issues of common concern such as the most promising paths to personal and collective peace. They could share knowledge in common and understand each other's processes

with minimal difficulties (perhaps only language would stand in the way). These two groups also understand the impact of culture loss on their communities and in their personal lives as well as the complexity of trying to navigate alien systems with varying degrees of success and failure. Certainly both groups see the repercussions of confused identity play out in the lives of their succeeding generations. They recognize that they can stand by and passively observe these events or they can take responsibility to affect desired outcomes albeit a long term and perhaps difficult task.

The study also aimed to understand indigenous peoples' interactions with and within instituted governments still operating in keeping with imposed colonial orders. It should be hastily mentioned that both groups are officially 'independent'. Each however still functions under inherited structures and processes that are sufficiently foreign to their customary cultures, to create ongoing confusion to a point of oppression. In both cases, it is increasingly clear given the conflicts in indigenous communities, that conventional processes and structures currently in predominant operation in those places have not been fully productive for dealing with conflict and/or are not being completely embraced or used or worse perhaps, may be used towards dubious ends by political entrepreneurs. Some Tiv and Inuit people communicated that they felt left with little options for utilizing their customary processes in the face of the overwhelming socio-political changes that have confronted them first through colonization and through ongoing challenges posed by forces of globalization.

It was also important to determine some fundamental differences between indigenous and conventional processes in order to offer the conflict resolution practitioner more capacity, skills and tools for cross-cultural conflict resolution

engagements. Although not specifically an objective of this study, the findings inevitably validate Tiv and Inuit indigenous conflict resolution and peacemaking processes by showing that these processes both exist and are effective.

Context of the study

The Tiv have historically maintained culturally specific ways of life, social structures, religio-cultural belief systems and worldviews (Abraham 1933; Bohannan 1953; Downes 1933, 1971; Beattle & Lienhardt 1975) as did and still do the Inuit of Northern Canada (Briggs 1979; Brody 2001; Kulchyski 2005; Korhonen 2006). These specific ways of *seeing* and *being* and *doing* and *knowing* have governed these peoples for centuries. Cultural philosophies have been the basis for social organization, for building (community) relationships, and a platform for constructing political and legal processes. Both the Tiv and Inuit have strong oral cultures that employ the use of storytelling, dance, song, and sayings as individual and community instructional instruments.

These cultures were however interrupted by periods of colonization and cooptation that introduced foreign processes and new ways of conducting socio-political and judicial operations. This is true for the Tiv and Inuit but also true of most indigenous societies that were colonized elsewhere around the world (Wallace 1946; Memmi 1965; Blaut 1993; Kulchyski 1994; Carter 1999; Merry 2000; Turner 2006). As indigenous cultures were dubiously invalidated and supplanted by new processes, the peoples concerned witnessed deep changes that in most cases affected those societies negatively. For instance, knowledge about healing processes, cultural teachings about resilience and life skills, reconciliation rituals and other culturally informed socio-economic patterns

were significantly destabilized or abandoned. This situation created social, intellectual, spiritual and political confusion for indigenous peoples including the Tiv and Inuit. The culminating effect is a sense of procedural perplexity about local practices on the one hand, and a struggle to apply new assimilatory processes to cultures on the other (bearing in mind that indigenous cultures have always been structured according to different principles than those being imposed by their colonizers). The result has been a gross misplacement of power within social ranks, rampant violence, suicides, weak governments and poor judicial patterns (Fanon 1961: Memmi 1965; Cesaire 1972; Benedek 1999; Korhonen 2006).

As indigenous peoples, including the Tiv and Inuit, have become confounded by the violence in their communities, there has been a rising call for a reconsideration and reutilization of relevant cultural processes, methods and wisdoms that have been most useful in regulating those societies (Wallace 1946; Gluckman 1970; Sponsel & Gregor 1994; Wolfe & Yang 1996; Zartman 2000; Battiste 2000; LaDuke 2005; Turner 2006; Ross 2006). This is not necessarily an attempt to romanticize or reinvent the past, but to both retrace steps as well as progress into the future in attempt to pick up what worked but got thrown out wholesale in the process of active colonization. For instance, anthropologists have revealed that peaceful cultures existed from ancient times (including the Tiv and Inuit) that had remarkable systems and processes in place for conflict resolution and peacemaking (Fry 2006). If these claims are true and those cultures are still here, it is worthwhile to explore what processes those cultures used to regulate those societies.

Anthropologists who busied themselves with understanding cultures and subjective human experiences have persistently argued that although human history is laden with stories of wars, there is another side of history that highlights cultures of peace. (Howell & Willis 1989; Sponsel & Gregor 1994; Bonta 1996; Fry & Bjorkqvist 1997; Kemp & Fry 2004; Boulding 2000; Fry 2006) The question then is; what specific modalities have ensured enduring peacefulness amongst indigenous cultures so thought to be peaceful? Or, in general, what factors might contribute to make a culture peaceful?

The response to this question - whether it applies to indigenous cultures or to general human culture - is an important storying and restorying process. It is the sort of exploratory adventure with unmistaken potential to feed the tamer side of human nature and history. In the foregoing regard, this study set out to tap into indigenous cultural models of peace well as some relevant principles thereof. It anticipates that the processes and principles offered by those societies may be developed more deliberately into conflict resolution capacities and tools for (academic) instruction and practice.

Still with regard to the existence and promise of peaceful societies, Bruce Bonta (1996) argues that not only do such societies exist, mainstream society has much to learn from their ways of life, worldviews and social organization procedures. He notes that some of these societies' positions radically challenge common assumptions about conflict and conflict resolution. For example, conflict which is viewed as problems to be pursued with assertive vigour in a western context is viewed differently in other cultural contexts where conflict is normalized and avoided or countered through subtle (non-assertive) ways. Inuit approach to conflict is a case in point; conflict is viewed by this culture as

something that occurs inevitably but is an event to be actively avoided as it is perceived to be too destabilizing in nature (Boas 1964; Briggs 1979).

Another example of differences in conflict orientation may be the common assumption that conflict often leads to violence and so deterrence, law enforcement and punishment in the form of laws, and an armed police force are necessary components of society. Left in their original cultural ways Tiv and Inuit cultures could arguably function without that law enforcement branch of government because first, these cultures do not necessarily assume that conflicts will lead to violence (this is not to say that conflicts do not escalate into violence, but this is simply not the default mode or expectation). Secondly, "law enforcement" work would be carried out by unarmed pacifists such as elders or others with clout in the community. This system would be significantly different.

Conceptions of and orientations to conflict are important for understanding a cultures conflict behavior. Tiv view conflict as a disturbance (*Zdaiyol),* as an embarrassment (*kwagh ukunya),* provocation (*iyongo)* or certain aspects of conflict behavior as sacrilegious (*kwaghbo*). The reaction to any of these conceptions of conflict are determined by the degree to which it becomes a disturbance, embarrasses others in the community (a shared sense of responsibility) or upsets supernatural forces to which everyone must be responsible to respond and act.

Inuit consider conflict to be an event causing an internal dislocation and social unease. The words for conflict in Inuktitut are *Isumaluq* (which loosely translates "to be stuck" "worrisome" or "too much on the mind") *ningautik* ("fighting") *aghehatiniktiq* ("confrontation") or *unatuq* ("war"). The latter is not often used. In fact it took lengthy

discussions to determine the meanings of each word and get an agreement about the meaning as well. Research consultants[1] made concerted efforts to arrive at the specific words that were thought to better described the concept of conflict. It was clear in the course of interview that these are not words that exist in everyday conversations of the Inuit.

For Tiv and Inuit, it appears that the emphasis is perhaps more on normalizing conflict behavior by working it into the wider social system. That is preferred to isolating and treating conflicts with what may be deemed incommensurate behavior. Reactions to conflict behavior are inherent in the culture and understood in the language and communicative nuances almost to a seamless degree. Cultural practices seem to direct choice, consequence and action simultaneously. For example if conflictants are "stuck" (according to Inuit definition of conflict) in an unpleasant conflict situation, they will make efforts to get "unstuck". The community will participate to help them find ways to come away from that situation rather than punish them for becoming entangled in a conflict. Thus the mindset here is different than someone who may experience conflict as a "violation". The latter will more likely seek retribution for the offender and punishment for the crime against them.

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[1] I use the term consultant to replace the usual "informant" used to describe research collaborators in the field for two reasons. First, the term informant does not adequately convey the true nature of research with knowledgeable collaborators; it unintentionally appropriates that knowledge by treating a complex interaction leading to significant social changes as mere information. Treating that interaction in such manner, denies the other kind of learning that occurs when two human minds rub and bodies speak in that process. Yes, people can speak even without saying words, communities and environments can afford much learning and "information" for the field researcher even without them ever soliciting verbal information. Secondly, I find that the term insults collaborators! I could not think of people who graciously granted interviews and spent time dialoguing and explaining their intricate cultures that they were simply my informants. They had the knowledge; I was consulting with them to understand their knowledge. Therefore, *Consultants* is more befitting term.

Furthermore, Indigenous societies including Tiv and Inuit function on principles that may not necessarily be in agreement with mainstream legal dictums. The perception and use of threats provides a good example. Tiv and Inuit communities used jarring utterances (that may be legally considered to be threats) in verbal altercations. Yet to them, the words of threat that they utter are not construed to be a crime in a legal sense but a mere aspect of communication or a regulated opportunity for healthy venting of negative emotions. Sometimes this 'venting' is deliberately intended such as during song or speech duels. People may also shout words to each other in the course of play, work or quarrels. One man involved in a quarrel with a former colleague in a Tiv community was waving his fist and promising to "kill" that opponent's entire family if he ever had to set eyes on him again. Bystanders laughed and jeered the entire time as the opponent also threw back serious "threats" of his own. This form of verbal duelling appeared to be a conflict engagement mechanism that is understood among the Inuit as well. Inuit (especially children) also tended to threaten one another easily using the most formidable words without drawing any sense of alarm. Indeed the individual that left off with the most bizarre threat was considered the winner of the verbal contest in an understood but unspoken way.

Comfortability and access to justice is another problem faced by indigenous peoples going through the justice system. Tiv and Inuit reported difficulty navigating justice systems at the least, or indicated that those systems are downright torturous at worst. Consultants in both groups also found the processes expensive to use. There was a perceivable sense of injustice communicated to the effect that consultants felt forced to use the systems and processes that they do not understand or endorse. Consultants

insisted that they have their own fairly well developed indigenous processes for conflict resolution and peacemaking that make cultural sense and are free and accessible to everyone in their communities. Yet Tiv and Inuit have continued to struggle to apply the adopted legal systems and procedures. This struggle has meant that people who should be actively involved in conflict resolution in those communities feel impotent to do so. The would-be recipients of indigenous models also are not automatically consulting those media for assistance. The consequence is rampant intergroup conflicts among the Tiv and fatal intrapersonal conflicts amongst Inuit leading to massive suicides and serious forms of domestic violence (Tester & McNicoll 2003).

Refreshingly, Tiv and Inuit are re-examining their states of affairs as the complex conflicts within their communities can no longer be ignored. They are necessarily looking into their "original" cultural practices to draw upon indigenous practices that were useful and efficient in conflict resolution and peacemaking. For example, Charles Keil (1979) writing about the power of Tiv songs and musical culture, shows how that society is instructed through storytelling, songs and dance that teach morals, convey values, celebrate community and foster positive bonding that facilitates entry into meaningful interpersonal and community dialogue. Jean Briggs (1970) posits that although human relationships are ambivalent and violence cannot always be completely ruled out in interpersonal relationships or community life, it is nevertheless possible to note aspects of (Inuit) culture that are essentially peaceful or that promote peaceful relationships.

On the whole, the global human community will greatly benefit from the acceptance and promotion of diverse processes, practices and procedures for conflict resolution and peacemaking especially as universality and conventionalism continues to

fall just short of its guarantees (Tully 1995). Conflict resolution and peace practitioners are encouraged to embrace the reasoning that true and inclusive global peace and justice will be attained by a proper understanding of cultures and a co-toiling to build the human family using all available means and media. In this process, it is perhaps worthwhile that mainstream systems recognize that in some cases their processes are not within reach of indigenous peoples or simply do not suffice (See also Augsburger 1992; Lederach 1995, 2003).

Scope of the study

On Originality–The title of this study raises a few questions that need clarification. What is an original process? Who is indigenous? And why did I select vastly different study groups (geographically and physically)? The latter question is addressed in greater detail in chapter five. It is important to clarify the first two questions forthwith because they locate a scope for this study.

The words "*Original Ways*" in the title are carefully chosen to immediately communicate that the study is seeking to explore *other* ways. These other ways have sometimes been referred to as *alternative ways* by predominant mainstream juridical processes. The *mainstream* in this case has also been called modern, contemporary, foreign, adopted, imposed, colonial or imperial. Whatever the mainstream represents however, it is certainly not the starting point for the cultural practices that indigenous peoples claim to adhere to. In her edited book *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* Melissa Nelson (2008) and other contributors clarify what originality means for the indigenous discourse. It is in short, a "return from extinction". I find this powerful statement can be expatiated to mean that original ways

are an introspective progression of culture and self, a process to revive and give voice to hitherto silenced worldviews, a rebirthing of cultural philosophies and quite simply, it is about pointing to another way of life.

In both Tiv and Inuit communities, the usual reaction to my research topic and questions requesting knowledge about indigenous conflict resolution processes was the same. First, potential consultants politely declined to be interviewed, often with the words "I don't know much about the justice system" or "I am not a lawyer" or "that is beyond me, I can't help you". Then I realized (as I had suspected would be the case) that people in those communities had come to associate conflict resolution with mainstream judicial systems primarily. The only conclusion that I could draw from this initial reaction is that consultants did not know much about the workings of the judicial systems of their governments and not feeling competent to speak about that system, declined to be interviewed. Most people understood the "justice system" in the sense that it was not to be toyed around with; they viewed and approached it as a stern and punitive machine. Thus I reframed my question to make it clearer and more open ended. I asked, *"how do people here deal with conflicts in the community"* Or, *"How did you resolve conflicts before the justice system was introduced?"* Or simply, *"Is the justice system the only mechanism you have here for conflict resolution?"* The reactions and responses to these reframed questions were remarkably different and more positive. One consultant said "well you should have said that you wanted to know about *our* ways and that is different".

Another said that she could not respond to all of my questions in the instant that I was asking her. I would have to come to her office on another day so that she "can sit

down" to discuss all that. She did talk with me a few days later, and I understood why she needed a sit down to respond to my questions. She considered the topic to be of the utmost importance and important topics require much reflection and the space to discuss without rushing. When I arrived at her office at about 12:30pm as planned, she was just finishing the last bit of her lunch. She had eaten early so that she would not have to break the conversation to eat lunch. I also noticed that she had kicked her shoes off and made coffee for herself and for me. She projected the air of someone who was about to address an important matter in a relaxed and deliberate fashion. She had made the time and space to tell me about a culture she was proud of. That was easy to see and her attitude would have compelled the respect of any listener.

The change in attitude with this consultant caused me to also reframe my questions with others so that people would not automatically assume that I was asking about the mainstream justice system. In which case, they turned me away stating that they did not know much about it or that they were not lawyers or simply not interested. Thus I learned that how questions were framed affected the nature and direction of the discussion that followed as well as the attitude of the consultants who were responded. In most cases my questions were simply variations of one central question "*how do the Tiv and Inuit resolve conflicts outside of the justice system?*"

The use of the term original does not imply that Tiv and Inuit cultures have not undergone any cultural changes over time or that they are in an assumed state of pristine preservation. Admittedly, Tiv and Inuit culture have been significantly impacted by several factors – colonization, interactions with other cultures in and around them, education, travel and more recently, globalization. In Nunavut where I expected the Inuit

would have had less interaction with other cultures, I was more than a little surprised to find that several people in the community that I was in had ancestors from far-off Africa. They had dealings with people from far away Fiji Islands and with Germans who had set up camps among the Inuit, and Japanese who were up there in some work or research capacity! And this list is not exhaustive. Quite simply, humans have always travelled and interacted widely and no place testifies to this better than expeditions to the northern arctic.

In sum, originality of Tiv and Inuit processes is but a position set to acknowledge culturally sanctioned processes, often encoded in language, used and understood by the groups and for the most part, having roots that precede the more recent justice/legal systems currently in operation.

On Being Indigenous-The second question is also important; who is indigenous? To put it lightly, the term indigenous is loaded and hotly contested; it is a term that has been politicized and scrutinized so much that the use thereof must not be without qualification and definition. It is multilayered and draws almost emotional responses. It is also a potentially dangerous term to employ because it has the inherent capacity to segregate the world in a Babelian[2] fashion as well as trap cultures on supposed evolutionary ladders. This general reaction to the term *indigenous* is appropriate because it means that the term is often employed with some caution and information. However, using words with caution is precisely what makes it a bit cumbersome in application. In that regard, invoking the term *indigenous* is best accomplished as a deeply reflective endeavor.

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[2] This refers to the Tower of Babel story in the Bible Genesis 11. In this story, God discourages the building of a tower to the high heavens by confusing the languages and therefore purposes of all the peoples of the world.

The term *indigenous* quickly generates mental images of exotic looking people in sheep skins, beads, cowries, shells or horns with faces painted in bright colors and words like *huawuu*, *pakayan*, *yanomami*, *xixian* and *papua* next to the images. This is an overly exoticized image of indigenous people that seems preoccupied with ensuring that indigenous is synonymous with Stone Age in some suspicious way. Barbara Miller's (2011) textbook *Cultural Anthropology in a Globalizing World* has a table to locate cultures on an evolutionary continuum based on modes of livelihood from foraging to horticulture to pastoralism to agriculture to industrialism/informatics and nothing else follows that. While she does not explicitly mention that this continuum is a supposed human evolutionary process with indigenous people perhaps at the beginning levels (foraging and horticulture), the average mind is not left in doubt once they read the more detailed descriptions of each of those categories. It becomes clear where she would fit indigenous peoples.

She points out, for example, that foraging people are politically organized into *bands* and horticulturalists into *tribes*. Band groups she notes, are generally fewer in number (20 to a few hundred), membership is flexible and members are equal and nomadic on some level. While horticultural tribes are a bit more (100 to 1000s), headship is usually by males who rely on their authority and the group loyalty for leadership. By the time these groups graduate to *chiefdoms*, they are larger in numbers (1000s), have hereditary leaders with some status and a stool that must always be filled to ensure social order. Only when people become agrarian and industrialized do they have states and complex systems of social organization which can be outlined thus – centralized polities, democratic states, international relations, identifying (religious) symbols, census,

citizenship, informatics, presidents, female participation in government, elite armies, and laws (not *norms* as this is the commonsensical application of social values). To the quick thinking, the direct suggestion then is that groups of people who adhere to collectively sanctioned "norms" as a mechanism for social control are closer to the beginning of that evolutionary continuum. The arrow inadvertently points to indigenous peoples.

This argument and attitude has surprisingly been recycled by anthropologists over the ages (Kroeber 1948; Redfield 1953; Levi-Strauss 1966; Miller 2011) even when evidence speaks to the contrary. So called "primitive" societies exist today that have embraced the qualities of industrialization without completely losing grip of their original practices or at least make frantic efforts to preserve the media and mechanism by which they operated in what anthropology treats as an early evolutionary level. The Tiv and Inuit are examples thereof. Perhaps it is time to engage different questions in dealing with varied cultures such as locating fundamental differences between cultures (approaches to human conflicts) rather than constantly pointing to supposedly predictable differences based on evolutionary progression. This disposition is what has led to questionable civilizing missions embarked upon by colonizers (Sahlins 1999) and their missionary collaborators. This model has also led to some atrocious programs and projects that aimed to literally hasten the civilization process of the assumed lower peoples. Indian residential schools are a case in point. John Sheridan Milloy (1999) provides a compelling and comprehensive account of this problem in his book *A National Crime: The Canadian government and the Residential School system 1879 – 1986*.

Another and perhaps a more ignoble idea that the term *indigenous* calls to mind is an association made with stereotypical concepts like *primitive*, *backward*, *savages*,

barbaric, *uncivilized* and *simple* societies ('simple' with a derogatory connotation). This is by far a bigger disservice to indigenous people afforded by earlier anthologies of anthropologists (specifically the class of anthropologists who were employed specifically to complement the thankless task of colonization). Their jobs then as recently clarified and pointed out by Montgomery McFate (2005) were to provide "cultural knowledge of the adversary" so that the adversary could be more easily understood and possibly subdued by the military. In other words, information provided by useful anthropologists (in his opinion) ought to enable easy engagement and conquest by colonizing forces. He explicitly points out that anthropology was once called the handmaiden of colonialism and had a long and fruitful relationship with various elements of national power which ended suddenly because it turned its attention to the postmodern abyss. Anthropology he continues, was born as a "war fighting discipline" (note that the war was waged against cultural others). His conclusion with much displeasure is that the profession/discipline has essentially lost its relevance and become exotic and useless since it is not accomplishing its original task of collecting data about the cultural other and transmitting back to the west.

Nevertheless, some anthropological work has however been very useful in promoting communication and sense making across cultures. I recall Marshall Sahlins, Antonia Mills, Bea Medicine[3]. The other kind of anthropologist with a civilising and/or conquering agenda is perhaps better left off lists for reasons of subjective fairness or

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[3] This is not an exhaustive list by any standard, just a few names that immediately come to mind. This list is not intended to discredit or deny the much longer list that could be generated of excellent anthropologists who have contributed immensely to the furthering of human dialogue across racial, cultural and language divides.

unfairness. [4] A comprehensive discussion of the complex nature of indigeneity and attendant challenges has been accomplished by Pamela Wilson and Michelle Stewart (2008) in their edited book *Global Indigenous Media: Culture, Poetics and Politics.* The authors in this volume take on the task of locating the concept and question of indigeneity and trace this history, progression, contemporary interactions, interpretations and future of indigenous people. Then, in indigenous peoples' own voices, various definitions are offered including self-identification based on culture and experience, marginalization's within mainstream political structures, continued adherence to traditional models and the quest for unique identities affording non-conventional social and political interventions. Wilson & Stewart (2008) appropriately note "When discussing indigeneity, we encounter an intersection of many discursive paradigms in academia and also in cultural politics at all levels". An exhaustive engagement with the term merits platform for fuller analysis which is not afforded by this study.

However *Indigenous* people will be considered in this study to include people with historical, almost sacred connections to their ancestral lands and physical spaces who share cultural, customary and traditional processes communicated through a shared language. They often have experienced oppressive and exploitative colonization of their

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[4] On the whole, as this study is interdisciplinary in nature, it borrows much knowledge and pays much credit to a few disciplines, especially anthropology. Indeed several anthropological works have enabled this study reach into previous times for accounts on indigenous social arrangements and orientations. Native studies as a discipline is invaluable for providing voice and perspective of the "native" other also known more fashionable as indigenous peoples. History is timeless for its forward movements into the past, it provides connections that would be impossible otherwise and the peace and conflict studies discipline is the lifeblood of the study. It is worth noting that while much attention is drawn to these disciplines (especially anthropology), this study is intended as an exercise in the branch of practice called transformative conflict resolution and peace building. This branch is cross-cultural in nature, innovative and empowerment oriented (See Lederach 1994, 2005).

resources, forced assimilations or relocations into foreign political arrangements, continued marginalization within those structures. They are often struggling for cultural survival, seeking to assert their cultural differences and/or preservation of ancestral homelands. They are sometimes identified by race, for example "red Indians" in North America, or by language, class and region such as in Africa and Asia. It is also appropriate to note that indigenous peoples share experiences and attempt to collaborate where possible to end their difficulties and propel themselves into self directed progress. More recent activities by indigenous peoples leading to recognition at the United Nations confirm the latter (Ewen 1994).

The United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples[5] seeks to promote all of the rights and privileges that indigenous peoples have been variously denied. In that sense, it is s very telling document. Every time that the declaration states for example that "Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture" (Article 8:1) what it is really saying is that indigenous peoples have been denied that right and their colonizers are being admonished to the contrary.

But then one is left wondering if defining the indigenous or indigeneity is necessary at all? for those who are indigenous know themselves. They understand their circumstances and are in no doubt about their cultures, their natural connections to places and lands or their socio-economic experiences (both historical and contemporary) with alien cultures. The term indigenous here will simply be taken to mean the practices that the Tiv and Inuit identify as their cultural, traditional, usual ways of doing, seeing and being.

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[5] Full document available online at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

This study does not purport to speak for all of the worlds' indigenous peoples although it recognizes that there is a discourse that can be had at that level. It has adopted a case example model and elected to interact with the Tiv and Inuit specifically. Indeed, it does not claim to have approached all Tiv or Inuit people or understood all there is to know about those cultures. It has mainly considered conflict resolution ideology and procedures outside conventional models. This is but a foundation to be built upon in future endeavors.

Significance of the study

Indigenous peoples adhere to practices and processes that they consider to differ from the conventional practices and procedures of the governments under whose jurisdictions they live and operate (LaDuke 2005; Hendry 2005). In some cases, they deem their processes to be more effective in dealing with specific social problems (Mills 1994; Chia 1990). These processes include the use of creative methods and approaches such as storytelling, song, dance, rituals, ceremonies, prayers and meetings; again, each of these socio-cultural conflict resolution and peacemaking mechanisms merit in-depth considerations in their own right as they are complex in method, context and application. While study consultants talked about using many of these mechanisms in their responses during interviews, they have not been specifically addressed in this study. Except for instances where I share of how I observed some of the mechanisms being used in day-to-day interactions in the communities visited.

Conflict resolution scholars and practitioners writing in various scopes and settings have emphasized the importance of employing or applying other (indigenous) procedures in their peace building work especially within indigenous settings (Lederach

1994, 2005; Rice 2005; Ross 2006; Merry 2006; Ausburger 1992; Ani 1994). For example, in his work as a judge in the northern territories of Canada Rupert Ross strongly advocates for the cooperation of processes - indigenous and mainstream - in the spirit of interdependence if lasting positive peace is to be built among Canada's indigenous peoples. Marimba Ani (1994) also maintains that indigenous Africans necessarily consider traditional methods for conflict resolution and peacemaking to be of utmost importance in social regulation of local societies even in modern times (See also Brock-Utne 2001; Blanton *et al.* 2001; Gelleman 2007).

This study is also important because it generates a knowledge base that significantly contributes to the discourse on 'alternative' conflict resolution methods. It is important to note however that while often regarded as alternative to mainstream conventional juridical milieu, indigenous methods are 'original' to indigenous cultures. Researchers, academics and practitioners working with or amongst groups that may not completely be attuned to or may be having difficulty accessing or using available mainstream conflict resolution processes such court systems, law enforcement etc. will find these principles useful as these are readily adhered to by indigenous peoples. Tiv and Inuit for example felt more competent speaking about their own indigenous processes than they did the justice systems in force in their communities. Thus a practitioner seeking to enter into collaborative conflict resolution and peacemaking with positive buy-in by their indigenous partners will do well to understand what processes are meaningful to their partners rather than assume a position that imposes an already unwelcome and confusing process.

The study also creates an awareness of the potential for conflict resolution and peacemaking in indigenous cultures. Too often conflicts of an ethnic nature are dismissed as being fearfully intractable when the problem is that the wrong assumptions have been made about the conflictants embroiled in the conflicts. In such cases, conflictants' cultures have been disregarded, and they in turn become disillusioned and disinvested with what they see as tedious and alien approaches being forced upon them. This study, by bringing to the fore indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking, has availed the practitioner a foundation for peace building in indigenous settings. Conflict resolution practitioners may have noticed that attempts at imposing conventional processes in indigenous settings only result in superficial peaces held together by either 'carrots' or 'sticks'. True and lasting peacemaking must thrive according to the standards understood and respected by those for whom peace is being sought (Rice 2005; Lederach 2005; Ross 2006).

Furthermore, this study has provided additional data on indigenous peacemaking procedures, principles and the use of creative methods to engage conflicting parties in peacemaking. Scholars and practitioners agree that while data on indigenous conflict resolution and peacemaking is important, it is quite sparse (Fry 2006; Attah-Poku 1997; Wolfe & Yang 1996; Goldschmidt in Spongel & Greggor 1994). It is therefore important to make this data available and to reveal these processes and procedures to show how conventional and indigenous processes differ but also how they could be used together; to make indigenous processes more tangible for use by scholars and practitioners and to find a meeting point for indigenous and mainstream methods.

More so it is especially important to emphasize indigenous methods in the face of universality or risk the obliteration of diversity and authentic cooperation of the human race. Ani (1994) stresses the danger of universality when used to propagate one culture over all others. The risk is that the the one part of the human race with its ideas, models and procedures is mistakenly represented as the standard for the whole human race. Over time, the unrepresented parts become unseen, unused and obsolete. This is neither good for the part being so misrepresented nor for any part thereof. It is better therefore to equally understand all the parts and make them work together towards achieving a healthy and complete whole. In other words, the indigenous should work alongside the conventional in conflict resolution and peacemaking so that a deeper and long lasting peace can be cultivated for the entire human people.

Finally, effective conflict resolution is a worthwhile social service for any establishment, government or community. Governments pursue peace because it ensures the smooth running of social affairs and is a requirement for stable economic development. Thus governments so invested in peace, should strive to properly recognize diversified approaches and develop effective tools and methods for the task of peacebuilding. Relying on just one style or process to achieve social equilibrium and harmony may be a disadvantage; for as a toolbox does not have just one tool, sensible governments understand the need for multiple tools in readiness for the work of effective peace building. Therefore, this study has made options available for practitioners and scholars alike. It has also laid a foundation for further diversified research on the topic.

On the other hand, communities within governmental jurisdictions want to be heard and to be included in the collective task of peacebuilding, especially when governments

purport to be doing all that for them. Indigenous people want to know that what they bring to the peacebuilding table is valid and useful. To that end, this study boosted the esteem and confidence of indigenous peoples in their own processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking. It further validates indigenous knowledge and perhaps by helping governments understand indigenous processes, creates a meeting point for the conventional and the indigenous to cooperate towards lasting peace building efforts.

Purpose of the study

1. Towards and indigenous legal discourse. Gordon Christie in Benjamin J. Richardson, Shin Imai and Kent McNeil (2009) notes that as yet, there is sparse legal and theoretical discourse on indigenous people that is specifically centered on indigenous peoples and that is written by indigenous peoples. In other words, not much research exists that focuses specifically on indigenous law or legal systems and juridical practices. While some such as Rupert Ross (2006) acknowledge that indigenous peoples [of Canada] do have different processes that hold significant potential for conflict resolution and peacemaking, and William Zartman (2000) documents African conflict resolution processes, a specific indigenous legal theory is yet to be coherently developed. Yet there is need for indigenous legal theories that focus on indigenous peoples, take account of how non-indigenous legal systems have impacted indigenous peoples and stress a uniquely indigenous legal order. Research of that nature will to showcase indigenous conceptions of law.

To which Christie adds, that the body of work required to generate such indigenous legal theories should necessarily be accomplished by scholars with experiential grounding that is, those who possess some lived cultural experiences of the

culture they are working to describe or prescribe. The absence of this sort of experience means that the theorist loses the subjective viewpoints that they could bring to the discourse. Experiential, intellectual and cultural grounding, position a theorist to contribute more than abstraction to the study; it means that such a researcher will bring with them, richer and deeper understandings of the culture being studied.

Being culturally grounded allows the indigenous scholar to consider the conceptual universe within which they live, they are able to decipher the thought processes of the non-indigenous peoples on matters of the law and on the flip side they are also able to speak to the often present dilemma of having experience the limiting effects of alien laws and processes on their own communities. Thus they stand almost as bridges to knowledge or as filters for both sides as they understand oppositional legal phenomena.

This study also set out to delineate an indigenous legal system and in the process, found that indigenous law is clothed in culture; it is encoded in indigenous languages and expressed through sayings, through stories, through songs, and through proverbs. It's qualities are refined in the fires of experience. The knowledge of it is ontological and its judges are the supernatural forces of life and death. Indigenous law is often unwritten but well known and understood by community members nevertheless. It is the law of the individual within community and the law that guides community's responsibility to the individual. Indigenous law is so well known by indigenous people that there rarely is there need for specialized interpretations; the words of a proverb are nodded to by all present who understand that meaning in the recesses of their hearts. Just as people do not escape death, no one escapes the judgements of indigenous law for the powerful and the

meek regardless of status, stand equal before the force of truth. For truth is the indigenous rule of law.

The guardians of indigenous law are elders. They have earned their position for having passed through the refining fires of experience. Elders can show-off their fine physical clothing but more importantly, they can show off the rags that only time and use creates. They can tell of the scars that life has gifted to them. They also possess the grey hairs that time and age bring. The stories that pour from those rags, scars and grey hairs are the ones that shine lights to peaceful pathways for the next generation. It is expected that the elder will not be selfish in sharing of their treasure of rags and scars. But holding the mantle of truth, will teach the next generation how to avoid the pitfalls of life and how to deal fairly with all.

The practice of indigenous law is daily. It includes everyone as soon as they can understand the words spoken to them. If the words are true, they are to be practiced and applied and received by all. The test of a good person is in how they live according to their most noble beliefs on a day to day basis. The jury is the community as they see and observe the individual daily. Most probably they are on the receiving end of the individual's beliefs and values.

The grand arbiter of indigenous law is life or death. My father used to say, "People can live while they are dead as they can certainly be walking around and they are already dead". Living or dying is a quality of the soul. A living person will be full of peace, health positive relationships, joy and satisfaction and a dead person will live but without the positive qualities of the soul present and functional.

Indigenous law is inscribed on the heart. It could be written into codes but its rightful place is deep in the heart because there, it is less likely to be forgotten.

2. Reclaiming and centering indigenous knowledge and ways. Leela Ghandi (1998) taking a postcolonialist stance insists that those parts of the world and peoples that colonization set aside as being on the margins, must reject this notion and take their place as being central in their own rights. The (non-conventional) 'other' has always been treated as an 'alternative' but must begin to reconstruct itself as the original in its own context and to affirm its practices as valid. She argues that colonized - indigenous people - must stay actively engaged with their colonial past in order to encourage the continual revisiting, remembering, interrogation and representation of the colonial experience so as to both make and gain theoretical sense of that experience. The goal must be to decisively reclaim a cultural identity through avenues historically used by indigenous peoples such as storytelling, songs, dance, myths, legends and other forms of communication. This is the pathway to healing, reconciliation, rehumanization and cultural rebuilding.

Study methodology

This study is exploratory, descriptive and analytical in nature. It proceeded in three phases. In the first phase, the researcher conducted archival research (literature review) considering relevant research pertaining to indigenous peoples in general as well as their processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking (Including effects of colonialism on indigenous practices; indigenous peacemaking as is featured in scholarly works and anthropological contributions to peace studies). This helped establish a historical context and to keep in view trends on the topic. This phase created a theoretical

framework for the body of the work and the information gathered served as a baseline for the second phase.

In the second phase, the researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with consultants within selected communities among the Tiv and the Inuit using narrative ethnographic methods and participant observation. She determined the state and efficiency of indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking, assessed how indigenous peacemaking procedures have hitherto worked within those communities, considered the strengths and weaknesses of the use of those procedures in peacemaking, and highlighted the perspectives and outlooks of those communities on the matter. Interviews were conducted primarily with elders or other identifiable cultural custodians in each of these communities. This is because the communities under study have historically esteemed elders as custodians of culture. Elders are thought to be knowledgeable on matters relating to culture by virtue of their experiences or connections to certain traditional offices, or by virtue of their designated responsibility (Bohannan 1953; Briggs 1994; Chia 1990, 1991; Ellerby 2005).

In order to incorporate a gendered analysis, women were also interviewed separately and encouraged to share their perspectives on, and their participation in the use of indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking. Female perspectives on the Tiv and Inuit indigenous processes deserve closer attention perhaps in a separate thesis. This aspect of the research generated very interesting feedback that seemed beyond the general scope of this thesis. This subject will be accorded specific attention elsewhere. Some female voices have however been included herein to ensure balanced points of view. The third and final phase of the research was devoted to data compilation,

transcribing of data, analysis, writing of the findings of the research and preparation for dissemination of research results.

Case study selection

The Tiv and Inuit as cultural groups are interesting case studies because they are similar in some respects but are also significantly different in others. Tiv and Inuit were selected for this study based upon some prior knowledge and interest the researcher had in their peace oriented cultural practices. Their vast geographical, racial and linguistic differences provided a platform to test the similarities and differences that emerge in an indigenous legal discourse. Their differences also made it possible to find elements of conflict resolution that may be shared by significantly different indigenous peoples.

Ultimately the study shows how both convergences and divergences may serve indigenous peoples; one group can learn from how another applies its methods and together they gain validation in those areas of practice that are similar. The atmosphere to enable this sharing of knowledge would also be one of cooperation and not imposition. Conflict resolution and peace students, scholars and practitioners will benefit from the theory and methods distilled from this study. Emerging theories may then be tested in other indigenous contexts hereafter.

The case study approach was appropriate for the study because as Kathleen Eisenhardt (1989) notes, case studies can be used to provide description of a situation and to test or generate theory. This study in a broad sense accomplishes all three aims. On one level, it describes an indigenous colonial experience of marginalization of voice, practices and procedures. On another level, it tests postcolonial and indigenous theories of conflict, and by extension, of identity and knowledge. On a third level, from the

information acquired through narrative ethnography and indigenous methodologies this study sets the foundation for the development of an indigenous theory of conflict resolution and peacemaking.

It is important to state that in working with the Tiv and Inuit, several constructs emerged in the data analysis that have not all been developed into theory. The learning process was important for the researcher as well as for the consultants. In an atmosphere of mutuality and collaboration to create knowledge, the learning was two ways, the researcher learned as much from the consultants as they did from her. This occurred when the research questions were sometimes reframed by consultants' to address the issues they felt spoke more meaningfully to them in terms of their conflict and conflict resolution experiences.

The researcher has not attempted to theorize all indigenous conflict resolution or peacemaking; sometimes she merely states what consultants insisted was important to them and prevalent in their contextualized settings. This information sets a background for a study of this nature. Attention was also drawn to several other case examples in order to provide a broad background to the study but these are not themselves presumptions of theory necessarily. The deductions made from the data gathered among the Tiv and Inuit, self generates hypotheses to be tested elsewhere in future research. The differences and similarities of the Tiv and Inuit are discussed in chapter five.

Study participants

This qualitative study had a modest sample size; eleven (11) women were interviewed on both sides (four Tiv and seven Inuit women) and twelve men were interviewed (seven Tiv and five Inuit male elders), making total of 23 core interviews.

Besides interviews, there were several other conversations that took place with people other than the interviewees. There were well over thirty five (35) of such useful conversations. In fact more knowledge confirmation came through interaction with the everyday modes of life and through those serendipitous conversations. I have shared some of the feedback whenever they help to buttress a point.

Participants were recruited using a snowball method. Study consultants mostly recommended the next candidate. These were people considered to be elders (ages ranged from 65 to 93 years old). Most of them had lived through changes in their communities, seen colonial days and witnessed major disruptions of their cultures. The so called independence that brought in new governments and have continued to observe the changes they are witnesses to, often very silently.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in all cases. Language interpreters were consulted with the Tiv to clarify meaning of words used by elders and translators were used with Inuit consultants. Meanings of words were cross-checked with other Inuit to ascertain general use of terms as well as readings of cultural behaviour and attitudes. Field work lasted for a total of six months in three Tiv communities (Makurdi, Mbayongo, Ukpiam) and for five weeks among the Inuit in Pangnirtung, Nunavut. Interviews and conversations were also completed with Inuit from other parts of the Arctic. These provided a varied and expanded perspective.

As the goal for this work was, among other intents, to ensure maximum 'voice' through the use of narrative and indigenous methods, the perspectives of consultants have been transcribed and reflected to the best possible extent. Some slight grammatical modifications are sometimes made to improve sentence structures and spellings were

corrected for legibility. Quotes are otherwise written as they were received. Information is organized in response to the questions that the researcher set out to investigate and then followed by the findings that were distilled from the responses to the questions thereof. Consultants' names have not been used in the study at all.[6]

Trust and reputation were important tools for operation. I was to discover that elders would only refer me to talk to other elders that were deemed trustworthy. It was clear that elder's characters were an issue of much importance and scrutiny in Tivland and among Inuit. To be known and labeled as a bad elder seemed worse than death. This is was a question of reputation and self respect shown by elders. I also observed that whenever I met with an elder, they would ask me who had referred me to them and it seemed that they also decided if meeting with me was worth their while depending on the integrity of whoever sent me their way. This is a complex system of trust amongst (Tiv) elders who are very conscious of their reputations. A common Tiv proverb is very telling in its message–"It is better to die than be ashamed." In other words, the Tiv are deathly concerned with their reputations to the point of preferring to die that risk the loss of a good name.

Female Tiv consultants at first seemed very reluctant to participate in interviews; they would politely explain that they were not the best person to speak to because such and such (male) other was much more knowledgeable on the subject matter. A few wondered why I chose to interview them as they are not educated (in a conventional

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[6] The University of Manitoba Ethics Board requires confidentiality, anonymity and "protection" of research consultants. It is recommended that names be replaced with pseudonyms. Consultants however did not want their real names replaced with pseudonyms. They wanted their full names included if at all. Not including real names or pseudonyms seems a safe middle ground to deal with this conflict. Consultants are however identified by their sexes to show how gender perspectives differed or converge in some cases.

way). The first reason points to the patriarchal nature of knowledge and process and the latter was a sad revelation of the poor value placed on indigenous knowledge in general. I found myself frequently clarifying that I was interested in learning not necessarily what is taught in schools but what they as indigenous (Tiv) people know about their culture; how they live on a day-to-day basis, and why they organize themselves as they do and what they do when order breaks down. Most people were quite surprised to hear that. Anyways, female elders quickly became comfortable once I clarified that I was more interested in their indigenous knowledge and they certainly had much to say about their processes.

Interviews took place in different locations. On one occasion I completed the entire session on one female elder's farm as she was weeding and tending to her plants. Another session happened in the market where a female elder was selling some homemade cassava flakes. (I ended up purchasing some from her to cover some of her cost because she had concentrated on talking to me rather than selling her wares for close to two hours.) Other interviews generally took place at the homes of elders mostly in the evening when they had returned from the day's work (farming, trading, cloth making). Older people who were too frail to work stayed at home most of the day watching younger children. I spent much time talking about several sundry matters with older folk because they were delighted to talk and share, they had the time and there was no need to rush through interview sessions.

Orientation to time and its use is different amongst the indigenous peoples that I worked with (both Tiv and Inuit). Conversations did not strictly follow my questions or timing. On many occasions I was asked to wait for a better time or place time to talk. I

would go away and return at a later date. Sessions typically began with me being interviewed first. Consultants wanted to know about me, my family, parents, clan, work, where I grew up and even some of my thoughts on Tiv culture. I literarily had to navigate the conversation back to the interview. Some of my questions were reframed by elders who took a storytelling approach to responding to questions because the Tiv always have to have a context for all responses.

Food and water were always involved during visitations and discussions. This was always a shared experience with my host also eating the same meals or drinking water with me before any discussion began. When interviews happened at consultants' homes I was introduced to every family member present. Sometimes other people present would draw closer to listen and participate in the discussions that were going on. This resulted in unplanned but useful focus groups. Interviews with male elders mostly occurred at their homes with their wives present. One elder was a retired high court judge, another university professor and most others were civil servants, farmers or just older people who were frail and stayed home most of the day.

Field work amongst the Inuit was completed in Pangnirtung on Baffin Island. Interviews also took place at different locations; mostly in consultants' homes but sometimes in their offices. Much conversation also took place on 'the land' (campsite mimicking previous Inuit encampments). Once, I actually managed to complete an interview session on a boat ride. I also interviewed one male elder at his workstation; we talked as he worked away making stone carvings.

Like the Tiv, the Inuit in Pangnirtung were also well aware of people of sterling character in the community and would refer me to those individuals for information.

However, female (Inuit) elders were more readily willing than their Tiv counterparts to be interviewed and to share their perspectives on conflict resolution. Food sharing was also common when I was visiting for interviews. Diets included meats and a delicious homemade pan bread called *palauga*.

Interviews lasted from half an hour to two hours depending on the consultant's energy levels and willingness to continue sharing. Sometimes we never really got beyond one question and the responses took conversations to several places and topics and when this happened, not only were my questions addressed satisfactorily, I also gained insight into other aspects of cultural practice without needing to probe about those particular aspects. On other occasions though, consultants stuck to questions asked and did not seem interested in any further discussion, but that was fine too, since the interviews were intended to be semi-structured and consultant driven anyway. It was important that consultants felt comfortable and ready to participate in interviews and speak to issues that were important to them.

Thesis overview

This thesis comprises eight chapters. The introductory chapter sheds light on the background, purpose and importance of the study.

The second chapter is an overview of the current literature in the area of indigenous peoples, their historical background, the discourses and politics of culture and identity in relation to modernity and otherwise

The third chapter considers the different perspectives that indigenous people bring to legal ideology and theory. It lays out a comprehensive map of the real and potential problems in indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking.

The fourth chapter explains the methods of data collection and the decision to use qualitative, narrative and indigenous research methods in this study. Some ethical considerations are also discussed.

The fifth chapter introduces the study groups–Tiv and Inuit. It provides detailed background on their historical as well as contemporary socio-cultural contexts as well as the researchers impressions of the groups in terms of conflict orientation and behavior.

The sixth chapter discusses results in detail. The various arguments, suggestions and perspectives emerging from interviews are outlined and expanded upon. These findings may be thought of as the foundations upon which Tiv and Inuit theory of conflict and peace are built. Consultants in the study groups elaborated on their indigenous ideologies of conflict, conflict resolution and peacemaking.

The seventh chapter sheds light on some problems faced by Tiv and Inuit indigenous processes; Study consultants identified some of the challenges they encounter in attempting to implement indigenous theories of conflict and peace. Some suggestions towards mitigating some of those challenges and strengthening indigenous conflict and peace practice.

The eighth and final chapter summarises the overall findings of the study. It shows how the study contributes to research and practice. Some recommendations are also made for future research in indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking with any indigenous groups or with Inuit and Tiv in particular.

Chapter 2 - Conflict, Culture & Indigenous People

Conflict - Where the buttocks rub

The African[7] proverb "where there are buttocks they must rub" is often applied to the human condition to illustrate the inevitability of conflict; the point being that when people have cause for close up interactions, their different personalities, egos, preferences, dispositions and affiliations may become fodder for tensions, frictions and overt conflicts. However, interactions leading to conflict are not a given for just as buttocks do not necessarily always rub the wrong way, people in spite of their differences do not always have to be in conflict with each other. More so, in the same manner as the rubbing motions of buttocks are actually mutually supporting and work together to assist other bodily functions (like keeping human waste products in check until the "drainage pipe" wishes to clean out), conflicts can sometimes serve productive purposes. For example, a couple that finds themselves fighting a lot (where that behavior was not a usual pattern), may be made aware through the conflicts, that some aspect of their relationship needs some work. Thus if they take appropriate steps to address underlying issues and their marriage is made better, then the conflict the experienced was productive because it served as a warning sign. Yet conflicts can also become destructive and deadly if not effectively resolved or transformed. Human conflict is however completely avoidable in some instances and should dealt with preventively or channelled to function for growth and benefit when it occurs.

Lewis Coser (1964) submits that conflict is a 'natural' state for humans. It fulfills certain important social functions in human social relations. Conflict, says Coser, has an

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[7] The author and origin is not known but the saying is widely used in parts of the African continent.

inherent quality that holds groups together by strengthening the shared sense of identity of group members. It helps with establishing and maintaining group identities especially in environments where several cultural groups coexist. He suggests that conflicts can potentially allow groups to freely express hostile dispositions that otherwise suppressed, may eventually erupt in intra-group violence. Cross-cultural conflicts of this nature may be seen as a sort of safety-valve permitting the release of inevitable intergroup tensions. Release in this case, is experienced through conflict, especially when it is projected outwards to the out-group or some other chosen substitute. By projecting normally suppressed hostilities outwards onto a chosen 'enemy' out-group, the in-group saves itself having to experience the tensions that may have been directed inwards. In this case, conflict is not dysfunctional, but indeed useful in maintaining in-group cohesion. Thus conflict has both diverging and converging dimensions such that people in close relationships can harbour both feelings of hate and love for a chosen subject. Conflicting parties therefore may find in their constructed 'enemies' aspects of admiration with which they can sympathize or even celebrate. This line of thinking acknowledges the positive role of conflicts in human relationships.

Conflict resolution practice tries to find and harness windows of opportunity (when conflicts may serve a productive purpose) and to build upon them in effort to help individuals and cultural groups find common ground for peace building. For instance, when people understand that every human interaction pleasant or not, is an opportunity to learn about self and/or others and to grow personally, then their conflict disposition is transformed into curiosity wherein patience replaces apathy and impatient aggression.

Thus the rubbing of the buttocks (human interactions) continues but serves rather than destroys the body (human relationships).

Culture – The abiding confusion

Realizing that conflict resolution in cross-cultural settings can best be addressed in a multi-disciplinary, multi-dimensional fashion, the field of conflict resolution has attempted to offer models for *inter-* and *cross-* cultural conflict resolution. This includes clearly defining the concept of culture, understanding cultural differences and impacts on difference on cross-cultural interactions as well as identifying the most suitable approaches for engaging cultural others.

Vlamik Volkan (1998) has offered a description of culture as being something of a shared meaning, an ideal, a documented record and a social construction that brings people together under what he calls an ethnic tent. This idea of culture as an ethnic tent provides a model for understanding how inter-group conflicts are generated amongst people of different cultures and also how such conflicts may be resolved. A proliferation of ethnic tents holds potential for conflict as it creates in-groups and out-groups; in-groups include people who fall within the same ethnic tent and exclude the out-groups[8].

David Augsburger (1992) has referred to this in-group/out-group phenomenon as the *same* and the *other* dynamic where people who share certain common factors (race, gender, class, language, nationality, social orientations etc) consider themselves to be the same in a positive way and all others without the attributes are regarded with suspicion and negatively. Thus transcending culture as an ethnic tent necessarily involves building bridges across real and imagined divides and locating common grounds across

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[8] Out-groupers are generally those who fall outside of a specific ethnic tent.

differences to create safe meeting points for peacemaking. Cross cultural conflict resolution processes bring together people who identify with different personal or ethnic tents in order to build bridges that connect those various tents and help transform hostile divisions into cooperative alliances (Bar-On 2000).

In order to achieve middle or common ground for cross-cultural peacemaking, it is important to understand where real differences lie as well as similarities. Otherwise people may assume the existence of intolerable differences leading to out-grouping others where none exist in fact. It is important to be aware that whereas some differences are primordially significant, many are artificially constructed to serve dubious ends such as race, class and gender. Sarah Lanier (2000) makes a most audacious classification of cultures that if seriously considered, has profound implications on cross-cultural interactions occurring without and within artificially constructed arrangements. She groups cultures into ``Hot climate`` and ``Cold climate`` categories and then outlines fundamental differences of the people who find themselves in either group (see table 1).

This classification is an important one for this study as it locates Tiv in hot-climate culture and Inuit in cold-climate culture. Yet in the context of their historical (colonial) experiences, this dichotomy falls somewhat short and the two cultures find themselves standing together rather than apart. At first, it appears that Tiv and Inuit fall into vastly different categories based on the hot and cold weather differences. On close examination however, it becomes evident that although the Tiv and Inuit live in opposite climes, they share many 'hot' cultural attributes together. Inuit who live in the coldest parts of the world, actually live and operate in 'hot-climate' culture ways according to Lanier's descriptions. Even more interesting is that their fundamentally `hot` cultures

were colonized by Europeans in accordance with 'cold-climate' culture principles (see table 1). This hot/cold culture difference therefore sets the stage for significant cultural misunderstandings, misinterpretations and assumptions leading to conflict and confusion on several levels – individual, social, political and judicial.

Cultural categories and their socio-political effects on attitudes, behaviours & expectations

Cold-climate Cultures	Hot-climate Cultures
People who live in cold climates	People who live in hot climates
Task oriented	Relationships based
Direct communication : short direct questions and answers preferred, "professionalism" is desirable	Indirect communication: friendliness is actively pursued and cultivated
Individualistic: sense of self is personally defined	Group oriented: sense of self is defined by community and vice versa
Privacy culture: prefer own time and space	Inclusive culture: possessions and plans are to be shared freely
Hospitality requires time and planning	Hospitality is spontaneous and involves food and drink
Very time oriented	Events are more important than time
Informal approach to life and others	Formal approach to life and others; who you know matters and dress honours others
Women take frontline roles, oriented to "power" dynamics between the sexes	Women take submissive positions and are oriented to "roles" between the sexes
Youth is elevated and preferred as the prime contributing time of life	Age brings cumulative experience and knowledge, the elderly are to be respected
Trust is placed in distributive organizations and structures	Trust is vested in community rather than non-personal structures
Emotions are discussed as necessary for personal and interpersonal negotiation and healing	Rituals are important in personal or interpersonal negotiation and healing

Table I - Adapted from Lanier (2000)

The Intersection of conflict and culture

Conflict resolution and culture theories combine to create a recipe for peacemaking and social transformation. Avruch (2009) has provided ways of looking at culture that are useful in the specific sphere of conflict resolution. He posits that a broad understanding of various cultures opens the door for individuals to embrace both inevitability and potential in socio-cultural transformation. He maintains that individuals are "bearers of multicultural identities" and as soon as they grasp the complexity of their multicultural identities on a personal level, they are able to accept and embody change

through adaptation. This takes place internally within them as well as in their immediate social environments. Such people become comfortable enough to maintain personal and group difference as well as external loyalties. This way of being makes a person empathetic to the complex nature of culture and identity; they are in turn more open to cross-cultural interactions with out-groupers without intending to deride, assimilate or obliterate cultural others.

Through cross-cultural conflict resolution lenses, culture ceases to be conceived of as something fixed in time and incontestable almost to a sacred degree. It more closely resembles a dynamic phenomenon that is emergent in nature and pliable for the better. Cross-cultural conflict resolution processes also recognize that inherent qualities and resources within a person or group can be drawn upon to support necessary plying procedures without importing alien resources. Cultural differences may be demystified within and between parties and then reconstructed into tools for building human relationships and diversity rather than tools for division, oppression, discrimination and conflicts (Lederach 1995).

Cross-cultural conflict resolution also presents the platform for dialogue and understanding of the other in the search for common ground. Thus `hot-climate` and `cold-climate` culture people for instance would not see their ways of being as fixed and unchangeable but will begin to see that adaptation and journeys across cultural divides are possible and mutually beneficial. The central idea is that cultural differences (ought to) complement rather than alienate people. Taken together, cultures are stronger than the divides they create.

Diller (1999) has stressed the importance of the recognition of cultural diversity (especially in the human services). He argues that in multiple and intersecting environments, professionals serving the populace will do well to recognize the differences in presentation, practices and beliefs of their clients. They will need to understand how culturally diverse peoples experience life. He warns that costly mistakes have been made in the past where culturally diverse peoples were treated in ways that were not helpful to them as clients and patients purely because they were forced into systems that made no cultural sense to them. Consequently, clients and patients knowing the monoculturistic tendencies of professionals, boycott such services and prefer to seek out their own processes that approach them from a place of appropriate cultural understanding.

Diller's position is in agreement with that of Adrian Furham and Stephen Bochner (1982) who argue that although cross-cultural migrations have been happening for as long as can be remembered, cross-cultural interactions are not always the easiest for humans. People have had to deal with culture shocks and have had to constantly relearn social or cultural skills in order to adequately function in new cultural environments. They add that in cross-cultural environments, there is bound to be misunderstanding as cultures interact. There may be misunderstandings as one culture fails to attend or read the messages or behaviours being transmitted. Some messages and or behaviours may be misinterpreted, given wrong attributions or ignored altogether. Or, some persons may simply not know culturally appropriate ways to act and therefore may send out responses that may be offensive.

Furham and Bochner (1982) then go further to explain that some people even within their own cultural circles may be a bit awkward as they lack social skills. Specifically these are people who are socially inadequate, who when measured in the light of people with social skills,

> have failed to learn a wide range of inter-personal skills, due to poor child-parent and peer group relationships and because of other forms of social and physical deprivation. Such individuals are incompetent in or incapable of certain verbal exchanges; they are unable to accurately interpret or perform nonverbal signals. They have not mastered the social conventions of the society at large, and may also be unaware of many of the social rules of social behaviour pertaining to their own particular subgroup. Thus it could be said that socially inadequate individuals are often like strangers in their own land and culture. Some of the specific behaviours which the socially incompetent perform unsatisfactorily, include expressing attitudes, feelings and emotions; adopting the appropriate proxemic posture; understanding the gaze patterns of the people they are interacting with; carrying out ritualized routines such as greetings, leave-takings, self disclosure, making or refusing requests; and asserting themselves (165-6)

Such people when introduced into larger multicultural societies become even more unable to function. Cross-cultural interactions may be more strenuous for such people who need to understand theirs and others cultures as a foundation for effective cross-cultural negotiations.

Sharp cultural differences between cultures can also present grounds for intercultural conflicts. Therefore conflicts in multicultural environments are nearly a given especially when unfamiliar cultural groups come into prolonged contact. Social politeness gives way to misunderstanding or conflicts (Brislin1981). This realization is a crucial step in cross-cultural conflict resolution as cross-cultural conflicts may be intensified where parties do not even realize that their actions or inactions constitute a problem to another culture.

Mohamed Rabie (1994) warns against attempting to eliminate cross-cultural and indeed any type of human conflicts as they are a natural part of life. He admonishes rather, that attention should be focused on deconstructing the ideas, values, images, belief systems, structures and processes that generate conflict. This effort paves way for creative work within and between cultures to reduce tensions and conflicts. The field of Conflict Resolution Studies thus encourages the use of dialogue to bring together people and cultures with the aim of improving communication and understanding across racial, religious, cultural and personal divides. Examples include the 'Seeds of Peace' project that brought Israeli and Palestinian youngsters together for cross-cultural engagements intended to create opportunity for the sorts of interactions, experiences and understanding that is crucial for peace building (Wallace 2000).

Rabie also finds that conflictual behaviour occurs when people are unsatisfied within the structures and processes that they find themselves. One example is value-related conflicts

> disputes over loyalties, individual beliefs, group identities, ethnic relations, cultural perceptions and values. They are issues that do not lend themselves easily to political compromise and thus tend to be non-negotiable. They are also difficult to define outside their own cultural contexts, which makes them hard to communicate to others whose cultures are different. Despite an accelerated movement towards the development of universal values, unique historical experiences and socio-cultural formations have continued to influence people's worldviews, driving them in different, at times opposing directions. Culture thus plays an important or decisive role in provoking conflict, sustaining it for generations, and helping resolve it (23-4).
> Believing that cultural affinities may thus generate or fuel conflicts and vice

versa, he admonishes further that culture must continue to be treated as important and individual cultures respected rather than denied.

Cross-cultural conflict resolution practice also lays emphasis on the importance of respect for individual cultural affinities and encouraging cultural parties to remain open to negotiated compromise where necessary. Lack of compromise may sometimes be at the very root of the conflicts in the first place. Cultural groups are therefore encouraged to settle differences, locate and promote common ground and foster the positive interdependence of groups where possible.

The value of interdependence promoted by conflict resolution practitioners is almost commonsensical. But often, common sense needs to be taught and actively encouraged. It can include mundane information such reminding people that to build a better world, men need women, the upper-class cannot exist without the working class, all human races complement each other, diversity enriches knowledge and peace is more desirable than chaos. All the elements of the universe depend upon each other to exist and function properly but too often people forget. Thus all people-individuals and cultural groups-should constantly be reminded to recognize the expedient role of interdependence especially in multiple and intersecting cultural environments which is basically the entire multicultural world. The field of conflict resolution is premised on this understanding and its task is to constantly remind all people of this fact (Augsburger 1992; Abu-Nimer 1999).

Therefore Rabie (1994) offers "the shared homeland model" wherein culturally, ethnically or nationally different peoples can operate as politically autonomous entities while at the same time cooperating on the economic and social front. This way he contends, ethnic minorities can be free to shape their own systems and to cooperate as they find beneficial without feeling oppressed, excluded or discriminated against. Each

group would have rights to participate in its own political affairs and to respect the political affairs of other groups. Obviously this model in practice would have its own problems. However it presents itself as a plausible option for fostering cross-cultural cooperation within multiple cultural environments.

Another task of conflict resolution in theory and practice is to construct affirming theories in favour of peace as well as deconstruct negative ideology with regards to conflict among diverse peoples. Raymond Taras and Rajat Ganguly (2002) have strongly recommended that in dealing with (cross-cultural) conflicts of ethnic nature it is important to be aware of impeding theories which while useful on their own, may lend themselves to dubious interpretations and be used to negatively impact cultural groups considered to lie outside of a certain mainstream. Some groups may use such theories as driving ideologies to justify inappropriate actions.

Examples of such culture theories include;

1. *Modernization/assimilation theory* propounded by Karl Deutsch (1953, 1957). Deutsch thought that modernization would become a 'natural' mobilizer of the population and that communication growing out of modernization would result in the assimilation of the modernized population, thereby completing the cultural integration program. He argued that some danger would abound in situations where modernization outpaced assimilation, then, fragmentation would occur giving rise to ethnic conflicts and nationalism because rapid modernization may not accommodate all groups at the same pace. Thus those left behind becoming conscious of the economic gaps, will begin to agitate for equality phrased through what he finds to be 'parochial' ethnic sentiments.

This theory is sound in certain respects but can be misinterpreted and misused in a few ways. First the theory pre-supposes what modernization means and perhaps what it should look like. Whatever picture Deutsch had in mind was probably established as the standard measurement for modernity and any group that fell short of that standard was not yet on the modernization train. If a group does not fit that certain picture, then they are not modernized and should be assimilated. It can partly be argued, that the grand program of colonization could easily have been justified using Deutsch's theory. Secondly, he assumed that people left behind by the modernization train so to speak, will be disposed to agitation and will clamour to be equal with those obviously further along on the modernization journey. To make it worse, he thinks that their agitation will be because they have parochial sentiments. This idea dangerously lends itself to negative interpretation and could be used to dismiss legitimate claims for equality by disadvantaged groups who have been the target of exploitative policies and regimes such as indigenous peoples and women have been.

2. *Strain theory* is another rather pessimistic theory propounded by Clifford Geertz (1973) who argued that people left behind in the modernizing journey, will tend to grab hold of anachronistic ethnic identity as something with which to express dissatisfaction with the socio-economic exclusion they feel. Geertz felt that such individuals would abandon the ethnic fight once they were absorbed by the socio-economic system.

This argument which is quite sensible on its own could also be misinterpreted. For example, cultural groups who fight for their identity could be construed to be masking a fight for more economic inclusion. This theory misapplied, could completely disregard legitimate request for cultural recognition. A disturbing example would be if someone

tried to reason that Israelis when they pushed for a state were simply interested in economic inclusion in the Palestinian economy. What an insult that would be.

3. Theory of '*the plural society*' mostly built upon John Stuart Mill (1869) and J.S. Furnivall's (1939, 1948) ideas, argues that multiethnic societies could not remain stable and democratic because ethnic groups would not develop a sense of common loyalty.

This theory can be thought to assume right off the bat that universalism is perhaps the best way to be, that multiethnic societies are a farce. It ignores the fact that loyalty is commanded by immutable ideals such as mutual respect, inclusion, equality, cooperation, fairness, equal access to justice, collective progress etc. Loyalty is not necessarily achieved because everyone looks, acts, speaks, believes and adheres to the exact same things. Multiethnic societies can thrive on collective ideals.

4. Eric Nordlinger's (1972) theory of '*consociationalism*' that is, power balance between various groups in multiethnic environments so that none could form a majority on its own, maintained that structured elite cooperation and predominance would prevent conflicts in multiethnic societies.

Again, this theory right away appears classist. It has two horns, one good and one deeply problematic. The first horn which tries to prevent the emergence of single majority groups in multiethnic societies is good. The second -potentially problematic horn which recommends structured elite cooperation and predominance in society is classist. It is problematic because it vests confidence in the elite as opposed to the mass. It could be used to justify authoritarian government by so-called elite who exclude the voice of the masses in important decision-making process. In practice, this theory could be deeply anti-democratic.

5. Ted Robert Gurr's (1970, 1994) '*Relative Deprivation Theory*' sees disintegrating tendencies in multiethnic societies in the perceived discrepancies between a group's economic reality and expectation. He argues that when a group perceives that its wretched condition is as a result of some structural unfairness, they may consider that political action is necessary to address the situation.

This is no doubt a sound, demonstrable and applicable theory of conflict. Where it veers off the rail and could lend itself to misinterpretation and misapplication is its presumption that perhaps cultural groups may be reaching beyond their means and becoming dissatisfied only when they do not reach their ulterior expectations. A bad government can grab hold of this idea and advise frustrated citizens agitating for a better life to reduce their expectations to the level of their realities. Secondly, the idea suggests that disadvantaged cultural groups will blame their inadequacies on unfair structures (rather than take responsibility for change) and that will give them the impetus to react negatively with violence.

Taken together, the problem with these theories is that they completely demerit cultural conflicts with an ethnic dimension preferring rather to see those conflicts as clothing economic or frivolous agendas.

Peacemaking opportunities in multiethnic environments

Regardless of the challenges faced by multiethnic environments, they can be healthy places where the human spirit flourishes and grows through cooperation and a clear understanding of how each culture contributes towards diversity and progress despite inevitable conflicts. To promote such effective cooperation, John Paul Lederach (1995) admonish it is important to adopt an "Elicitive Model". In his words,

the elicitive approach starts from the vantage point that training is an opportunity aimed primarily at discovery, creation, and solidification of models that emerge from the resources present in a particular setting and that respond to needs in that context. Its motto, borrowed from the theme of appropriate technology, suggests the concern: discovering ways to catch fish in their own ponds. The emphasis is not only on empowerment as participating in creating models, but also in seeking resource and root in the cultural context itself (55).

In other words, it is important to recognize the peace capital that each culture possesses and can contribute for the benefit of the whole. Lederach goes on to stress that the elicitive approach invites the conflict resolution practitioner working in multiethnic environments to adopt a '*facilitating*' rather than an '*expert*' all-knowing-role. Basically to allow the cultural environment to become a self generating resource for the resolution of the tensions or conflicts that may exist. This model recommends the conflict resolution practitioner to approach other cultures from a place of assumed ignorance (used positively) that is, ignorance about the specificities of that culture and its complexities too. S/he should operate without an intention to project or forcefully apply knowledge gained from her own culture or from working with other cultural groups unto another that may be essentially different.

The practitioner's attitude in using this model is one of discovery and creativity, i.e. working with the group to find what works best and then working together to build creative ways to apply such knowledge for the common good. Lederach advances that working in this manner may become more complex when urbanization and modernization have altered a cultural group or when generations of a cultural group move away from older cultural practices and become assimilated into the host/dominant group. These differences regardless, the practitioner should consider the conflict situation within existing context and acknowledge that the conflict parties are the primary resource for

conflict resolution. Parties as resources should be used maximally as they probably understand their own contexts better. It is important to acknowledge, validate and empower them to function as problem solvers. The practitioner also has the task to conscientize the cultural groups s/he may be working with by encouraging them to own and interact within their processes and ideologies, but also to identify the strengths or weaknesses embedded in those processes. This way, conflict parties become their own procedural experts and critics. However in order to not become completely cut off from the host/dominant model, the practitioner should encourage conflict parties to be open to other ideas and models without minimizing or denying their own models. The superseding goal should always be to find the best possible solution to the problem.

David Augsburger (1992) has also found through mediation, negotiation and conflict resolution work across cultures, that the best modern day theories about human interaction and conflicts have been confounded by cultural complexities around the world. He observes with pleasure that different cultural processes are beginning to gain and contribute their voices on how best to restore human relationships through means that are not necessarily conventional. Augsburger therefore encourages the pooling knowledge by inviting experiences and wisdoms from all cultural spheres to be used for conflict resolution especially in multicultural environments. Warning against the tendency to encourage uniformity, he sees diversity as a source of strength, inclusivity and creativity in problem solving. Augsburger has found that the solutions to problems involving culture must necessarily be tackled using means and methods that make sense to the people operating in those cultural arenas. This is beneficial even to those who may

not be in those particular cultural contexts but who can utilize what models seem more efficient and effective.

The western culture of individualism for example, focuses heavily on the individual as she understands and experiences conflict. This culture can benefit from an understanding of how conflict affects the collective just as much as the traditional communitarian cultures can also gain by personalizing conflict in some cases and looking more at the individual in conflict. All cultures bring strong perspectives and contribute rich dimensions to the understanding of conflict and conflict resolution in the same way that conflict resolution helps cultures to shape and reshape their core values, their social realities and modes of operation.

Chapter 3 - Indigenous Cultures: Difference and Contribution

Anthropologists have shown us that, cultural form-as 'determinate orderings of things, behaviour, and ideas' - do play a demonstrable role in the management of human interactions. What will be required of us in the future is not to deny that role, but to understand more precisely how cultural forms work to mediate social relationships among particular populations (Wolf 2010, 19).

Despite some problems of interpretation in different cultural environments (Ani 1994) and collusion with colonial projects (McFate 2005), anthropology as a discipline and practice has contributed enormously in the understanding of indigenous cultures. In some cases anthropologists have acted almost as advocates for indigenous cultures in the face of colonial interpretations. They described indigenous cultures in ways that allow outsiders a glimpse into those cultures that may otherwise be entirely missed (Gluckman 1970; Mills 1994; Fry 2005).

As the process of colonization seemed to depend upon demeaning and discrediting indigenous processes of the colonized, anthropology sometimes worked on the other hand to present those peoples and processes in a different (more resourceful) light. It is difficult to say if anthropologists who embarked on these tasks of describing cultural practices started out meaning to showcase human/cultural capital or if they were changed by what they encountered through their work (see Young & Goulet 1994, 1998). In any case, anthropology has left a useful trail of information to that helps one begin to understanding some aspects of indigenous cultures in terms of what they believed about conflict, how communities approached conflict and what some conflict resolution strategies existed in various cultural contexts.

Anthropologists whose work brings in contact with indigenous peoples around the world, have sometimes acted in roles as cultural translators and bridges, advocates,

teachers, and as important decolonizers (Mills 1994). They have paved paths to understanding and respect for difference and have brought to light processes and procedures of indigenous peoples. These processes were otherwise blacked out and branded as primitively uncivilized and subsequently dismissed by colonizers (Wolf 2010; Blaut 1993). Nevertheless, some anthropologists through their reports, enabled a reconsideration of historical misunderstanding and exposed inaccurate negative labeling of indigenous cultures.

Anthropology also offers narrative ethnography as a model for engaging cultures that is safe and unassuming when used appropriately. What better way to engage a culture than to approach, observe and interact with the culture at close range. The individual thus connected to another culture can become a critical intercultural link or bridge between cultures; they are positioned to foster understanding of that as well as their own cultures and to encourage human collaboration by their actions. As Paul Bohannan and Dirk van der Elst (1998) see it, the field of anthropology-which birthed ethnography–was what allowed people operating within their cultures to expand curiosities about others in ways that predictably invited them to question self and their individual provincialities. They were able to compare between or amongst cultures in ways that engendered humility, fascination and respect as their awareness grew. The result was usually the realization that one's culture is but one model of life and reality and that the knowledge of other worldviews and processes holds the potential to enrich human knowledge of the life and humanity in general.

Bohannan and van der Elst were saddened that the colonization project and its denial or destruction of other cultures, worked in the opposite direction of building a rich and diversified human family and of closing cultural gaps. They noted that

> colonial powers were all immensely ethnocentric – they destroyed cultures knowingly because otherwise they could not impose their own ways and their own ideas on the people they wanted to rule and tax and profit from. Colonials traditionally used missionaries as their frontline assault troops against local tradition and custom. Of course this did not always work out as expected: like the earliest anthropological ethnographers (who were also hired to aid colonial administrations), missionaries became effective champions of the natives (38).

By admitting to the destructive force of colonization, anthropologists Bohannan and van der Elst were choosing to promote the more potent force of collaborative human interaction. Cross-cultural collaboration occurs once cultures have put each other at ease through mutual respect, recognition and validation that cannot be denied by more denigrate forms of power. It is particularly noteworthy that Paul Bohannan finally takes this position after he presumably had earlier on been engaged in providing anthropological information for the purposes of subjugating other cultures as suggested by Mcfate (2005). This is another example of how entering into genuine discourse with people of other cultures can transform negative perspectives fueled by ignorance. In this way, anthropology has contributed immensely towards building the global human community. In the specific case of Tiv and Inuit cultures, particularly informative works include; Paul and Laura Bohannan, (1953, 1968, 1998), R.C. Downes, (1933, 1971), Jean Briggs (1970, 1979), Franz Boas' (1964) and Hugh Brody (2001).

Anthropological evidence of peace oriented cultures

Early anthropological accounts elaborated on various indigenous peoples and their cultural orientations to conflict. Writing about the differences they encountered, a useful trail of information was left behind that helps to mainstream indigenous processes and reveals certain qualities about indigenous peoples and their processes which have been organized and expanded upon.

Some order in the chaos - anthropology revealed that indigenous peoples had and in many cases, still have well organized, non-hierarchical (socio-political and legal) systems in place through which different types and degrees of social problems were dealt with among community members. Max Gluckman (1970) who conducted anthropological studies among various peoples in Africa noted that the groups among whom he worked were governed by distinct processes enabling them build and sustain social order. His work took him across North, Central and South Africa where he observed the social and procedural organization of community and approaches to conflict and its resolution. He noted that traditional customs play significant parts in establishing and regulating human relationships amongst the indigenous groups he observed. He concluded that social conflict is a human phenomenon that exists everywhere including amongst indigenous peoples, however, these groups as any other had evolved their own processes to prevent the destruction of social order.

Indigenous groups were not necessarily organized in the same fashion as his (European) group especially as they mostly had no hierarchical governmental institutions, yet they maintained the peace that is necessary if human relations are to continue and blossom. His final analysis merits a long quote.

All over the world there are societies which have no governmental institutions that is, they lack officers with established powers to judge on quarrels and to enforce their decisions, to legislate and take administrative action to meet emergencies and to lead wars of offence and defense. Yet these societies have such well-established and well known codes of morals and law, of convention and ritual, that even though they have no written histories, we may reasonably assume that they have persisted for many generations. They clearly do not live in unceasing fear of breaking up in lawlessness. We know that some of them have existed over long periods with some kind of internal law and order, and have successfully defended themselves against attacks by others (2-3).

This realization further fueled his curiosity about indigenous peoples and he subsequently devoted much effort in trying to understand some more about various socio-cultural structures. In reference to the Nuer peoples of the Upper Nile region, Gluckman explained that they have developed systems to encourage cooperation around resource sharing as a way to maintain peace. During certain months of the year, Nuer pastoralists had to share shrinking water sources for themselves and their cattle. At those times of scarcity, water becomes a potential source of conflict. Therefore, aware of a looming conflict situation, Nuer would promote the value of friendships amongst themselves as the way to prevent feuds that could potentially damage group relations and create endless warfare among their communities. They recognized that warfare would be bad for their cattle as well as their lives which basically revolved around their cattle. Thus their ecological situation brought them together to cooperate for survival using the tool of friendship. With similar examples, Gluckman continued to show that the Nuer developed principles that strengthened and maintained their friendships; they explored common ancestral lineages to strengthen their relationships. They also developed mutually binding rules of war to protect their tribes and unite against foreign invaders when necessary.

Similarly, Antonia Mills (1994) an anthropologist who worked among the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en (an aboriginal peopl in the Province of British Columbia, Canada),

observed their cultural practices with respect to their ancestral lands. She found that the Witsuwit'en have well established processes for conducting among other things, the appropriation of (ancestral) land rights. The context of Mills study of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en indigenous processes was a legal procedure involving the Canadian government claims to lands. The lands in question had been confiscated through colonial policies and were considered 'Crown Lands'. Meanwhile, indigenous peoples living on those lands continue to claim ancestry to them and consider the same lands to be their ethnic homelands. They insist that the lands do not belong to the Crown as they were never handed over.

Here was an obvious clash of worldviews and interpretation that needed intervention and explanation. Mills therefore conducted anthropological studies in order to advise the (mainstream) court of the cultural underpinnings of the indigenous peoples and processes in question. She reported at the end of her study that the Gitksan and Wistuwit'en had rightful claim to the lands. These groups had existed on the lands they now claim as ancestral land and had inherited those lands from generations of their ancestors who passed the lands on to them through their indigenous ceremonies most notably *potlatching*. *Potlatching* is an indigenous ceremony of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en. It is a process by which jurisdiction to land is passed on to other generations in a traditional way (Mills 1994, 9). With little understanding of the *potlatching* custom or process, European colonizers on arrival from Europe, had gone on to declare those lands to be 'waste' and 'unoccupied' and therefore free land to be occupied. Gitksan and Wistuwit'en lands were thus confiscated, occupied and claimed as crown lands without regard to the indigenous peoples who had lived and continue to live on those lands.

This presents a costly cross-cultural or intercultural conflict. In order for the cultures involved to communicate effectively towards resolution, there needed to be a meeting point that would foster some cross-cultural communication. Anthropology in this case, became a critical link to help foster meaningful cross-cultural communication. Thus did Mills work enter the stage; acting as a cultural translator, she was hired to study the ways, beliefs and worldviews of the indigenous peoples in question and to convey her findings to the mainstream court sitting on the matter.

Had anthropology not entered the process in the mediatory capacity that it did in the Gitksan and Wistuwit'en case, it no doubt would have continued to be difficult for those indigenous groups to communicate their cultural practices to the court. It is disheartening however, that in the end, the court did not consider the anthropological reports explaining the indigenous worldviews of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en in land ownership matters. The judge discredited the research methods used to collect information and threw out that bit of the evidence (Mills 1996). Predictably, that case ended in favor of the Crown of course.

Anthropology had nonetheless helped to reveal the difference in the conflict ideologies and resolution processes of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en. Mills noted for instance that the Gitksan and Witsiwit'en value their chiefs and elders much more than they do western courts and judges. The chiefs are people who are selected and conferred with the authority to resolve disputes and to deal with Witsuwit'en law. Also, although they do not have written histories, indigenous peoples are in possession of rich oral traditions–*kungax*. The *Kungax* or oral traditions of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en were also dismissed by the Canadian court in that case. The court decided that oral traditions

constitute 'hearsay' in western legal tradition and hearsay (including oral traditions) is inadmissible before western law. So in the end, power won over reason.

What remains however, is the fact that the Gitksan and Witsiwit'en were shown to have their own effective political arrangements and legal systems. Despite the attempts by dominant cultures to supplant indigenous cultures, they remain and seem to thrive. What indigenous cultures appear to lack, is the will to forcefully compete and the power to enforce their own cultures in the face of dominant, mainstream control of processes. However, Mills concludes that indigenous peoples have valid contributions to make in building the human community and in order to do so; they must first be accepted and understood. Ultimately, the task of making themselves understood, lies with indigenous peoples in the various capacities that they find themselves; scholars, academics and practitioners.

Peace that endures time - Anthropological studies also show that contrary to colonial depictions of indigenous peoples in different parts of the world as savage, primitive, irrational, brutish, evil, and extinct, indigenous peoples continue to practice admirable cultures of peace encoded in their day-to-day rules of behaviour and operation (Briggs 1970, 1979). They are certainly not extinct (Hendry 2005; LaDuke 2005) and Sahlins (1999) also assures that culture is here to stay, it is not eradicated yet. Douglas Fry (2006) who has also worked extensively with indigenous peoples in different contexts argues that some of the observations and cultural projections made in earlier periods of (European) contact with indigenous peoples were made out of misperceptions and the words that were used to describe certain practices of indigenous peoples were

especially mistaken. Speaking in specific situations where indigenous peoples or their practices were regarded as being *warlike* he states that;

> many descriptions [of indigenous cultural practices] penned by westerners contain vocabularies of war–for instance, warfare, battle, enemy, declaration of war, war parties, war paint, and the like–that are imprecise or inappropriately applied to disputes. This use of language implies warring when in actuality two individuals, perhaps aided by kin, are fighting or, ironically, engaging in procedures to settle disputes without bloodshed. Descriptions of this kind help to re-create the "savage" in our preconceived warlike image, as the western concept of war is projected onto indigenous activities (144).

He argues that such inappropriate vocabulary conveys erroneous messages and stereotypes that harm otherwise peaceful indigenous practices and procedures.

Fry (2006) goes on to describe the indigenous peoples of Australia and their non-warring ways. He explains that before contact with Europeans the aborigines of Australia were hunting and gathering societies that had virtually no wars, warfare was a rare anomaly. The people had well-established peace systems with elaborate conflict resolution processes. Fry further shows that the aborigines of Australia have organized legal systems and rules of society for conflict management and resolution. Their rules and systems are supposedly originated from spiritual beings and are in this sense sacred. While those societies are generally egalitarian, there are relational principles to guide interactions. For instance, Fry points to systems in place within which women tended to defer to men and young men were obliged to abide by certain decisions of older men. He emphasized particularly, that elders play an important role in the maintenance of law and order in these societies where formal political authority is minimal. Conflicts are generally resolved in open assemblies called 'big meetings' that are attended by the public and elders. Aggrieved parties are compensated and wrongdoers punished "often by

administering a nonlethal spear wound through to the thigh". Reconciliation is attained through the use of rituals and ceremonies.

Fry provides another example among the Lake tribes of South Australia where ritual ceremonies and cultural symbols are used to settle conflicts having to do with the death of a young person. It is the custom that the deaths of people who are neither infants nor aged are caused by sorcery and the sorcerers/murderers must be identified and made to repay a debt to the family of the deceased. These repayments are however symbolic and concluded through ritual ceremonies.

Similarly, the Tiwi of northern Australia settle disputes through regulated juridical fights that enable grieving parties to vent their rage in the open and to come to new perspectives of each other through the help of the community. The Aranda also engage in a most intimate penis-holding and coitus reconciliatory ritual ceremony by touching the penis of an offender or having sexual intercourse in the case of a female offender in ritual context. Thereby bonds of reconciliation are established between former enemies.

The Murngin of Arnhem (Northern Australia) practice *Makarata*, a ceremonial peacemaking fight that involves throwing spears at the 'enemy' without an intention to kill or hurt them but rather as a way to vent rage. Several other examples of non-warring, peaceful societies around the world have been provided by Graham Kemp and Douglas Fry in their edited volume *Keeping the Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Societies around the World* (2004).

Paul Heelas (Howell & Willis 1989) cautions however, that in making classifications for identifying the nature of societies in terms of how peaceful or

aggressive they are, it is important to take note of the context; the situation and place of events. This guards against making sweeping generalizations or drawing erroneous conclusions simply based upon repeating events. The key is to contextualize rather than generalize and label. Adopting this strategy of contextualizing, anthropologist Carl O'Neil, (Howell & Willis 1989) found the Zapotec to be a decidedly nonviolent people. They operate a set of customs, behaviors and actions that contribute to the advancement of peace in that society.

In similar manner, Howe (Howell & Willis 1989) also found that the peaceful nature of the Bali people is a product of their beliefs and values which are shrouded in a cosmology based on ideologies of balance, order and equilibrium. This is evident in the belief that people can only be inhabited by pure spirits if and when they are in a state of balance, order and equilibrium. When a person is in a state of disorder and disequilibrium they could be inhabited by a noxious spirit. Thus according to Howe (1989), most Bali people actively strive to pursue balance and order in their lives by keeping peace with others. Interpersonal conflicts are avoided or resolved quickly such that constant peace becomes a state to be desired and a goal to be pursued and a shared social value to be promoted.

Understanding comes through connection – Anthropology has also provided preserved historical evidence that indigenous peoples had and in many cases still do have elaborate legal systems and processes for peacemaking encoded in shared meanings and principles. In some cases these principles have became buried under centuries of colonization and westernized forms of education (Mills 1994; Uwazie, Fred-Mensah, Wilson-Fall, Tuso, King-Irani, Faure, Masina, Menkhaus in Zartman 2000; Ross

2006). Indigenous systems involve practices that are programmed into the cultures and spiritualities of the groups that practice them; that is rules, principles and rituals to guide societal relations and interactions (Schirch 2005; Chase 2005; Kilonzo *et al*. 2009)

The Xhosa principle of *Ubuntu* is a well-known example of an indigenous African principle of peace. Namonde Masina (2000) commenting on the *Ubuntu* principle first stresses that African societies exist on cultural principles that foster community and resilience. He maintains that African indigenous processes have survived colonialism, christianism and apartheid. These processes which are based on principles such as *ubuntu* are used to regulate relationships, day-to-day interactions and general societal harmony. He states that the African worldview sees human existence as "unified, interconnected and integrated... to be out of harmony is regarded as harmful to the well-being of the whole" (169). Although the principle of *ubuntu* cannot be easily translated into English the closest idea of the term in English would be "collective personhood or the art and virtue of being human. The fundamental characteristics of *ubuntu* are; caring, compassion, unity, tolerance, respect, closeness, generosity, genuineness, empathy, consultation, compromise, and hospitality" (170). This principle requires participating community members to be open to support collective personhood both for themselves and for other community members. Under the principle, cooperation and solidarity are expected and encouraged as 'one can be a person only through others'.

Ubuntu is customary law. According to Mbigi and Maree (1995), the principle is used to preserve order and maintain harmony in community and for conflict resolution. When parties are in dispute, they are encouraged to seek amicable solutions under the guidance of the *ubuntu* principle. If they are unable to accomplish this task on their own,

they could bring the matter before a chief, counsellor, headman or elder (*inkundla/lekglotla*). The *inkundla/lekglotla* listen to the aggrieved parties and using the principle of *ubuntu* assist them to talk through the problem and try to find solutions that both parties agree to and feel satisfied with. As conflicts are also considered to be shared experiences, community members may be invited to the process or may become involved on their own. The king, chief or elder is expected to use their moral authority as a unifying factor for the community, calling parties to seek solutions that will become good precedents for future reference. The king, chief or elder has authority to arbitrate all matters affecting individuals or the community as a whole. He has a council of advisors with whom he consults with regards to matters of concern to the community.

> the king or chief is always assisted by a small number of confidential advisers, a of council of elders who have authority to settle every kind of community problem. The counselors were elderly men of repute in their area, old men with court experience, men with oratorical powers, men of caliber, or men who were conspicuous for their wisdom and skill in debating cases. (Zartman 2000, 171)

These individuals were called upon to listen to matters and offer advice or possible solutions to the problem. They were also helped by other members of the community with some personal knowledge of the conflict.

Mbigi and Maree state further, that the principle of *ubuntu* is applied to the resolution of conflicts involving amongst others, murder, theft, damage, juvenile delinquencies, quarrels, marriage, rape, incest, witchcraft, rebellion, war and so forth. *Ubuntu* is also invoked when the community is working to help heal the wounds of victims and for reconciliation purposes. The principle basically works with an understanding that each individual is an integral part of the whole community and the community is defined and held together by the people in it.

The *Ubuntu* principle moves away from sharp dichotomies of 'either/or' to the more holistic sphere of 'both/and' wherein each community member assumes personal responsibility for every other community member. This idea helps strengthen community spirit whether or not anyone is in dispute with another. People are geared towards always acting or refraining from acting with the interest of the whole community in mind. Where there is a conflict to be resolved, the principle invites the parties to think of the how they can best resolve the problem without putting the other conflictant in jeopardy of any kind. The result is equitable and sustainable peace.

Taboo roads lead to dead ends – Taboos continue to be important aspects of indigenous conflict resolution often noticed by anthropologists. Kilonzo, Kurgat and Omare (2009) provide examples of the role of taboos in mediating conflict and maintaining peace specific to the management of natural resources in Kenya. They argue that although cultural taboos may seem meaningless to an outside observer with little understanding of the culture, they are creatively woven into the social consciousness of indigenous peoples. They demonstrate that for the Isukhas of western Kenya, taboos are intended to restrain destructive behavior through the use of subtle dread of supernatural repercussions. Deeply embedded in the socio-religious psyche (of the Isukhas), taboos are very effective in checking destructive behavior and encouraging environmentally productive work. More recently, the role and place of taboos as a belief system is being threatened by new ideology and the result has been deadly conflicts in that region of Kenya and amongst other indigenous groups including the Tiv and the Inuit. When people stop believing in the forces that ground them and regulated behavior, a lack of

restraint gives way to lack of self of social control resulting in wanton and poor conflict behavior.

Life preserving power of relationships - *Mato Oput* is another indigenous practice used for conflict resolution. Joseph Wasonga (2009) provides an example in Uganda, where the principle is premised on that culture's understanding that conflict is potentially life threatening; life on the other hand, is valuable and is made more meaningful in the context of relationships. Therefore to preserve relationships is to preserve life. Conflict resolution is thus an activity that ought to protect, repair and preserve human relationships to the best possible extent. Wasonga maintains that the Acholi declaration "No one stands independently and survives" is quite powerful as a social driver.

Spirits of the dead are often invoked to oversee relationships of the living and assist with the maintenance of social order and harmony. *Jok*, the divine spirit of ancestors, confers misfortune on unrepentant wrongdoers who do not move quickly to make amends for wrongs committed against other community members. The spirits of the dead are believed to still linger and intervene in matters involving the living. They are powerful mediators of conflict because people in dread of consequences to themselves and or family members, work to restore harmony to fractured relationships as quickly as possible. The practice of *Mato Oput* also involves ritual cleansing ceremonies and processes of truth telling for healing and reintegration of wrongdoers into community with the living spirits of the dead serving as supernatural mediators. The aim is peaceful reconciliation.

Peacemaking through Reconciliation - The Oromo society in Ethiopia has an operational indigenous legal system and provides a good example of an indigenous legal framework. Hamdesa Tuso (2000) explains that social disharmony and disequilibrium is repaired through the *jarsumma* which is a process of reconciliation and peacemaking. Peacemaking among the Oromo is based upon a delicately intertwined set of processes that are woven into the social fabric and soaked in by all Oromo people throughout their lives from infancy all through old age. The Oromo belief system sets the stage for peacemaking long before conflict ever occurs by putting in place principles by which that society operates.

The Oromo believe in *Waaqa*–the creator of all things whose favour they must seek by being and doing good to fellow human beings and by dealing fairly with all in the course of life. To consciously harm others is to commit *Chubu* both against society and against *Waaqa.* Such offenders attract disfavour as well as bring disharmony to the entire society. However, some lenient space is also made in consideration that sometimes a person might commit an unintentional act of harm to another through omission–*Ballesa*. Oromo also believe that there is an evil spirit *Setana* who is constantly working to spread evil and to tempt people to do evil; *setana* must be actively kept at bay (through good deeds), in order to ensure that no one falls prey to traps set up by this spirit. They also acknowledge equality among all persons, that is *Qittee* (egalitarianism) and work to and treat all persons with respect including children, adults, men, women, old and young.

When conflicts happen, the *jarsa biya* (elders) bring conflictants together to help broker peace and reconciliation. Successful conflict resolution maintains societal harmony in community and ensures favour with *Waaqa*. The Oromo indigenous conflict

resolution systems operate under the *Gada* (age-grading) System. This is a highly democratic and complex system by which power is evenly distributed among various age groupings (*luba's*) and parties in the community. Each *luba* has different roles and responsibilities for ensuring the harmonious working of the society; each is expected to deal with conflicts within its limits.

The Oromo are also well attuned to a spiritual side to peacemaking and reconciliation between people, the community and the ecosystem (the *Kallu* system). This spiritual side is invoked and used during conflict resolution to help grieving parties in their reconciliation; they are reminded of their personal commitment to *Waaqa* and to maintaining harmony in the community at large. This goal supersedes any personal goals that the individual may have; their first duty is to help preserve peace for the entire community.

Self interest is secured in the protection of others - Francis Deng (2000) shares a principle that has been used in customary law among the indigenous Missiriya Arab peoples of Southern Kordofan in western Sudan. These indigenous peoples believe that in order to secure one's own personal or collective security, one should work to protect the interest of their opponent, enemy or persecutor. This idea is premised on the belief that all people are made by the creator and are equal regardless of their social level. Thus each person deserves to be treated according to the divine laws of humanity (respect, kindness, consideration, and love). When people live this way towards others, they secure their own peace and security because they attract the same treatment to themselves.

Therefore when a conflict occurs, the conflicting parties must not lose sight of each other's humanity. They are expected to work towards finding solutions that are mutually beneficial at least, or that benefit the opponent as much as possible. This way, the opponent will be won over and the peace maintained. Deng is quick to add that "reaching out must be from a position of strength, magnanimity, and generosity rather than from weakness, whether in terms of right and wrong or of wits. You have a cause that you concede, leverage on the people you are pulling along, and a credible expectation that if your concessions are not heeded, you can threaten the opponent with worse consequences (98-9). This principle was practiced successfully among indigenous leaders in the Sudan, particularly by a Dinka chief Deng Majok who became known as a powerful mediator, negotiator and protector of his people because he befriended the 'enemies' of his tribe in order to ensure protection for his own people not out of fear or weakness but from a position of 'strength, magnanimity, and generosity.

A peaceful side of history has always existed – Perhaps the best gift from anthropology to the indigenous cause is the revelation that peace-oriented indigenous cultures have existed from ancient times. Although human history is laden with stories of wars, there is another side of history; a better side reflected by cultures of peace that can still be understood, tapped into, reinstated and applied to contemporary times (see Howell & Willis 1989; Fry & Bjorkqvist 1997; Kemp & Fry 2004; Boulding 2000; Fry 2006). It is possible to light up the otherwise dark history of wars that Elise Boulding (2000) decried.

Indigenous perspectives of peace

I define culture as perspective. It is the perspective of the individual and of the community that individual belongs to. Perspective in turn shapes culture; ideology, beliefs, values, norms, attitudes, behavior, worldview, lifestyle and expectations of individuals and groups. Socio-political and economic structures are built upon the collective perception of the people that are bound by such. A person's perspective on community determines how that person will deem and organize human relationships within that community. For example, if a person considers relationships to be a lifeline; they will value social ties within a community context. On the other hand if a person supposes community to be a burden, they will distance themselves from relationships they consider cumbersome. If several people living in a place assume the latter perspective, it will be reflected on the quality of community that they create. But if a group of people value relationships, they will work towards enhancing them qualitatively and quantitatively. Indigenous people including Inuit and Tiv value relationships as lifelines. Their perspective of community is one full of healthy, thriving, cooperative and respectful relationships. These groups expect that these relationships birth other ones like it generation through generation and thus is long term and enduring peace assured. They therefore expend much energy and resources building and rebuilding effective relationships because they believe that peace is made through peaceful human relationships. These ideas define indigenous culture and I call them perspectives of peace.

The idea of building peace by building relationships is upheld by Tiv and Inuit alike. These groups repeatedly shared certain perspectives that include but are certainly not limited to the understanding that:

Peace is from within – it proceeds from a place inside the human soul. A Tiv elder

shared his understanding thus;

> "*bem ka kwagh u ken shima, ka mfe u or nanfe la ka na iyan I dzuan a bem ye. Bem ka atam, sa a tese u gbenda shin atam la ga u fa a ga*. Peace is a product of the heart, it is the knowledge a person has that frees them to achieve peace. Peace is way and a fruit unless you are shown the way or the fruit, you may not see or recognize it"

This understanding of peace suggests that a person might experience peace even in a state

of war because peace is a quality of the soul. When people are at peace with themselves,

then they can begin the outward practice of peace that is the fruit of peace. He also

suggests that peace can be taught or shown to another. He speaks of peace as a way; if it

is a way then people who know it can show others how to get on to its path. It is also

reasonable to think that if peace is a product of the heart then everyone with a heart is

able to access this capacity and to develop it if they have the right understanding of what

it is. Indigenous cultures therefore have inbuilt systems of peace for by placing an

emphasis on teaching, they really are engaged in growing peaceful people. This is

accomplished through parenting and continued teachings on nonviolence, friendliness

and how to interact meaningfully in the human community.

Peace begins in the Nursery – parenting is taken very seriously by indigenous peoples not

just as a way to enjoy the children that they have been given, but as a community

building process. The understanding is strong that peace is an inherent capacity in the

child that must be nurtured. Douglas Fry and Jean Briggs (Sponsel and Gregor 1994)

have both demonstrated through their studies in indigenous communities that peaceful

people are indeed the product of directed and mindful parenting. Fry exemplifies this in

his comparative study of two Zapotec communities in Oaxaca, Mexico where he found

one community to be more disposed to physical aggression (San Andres) than the other (La Paz) depending on the orientations widely promoted in either community. Disputes arise in both communities yet reactions to offenses and wrongdoings are markedly different. Fry found that in La Paz, the community with fewer dispositions to physical aggression had more internalized values and attitudes, instilled from childhood to favour non-violent behavior. Principles of respect, equality, friendliness, use of positive language and cooperation were both taught and modeled by parents and others in the community. Physical punishment was absent (although aggressive children's play is thought to be normal). The orientation that children received through parenting was important in dictating peaceful behavior in the wider community. The other community predictably progressed in the opposite direction of aggression because the orientation permitted aggressive behavior.

Another example is provided by Jean Briggs (1994) who found that in addition to the internalization of non-violent principles, Inuit parents have a significant role to play in teaching, coaching and defining the meaning of self in relation to others and mirroring this quality to their children. Processes of socialization were delivered by the parents who taught children to recognize dangerous people/situations or friendly people/situations as well as demonstrated appropriate coping and conflict management processes. Communication was softened by jokes and impressions then the subtle meanings behind jokes and comments would be pointed out and explained to the child. Much of Inuit parenting and teaching is also accomplished through play and teasing.

I witnessed this behavior in Pangnirtung, Nunavut. On a boat trip with a middle aged couple along with their teenage son and little niece who was about five or six years

old. They had packed much food and other items to keep the little girl fed and entertained all the way because it was going to be a long trip, mostly the sorts of things that would excite any little girl such as colorful chewing gum, a balloon, dried meat, cookies, some colorful plastic toys and some knitting yarn and pins. As the journey wore on, the little girl enjoyed her items and food and talked with the adults on the boat. Each time she picked something up to eat however, her aunt would ask if she wanted to share some with everyone else (it is polite behavior for Inuit to share food with other people present or at least to offer it). Well, the little girl did not want to share her food (especially the gum and dried meat). So she would open a pack, take one piece, carefully seal and wrap back the packaging and hide it away. She was also getting a bit upset at her aunt who kept asking if she would share. This continued for a couple of hours. Then we had cause to dock and get off the boat for a while and the little girl needed some help getting off the boat without falling into the water (Arctic waters are frigid). Her aunt hesitated to help her get out safely. When the girl protested, her aunt reminded her of how she had not shared her food and asked why anyone should help her now? Her aunt also made faces at her and laughed. The little girl sat back in the boat for a few minutes with a thoughtful look on her face. Her aunt eventually reached in and helped her get out. This had clearly been an important teaching moment for the little girl as her aunt took her aside and whispered other words of teaching. When we got back into the boat, the little girl was a happy and generous companion and the adults were impressed and full of praise for her. The adults on the boat did not take or eat the goodies she offered them (each person had enough of their own food to snack on) but I could see that she had learned that the quality

of sharing fosters relationships and that relationships are sometimes more important than items.

Ideas shape behaviour - The ideas that a culture embraces usually feeds its attitudes and defines its actions or inactions. Thus prevailing ideologies in any peace seeking community should strive to instill virtues of peace and a connected sense of humanity; including the need to cooperate for collective survival, to reciprocate good, to extend empathy to all and to be sociable. Ashley Montagu writing the forward for the book *The Anthropology of Peace and Nonviolence* (Sponsel & Gregor 1994) confirms that prevailing social ideologies do inform (societal) action. She maintains that prevailing theories in the western world such as *"innate depravity"* by Konrad Lorenz or the inevitability of the *"death instinct"* as propounded by Sigmund Freud, allow a war mentality to thrive in that society. Thus to change society, the sorts of ideas that are propagated will necessarily need to be transformed to reflect more positive miens. That is why the messages shared in indigenous communities – through stories, songs, proverbs, sayings, and play - are so important and deliberately geared toward peaceful relationships.

Peace is a shared value and non-violence is a collective commitment - Bruce Knauft (Sponsel & Gregor 1994) writes about non-hierarchical indigenous societies with shared forms of "communicative" (a common language) and affiliative (relationship) networks to develop collective perspectives on morality. This is accomplished through the making of words (meanings) that were preserved by rituals (actions) and forms of religion (beliefs). The final result would be cohesive group orientations wherein shared goals are determined, pursued and promoted over individual goals. In this context, self interest is

deemphasized, group interests are promoted and constraints are placed on potentially harmful individual pursuits that disrupt collective social order. Predictably therefore, shared values are taught and internalized and society is thus set to function, survive and thrive in peaceful ways. Social values to ensure survival were such as cooperative food sharing, rules of sexual propriety and sexual norms[9], egalitarian decision making, and conflict resolution. The latter because although indigenous societies tend to proactively prevent conflict, conflicts are inevitable and sometimes may be quite deadly, mostly over lands and other scare resources.

<u>Desirable relational virtues are to be enforced</u> - Collective values tend to be held together in indigenous societies by quasi authoritarian leaderships. Robert Knox Dentan (Sponsel & Gregor 1994) found this to be true in his work among the Semai in Malaysia but also among more intentionally formed (religious) cenobite[10] groups such as the Amish and the Hutterites. It is important to state forthright that Dentan's claim that peace oriented groups stay that way because they have had to endure defeat and so embrace peace as a necessity out of fear, is contestable at bare minimum and not nearly true of indigenous groups who have embraced peace as a primary goal often as a value instructed by supernatural ordinates. All other social, political and economic life is organized on that value.

Perhaps a more important point Dentan makes is that peace oriented (indigenous) societies do have forms of leadership that are quasi authoritarian as a necessary way to

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[9] Indigenous societies tend to have clear rules on sexuality and sexual norms set in place to ensure access to sexual partners and male desires to procreate. These norms are usually to avoid potential violent conflicts and tensions between men for female sexual partners and offspring thereof. Conflicts over illicit sexual encounters still occur but there will usually be rules in place to deal with those, such as the "burning hut" ritual amongst Tiv to cleanse incest victims of the curse and guilt.
[10] Cenobites are groups organized on the basis of religion and living together in permanent community in agreement

enforce values. This is evident in seemingly coercive styles of parenting, control of sexuality and respectful deference (that is, women defer to men, younger people defer to older people and elders defer to the community). Attention should however be directed towards the reason for these systems and the goals of authority in the community. Authority is useful for enforcing positive norms much in the same way as people sometimes need to be forced to wear a seatbelt while driving or a helmet when riding a bike even if they do not like seatbelts or helmets. For example, the goal of a strict parental rule on sexual behavior is not to frustrate the child, but more to protect until the child is better prepared to enter into that activity, preferably at an age when they can make better informed decisions.

A place for peace and the sacred through ritual – indigenous peoples have long taken rituals seriously in their attempts to connect mortal life with spiritual spheres of life. Indeed many do not see the spiritual as disconnected from the real, but recognize that real life affects the spirit realm and vice versa. Ritual is the delicate string connecting the real and spiritual worlds. When people stop to recognize the energies outside of themselves, it brings them to a place of awareness and of humility where they can see that indeed, the human spirit is not as separate as our human bodies are one to another. Ritual is the vehicle for closing spatial gaps and reaching into that sacred sphere of peace while also allowing the qualities there from, to fill the individual as well. Ritual also invited collective human connection in a realm that shuts out differences and animosities.

Walter Goldschmidt (Sponsel & Gregor 1994) makes an interesting observation of an indigenous ritual activity. He describes the "White Deerskin Dance" among the

Hupa, Karok and Yurok peoples in Northwestern California. In his words, the purpose of the dance is to:

> push back the miasma of sin that threatens to engulf the world; to put the world back on an even keel…during one portion of each unit, two pairs of men dance in front of the line, carrying great obsidian or chert chipped blades, some almost a meter in length, that are the second most important of the many highly valued regalia. As these dancers, always young men glide past each other, holding the blades in front of them, they pass as closely as possible, quite conscious of the danger that the blades will shatter should they actually make contact. Rich men in each community sponsor a unit of the dance…, no man owns enough ceremonial goods to make a full display, so that his paraphernalia is augmented by items loaned by those with whom he is on friendly terms. Thus the rite is not merely a competitive display of wealth; it is also a public statement of affiliations (121).

Goldschmidt describes the dance and then offers a rather subjective and doubtful interpretation of the ritual from. He relates it to a "war dance" (one has to conclude that perhaps something in Goldschmidt's own cultural background causes him to immediately make a connection of swords with wars). More so, as far as he is concerned, the ritual is a show of wealth (again a culture colored interpretation of an indigenous event). What comes through to the reader therefore is that Goldschmidt as an observer of this ritual is making a value judgment of the event from his own cultural lenses as nowhere in the chapter, does he mention asking the dancers to explain and interpret their ritual. What he describes, could well be a dance that conveys a very different shared meaning to the participants, perhaps reminding them that wealth is only useful when shared; the idea that when one prospers, cooperation and sharing should be adopted. It seems reasonable that if the ritual was intended to push back the miasma of sin as suggested by Goldschmidt, that perhaps the vices of greed and selfish ambition are actually the 'sin' threatening to engulf the world, which the dancers were trying to push back against.

Goldschmidt also describes the *potlatch*, a practice of the Kwakiutl. The *potlatch* is a practice to promote the idea that it is better to wage a confrontation with property than with blood. Goldschmidt recognizes that this ritual was used to avoid militarization among the Kwakiutl. He nevertheless makes a value judgment (once again using his cultural lenses), when he insists that this was somehow a 'war' endeavor, a contest for social power and control of resources. But the fact that the Kwakuitl prefer to give up *possessions* rather than *blood* probably speaks more to the peace orientations of that group. The *potlatch* ritual could be an important reminder to community members, to place their loyalties in the right place – relationships.

The *kula* exchange among the Melanesian peoples is another example of ritual provided by Goldschmidt. It is a symbolic exchange of ornaments to indicate a willingness to cooperate and to end conflict. A rejection of the ornaments of exchange signals a continuation of the conflict or the existence of tensions. Goldschmidt's culture colored perspective again causes him to presume this practice to be the power of commerce over otherwise brutally barbaric war mongering aggressors. Whereas what he witnessed perhaps more closely resembles a symbolic gesture of communication and a socially entrenched understanding of the value of healing and reconcilitaion to the participants.

The conclusion from the above examples of cultural misinterpretation is that the global human community will greatly benefit from the recovery from a voyage of ignorance and move towards acceptance and promotion of difference rather than doggedly pushing towards universality and conventionalism of thought and practice (Tully 1995). True peace and justice will be attained by a proper understanding of

cultures and a co-toiling to build the human family (Augsburger 1992; Tully 1995). Our complex world needs multiple lenses for broad spectrum conflict analysis, resolution and peacemaking.

Towards an indigenous theory of peace and conflict

A clear indigenous hypothesis of conflict and peace begins to emerge, of what the concepts mean and how peace may be achieved. In general, peace may be thought of as elements coming together that work to keep destructive conflict at bay and promote desirable conditions of a good life. Peace in and of itself appears to be a mirage; an imagined form that can be seen from a distance but drawing closer, the mirage flitters ever further away inviting the seeker to a more engaged pursuit. In sum, peace does not appear to be something that once grasped, can be kept perpetually. It is a quality to be created and fed on an ongoing basis.

A *fruit-seed theory* of peace reflects the indigenous presumption about that concept. As each fruit has its seed tucked within it, so each culture has its potential for peace safely preserved within its wisdoms, also the idea that problems have their solutions buried within their complex nature. I find that indigenous peoples including the Inuit and Tiv believe that good (peace) seeds planted deep in the heart, germinate and grow into good people who then make up good communities create peace oriented societies. Thus seeds ought to be nurtured and replanted in each succeeding generation if enduring peace is to be established. Each preceding generation ought to determine the best way possible to accomplish this most important task.

Inuit and Tiv therefore speak of long term peace building measures such as parenting. It can safely be assumed that as members of their cultures and communities,

parents understand the values of their cultures and communities on the one hand and love their children enough on the other hand, to seek out and apply what is best for their children. They also know what type of community will be better for their children over time. They realize that they and their children are the community that they build and they know that families create the communities that they wish for. Most parents wish their children to live the good life in good communities. In this sense, the community is the fruit and its members are the seeds. Members enjoy the fruit (community of peace oriented people); if they are planted in good communities, they draw nutrients that cause them to flourish and grow into good fruit trees themselves. In another sense, if parents are the seeds, the children are the fruit that they bear. They nurture their children who then grow up to produce seeds and fruit similar to themselves. Thus an effective cycle of peace is set in motion. The wider community provides the 'nutrients' (positive reinforcement) needed to help create peaceful future generations, therefore, solutions to conflicts in cultures and community lies with the members of the community and not outside the community.

Good values and norms can also be thought of as good seeds that if planted and nurtured, can produce good fruit with seeds to be replanted over and over again with positive effects on community. Harmful ideas can accomplish the opposite effect with devastating long term consequences.

I proffer the *conflict repairment* theory to explain the Inuit and Tiv indigenous outlook on the concept of conflict. This argues that conflicts are a break in the proper order of being. This may be likened to the sense in which a car breaks down or when a human body contracts an illness. When a car has a problem and breaks down, the

appropriate thing to do is to find the problem and repair it so that the car is up and running again. Granted that sometimes the problem cannot be repaired and the car has to be written off. But most people will do what they can before deciding that the car is taken off the road. Similarly, a person who becomes ill does not right away decide to kill themselves in order to get rid of the body. Most people will seek medical or other forms of care in attempt to repair and heal the body. Conflicts can be liked to a breakdown of any otherwise functional system of relationships.

It matters how people think about conflicts because beliefs will likely propel attitude and action. When approached as a problem rather than a war, conflicts can be dealt with in much more productive ways; conflict parties and others helping them will do their best to figure out the problem and work together to repair the damage and get the relationships going again (that is, if conflict parties would like to continue to have a relationship together. They may just want to find personal peace and move on without continuing the relationship). It would be quite ridiculous if a car owner always approached her car with a fire extinguisher assuming each problem will generate a fire, or if she wrote off every car as soon as it had a problem of any sort. If she values the car, and wants to keep it longer, she will probably be geared towards repairing problems whenever they happen. In the same way, Inuit and Tiv approach conflicts as problems to be repaired and not as wars or contests to be won. It makes a difference in the quality of relationships people have because much effort goes into dealing with conflicts and thereby servicing relationships.

Chapter 4 - Narrating Indigenous Research Methods

Building a foundation

Narrative methods best support research in indigenous contexts. Indeed narrative is an indigenous method of knowledge inquiry and pedagogy (McLeod 2007; Kovach 2010). It provides the space to be contextual, descriptive, evaluative and generative in conducting the study as recommended by Ritchie & Lewis (2003). In dealing with processes that are not completely structured there evolves a need to allow room for storytelling and explanations and by so doing to be respectful of consultants' original knowledge sharing methods. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) emphasizes the importance of ensuring respect and local ownership when conducting research with indigenous peoples. Devon Mihesuah (1998) suggests as well, that researchers and academics must allow the voices and worldviews of indigenous peoples to come through in research involving them. This admonition was taken very seriously in the course of this work.

Knowledge gathering was primarily done using narrative ethnography. This method strongly agrees with Gubrium & Holstein's (2008) position that narratives or storytelling provide an in-depth view of the study group because it invites participants to delve deep into issues without any restrictions imposed by the researcher. Thus consultants as participants are invited to express their understanding of their own processes however they chose to express themselves, which may include the use of detailed explanations and examples to illustrate points and communicate ideas.

While the use of narrative may seem to allow room for lengthy or windy discussions making for tedious data analysis, this method fits the natural communication patterns of both Inuit and Tiv cultures. Both cultures still maintain oral traditions to a

large extent and value the passing of information across generations using this narrative forms. This style of communication was also automatically used by the study participants during interview sessions further confirming this to be an indigenous method of communication. More so, narrative best captures unique indigenous experiences of conflict as they offered room for descriptive analysis of conflict resolution and peacemaking processes. Inuit and Tiv tended to use value collective and often lengthy dialogue during conflict resolution sessions including discussion, persuasion and appeal when a social dislocation occurs. Although some measure of cultural fusions have occurred through colonization and globalization affecting communication patterns, narrative (communication) styles are still strong in several cultures (Duryea and Potts 1993; Mansfield 1993; Heberfeld and Townsend 1993; Hingley, Laenui, Smith and Henderson in Battiste 2000; LaDuke 2005; Turner 2006; Dunbar Jr. In Denzin *et al.* 2008; Whitt 2009; Chilisa 2012).

The consideration of people within their natural cultural environment is much more effective and meaningful for both researcher and collaborating participants when more qualitative methods are employed. In such cases, quantitative methods do not lend themselves to effective data collection or useful analysis of human (cultural) nuances. Stories do a better job getting people involved and sharing their lives and cultures than quantitative surveys could ever afford. Wherever researchers have attempted to understand people and the meanings they create as well as how they make sense of their life experiences within their local settings, qualitative methods have done a better job (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Frow 2008). Narrative methods make room for

detailed expression of the thoughts and ideas that inform consultants' realities and viewpoints. This was true for Inuit and Tiv.

Participant observation of processes and procedures also places the researcher in a position to use her personal senses and sensibilities in interpreting subjective encounters. In walking along, living among, talking with, playing together, watching and reasoning with consultants operating within their own everyday cultures in a daily, non-pretentious manner, the researcher develops a deeper understanding of some dynamics and processes that may otherwise not have made complete sense if she acquired knowledge just by the question and answer sessions of the interviews.

The Case for qualitative, narrative and indigenous methods

Qualitative, narrative and indigenous methods are used in an almost interchangeable manner to the extent that they are all focused on understanding the nuanced and subjective human experience. Narrative methods in particular, are among a re-emerging range of critical qualitative and indigenous research methods being increasingly used in contemporary times (Mumby 1993; Lieblich *et al.* 1998; Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2008; Andrews *et al.* 2008; Denzin, Lincoln & Smith 2008; Kovach 2010; Chilisa 2012). In one sense they are re-emerging because narrative methods such as oral traditions, oral histories and storytelling have been used for ages by indigenous peoples around the world, they are not entirely new. But these indigenous methods were however supplanted by mainstream 'scientific' methods and according to Denis Mumby (1993), so called scientific methods have since continued to be held up as the gold standard by dominant groups who have held sway over what counts as legitimate knowledge.

Narrative methods generally have to do with the construction of reality through the use of means such as oral traditions, oral histories, stories, testimonies etc. These are methods of gathering knowledge that highlight the importance of voice as well as text. Qualitative methods of this nature have to do with people's lived experiences, their historically defined identities, how they consciously construct their present reality and how they meaningfully progress towards the future personally and collectively as groups. Narrative methods may also be thought of as 'storying methods' that is, methods that primarily concern themselves with meaning making through narrativization. That is how reality is constructed, how constructed reality then shapes identity, and how identity plays into daily socio-political life (Archibald 2008).

Narrative methods challenge mainstream, foundational premises and assumptions about what constitutes legitimate knowledge. They provide unconventional ways of making and legitimizing knowledge if not a fundamentally different way of seeing and interpreting the world (Rice 2005; Brown and Strega 2005; Kincheloe & Steiberg 2008). Mumby (1993) critiques mainstream foundational conceptions of knowledge, as guilty of treating 'knowledge' as fixed, stable and adhering to principles to ensure 'political correctness'. By so doing, it cuts out other social groups and limits their ability to meaningfully contribute to the shaping of our general understanding of the world.

Laurelyn Whitt (2009) has identified a mutually reinforcing relationship between science and colonial capitalism where the former is intentionally instituted by the western frontier, as a tool to dominate the knowledge industry and to continually appropriate other's knowledge. She refers to this process as *imperial science* that is, "the complex system of practices that constitute the oppression of indigenous peoples". She

recommends that any consideration of what enters into policy as scientific be put through the sieve in order to ascertain how much of that proceeds directly from the unethical use of power to appropriate and control knowledge and also to credit one type of knowledge over others. She argues further, that scientific knowledge generation in its most ethical sense has been subverted by rhetoric employed as a means to prop up dominant agendas.[11]

The power brokered relationship between dominant (western) and hitherto subordinate (indigenous) knowledge systems creates hoops for researchers who must navigate that relationship to work with the most suitable methodologies for knowledge production. This especially concerns researchers who want to conduct their business in ways that are ethical, respectful of study subjects, encourage local ownership, and are non-appropriating. The first step in that direction is the recognition that other forms of knowledge exist and the processes of distilling those differ as well that is to recognize that indigenous systems produce knowledge in difference ways than the hard science model (Davis 2004).

This puts the researcher in a place where she has to mediate between the power structure inherent in the dominant methods (assumed to be scientific) versus the methods considered to be non-scientific and therefore subordinate. She still needs to show that the knowledge produced is valid whether it has employed so called scientific methods or the presumably not so scientific methods. Michael Davis's (2004) suggests that the researcher refrain from making or reinforcing the divide usually made between *western* and *other* forms of knowledge or knowledge generation. But to recognize instead, that

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[11] In this case, Whitt (2009) is speaking specifically of *Biocolonialism* as the case in point of where rhetoric has been used to replace scientific form of knowledge generation in order t push forward a power based agenda. The result is an apolitical and amoral ethics of science.

western science has merely formed a dominant discourse at the expense of indigenous knowledge. Yet some indigenous knowledge runs parallel or complementary to western science and those two can be mutually reinforcing and do not always have to be mutually exclusive.

The fundamental problem is that of power; the attempt by western science to obliterate, marginalize or assimilate indigenous knowledges. The task of ethical research therefore, is to empower the devalued forms of knowledge by according them voice and by so doing, to dismantle the artificial hierarchy instituted by more dominant methods. Resisting power supported hierarchies in defining forms of knowledge is a matter of survival for indigenous systems and people (Simpson 2004; Whitt 2009).

Regardless of the monolithic tendencies of power, qualitative and narrative methods are being reintroduced and favoured as being the methods that best capture the subjective aspects of experience especially where it concerns different social groups or populations with histories of narrative traditions other than those represented by the mainstream. These would generally be those societies that were assumed to be guilty of not having a 'written' history in the pre-contact periods, and were therefore disenfranchised and marginalized. It also includes social groups such as women, racial minorities and indigenous peoples who in different ways have had to face historical, political socio-economic and intellectual constraints. (Cannella & Manuelito, Ladson-Billings & Donnor, Kincheloe & Steinberg in Denzin *et al* 2008). More so, ethnographers found early on, that the study of people within their cultures is much more effective when stories and life experiences are invited rather than when surveys are filled out (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007). Narrative approaches also better addresses some of

the limitations of scientific methods. For instance, the quantitative problem of lumping people together and representing unique thoughts, opinions and experiences in numbers does little to capture experiential nuances. Qualitative methods of a narrative nature, however provide contextualized perspectives that better recognize the place of human thought and behaviours in social contexts, in addition to validating and giving voice to consultant's knowledge thereby helping to balance power between a researcher and her collaborators and effectively reducing the colonial tendency of knowledge appropriation (Riessman 1993; Ritchie and Lewis 2003; Wilson 2004; Madison 2005; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007).

Narrative methods also place emphasis on *process* as much as if not more than *theory* in the development of alternative pedagogies. It supports creative ways of gathering data and fluidly transporting that data into teaching and learning. The point of any useful research is that it generates data that can be used to enhance a collective learning experience. Research that does not make itself useful for instruction is probably not useful for much else. Indigenous methods are geared towards constant instruction of its people. For example a story told to children, often has a purpose to it that is meaningful. When a researcher comes along and is told the same story, usually the teller hopes that the researcher will tell the purpose of the story forward and that community will be made better as a result. To this end, Michael McNally (2004) encourages the researcher to take particular note of such indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning in the continued maintenance of culture and religion. He argues for instance, that oral traditions handed down by elders through storytelling and songs may be more valued by an indigenous learner than information locked in the pages of a book. He states that

the knowledge of stories about the past in lived moments of oral exchange is never simply locked up in by-gone eras. Such stories become tangible realities that create a felt relationship with the past that cannot easily be engendered in histories that are written and read alone.

Narrative methods are closely linked with and resemble ethnographic research methods largely because ethnography has to do with understanding the social world of people inside their social settings. Thus narrative and ethnography put together, invites the researcher to convexly immerse themselves in the daily lives and cultures of the people being observed; then only, are they able to decipher and describe their collaborator's cultures and general beliefs which are located within a cultural context (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002; Madison 2005; Hammesley and Atkinson 2007). The researcher is then compelled to concavely examine and question their own ethnocentrism.

Paul Bohannan and Dirk van der Elst (1998) point out that the best way to learn about the diversity and plurality of cultural ways is to delve into other cultural contexts. Thus the person engaging culture in this manner, right away finds themselves aware of "the shortcomings, quirks and victories" of their own culture. But they also become aware of the subtle assumptions they do not always know they hold. The value of this experience is that it provides multiple lenses for engaging a complex world. In this way, narrative methods empower both the researcher by providing her more tools for analysis, and the collaborating partners by providing them an enabling voice and volume for expression of otherwise unrecognized perspectives and worldviews.

Narrative and indigenous methods also put the researcher in a listening and learning position rather than in a power-over, acquisition of information position that

researchers are often obligated to. Indigenous methods require the researcher to be perceptive and to plug themselves into other cultural settings. This happens in a new way even if the researcher is herself from the culture she is studying. Listening and critical refection skills have to be honed and put to use when working with indigenous people. The researcher also starts to recognize that they are engaged in a political dance; one that requires them to make choices that contribute or take away from the collaborating partners. The researcher finds that she is confronted with a choice of she will use her power. Karen Potts and Leslie Brown (Brown and Strega 2008) invite the researcher to use her reflective and interpretive powers in anti-oppressive ways, to promote voice and integration.

Furthermore, Margaret Kovach (Brown and Strega 2008) notes that an indigenous epistemology favours fluid and experiential forms of knowledge generation and transmission, that is more intuitive and reflective and carried through by purposeful and practical methods of learning and teaching. For indigenous peoples, this includes a relational way of knowing that is, knowledge only found in relationship with others and nature, and a collective understanding of self (a sense of community and belonging together). Elsewhere, Margaret Kovach (2010) argues that qualitative methods which concern themselves with the interpretive approach to knowledge are the best tool for "traversing worldviews". She explains that this is where the stories of both the researcher and her collaborators are reflected in the meanings being made.

Narrative methods in an indigenous context, create room for previously misinterpreted or misunderstood people to reconstruct their own stories on their own terms (Andrews et al 2004; Madison 2005). When research collaborators tell their own

stories, they are recounting their own experiences as they understand them and not as anyone else prefers it to be told or understood. The teller takes the stage, stands in the limelight and articulates her lived experience in her own voice. That account is empowering and valuable.

In conclusion, narrative methods have come into their own both as research methods and as a socio-political ideology. They are not necessarily considered to be only a small part of ethnographic methods as they may once have been. Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993) does not quite see narrative analysis as fitting neatly into any scholarly field. Preferring to accord narrative analysis its own character, she emphasizes that narrative is useful for what it reveals about social life and argues that narrative analysis investigates the story itself; the stories that consultants construct and share, and that come to shape the theories. She notes that methodological, the narrative approach examines the consultants' story and analyzes how it is put together, the linguistic and cultural resources it draws on and how it persuades a listener of its authenticity. She states further, that analysis in narrative studies opens up the forms of telling about experience, not simply the content to which language refers. Researchers ought to ask, why was the story told that way? And be aware that in the telling of their stories, people may be engaged in an important process of constructing or reconstructing their personal or collective identities.

Narrative: hitches and issues

Narrative methods have not been without their own problems. Michael Howlett and Jeremy Rayner (2006) for instance, have accused narrative methods of pursuing "irreversible linear realities". First, the question has been asked whether qualitative researchers who use narrative methods can truly be objective in their interpretations of

the problematic concepts of meaning and reality (Denzin and Lincoln 1994: Ritchie and Lewis 2003). It is crucial to state clearly at this point that the goal of this study is not essentially to strive for objectivity but to represent the authentic experiences of study consultants and to ensure adequate voice in the process. The focus is to represent nuanced realities and that is necessarily a subjective process.

A second challenge is that narrative methods can take a lot more work to accomplish. Corinne Squire, Molly Andrews and Maria Tamboukou (Andrews *et al.* 2008) agree that narrative methods can seem overwhelming, susceptible to endless interpretation and do not offer automatic starting or finishing points. In fact, they may be without thematic or self evident categories on which to focus and no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation. For instance, they say, it does not tell a researcher whether to look for stories in recorded everyday speech interviews, diaries, TV programmes or newspaper articles or whether to aim for objectivity or researcher and participant involvement or whether to analyze stories' particularity or generality or what epistemological significance to attach to narratives. What narrative methods do offer in compensation for the hard work, is rich data for multi-level analysis. It also offers the researcher worthwhile relationships with her consultants and leaves the door open for future collaboration if necessary. The researcher also comes away with a transformed perspective and broadened worldview.

A third critique is the accusation that narrative methods present alternative and sometimes seemingly contradictory layers of meaning. It is irresistible to respond to this point by mentioning that contradictory layers of meaning are desirable in research as it opens up useful dialogue that is both informative and critical for social change. Social

change is not as it were, built on everyone having the exact same conclusion about social issues. Divergent viewpoints can coexist and be mutually enriching.

A fourth critique positions itself in questions of reliability and validity. This question requires confirmation that the data collected is trustworthy, dependable and verifiable as Lincoln & Guba (1981, 1985) recommend. Another way to frame the question in this context, would be *can consultant's knowledge be trusted?* There is little reason to doubt that elders and others interviewed were telling the truth about their cultures. What consultants said in the Inuit and Tiv case, was confirmed in the several other conversations that took place about the topic and in the focus groups that self organized around the discussions. A paraphrasing model of interviews was also used to confirm what was said and heard. More so, in order to ensure clearer understanding of the practices being shared, examples and hypothetical cases were presented to consultants, that helped demonstrate the application of the processes or principles they shared. Consultants were also informed of what aspects of their knowledge would be included in the discussion so that they knew how their knowledge would be used and incorporated and they could choose what aspects they preferred not to include in the discussion. Since a clear objective was also to amplify consultants' voices, minimal critical reflections have gone into altering that voice.

The repetitive and cyclical nature of qualitative research also weeds out errors and solidifies process as it progresses (Morse *et al.* 2002). The paraphrasing model of interviewing used within this cycle gave consultants the opportunity to think and rethink their responses and confirm what they wanted to say in connection with the questions asked and the purpose of the study. Consultants also had time to think and prepare their responses since interviews seldom happened on the first meeting. The snowballing approach to participant recruitment also permitted purposeful sampling in which the community and consultants recommended people for interviews that they assured were the most knowledgeable on the subject matter.

Hitches and issues notwithstanding, narrative methods are important and continue to be used because its benefits outweigh its limitations. This type of enquiry helps in the description, understanding and explanation of important aspects of the world that would

otherwise be lost in quantitative science. In effect, it helps with the process of deconstructing grand narratives.

Deconstructing the grand narrative

Graham Smith a Maori Scholar and educator was asked by Margaret Kovach (2010) what his experience has been working in western universities? He had this to say

> Oh, it's been a struggle. Fundamentally we (indigenous people) are contesting at the level of knowledge, but we are also contesting a history of colonization and colonizing processes…in order to overcome indigenous complicity in the reproduction of white social, economic and political privilege, indigenous academics need a philosophy that allows us to engage within the academy, within the ambit of what I call the politics of truth (89).

What Smith describes here is a struggle against an established grand narrative. It is a narrative that has put everything (ideologies, philosophies, knowledge, experience, pedagogy etc) on the margins, that is not mainstream or sanctioned by the mainstream. Thus universities (for example), have come to operate under certain intellectual rules-spoken and unspoken-that may not serve all populations equally. Therefore the politics of truth that Smith speaks of in his response, involves indigenous peoples making honest assessments of historical interactions, of power struggles within a wide ramification of interactions, in order to decide what is effective for indigenous people's progress and to focus intellectual and other energies thereupon. This is necessarily a political endeavor that should be carried through with conscience, fervor, openness and much attention paid to ethics. The politics of truth, is taking hold of history, acknowledging shared or collective experiences and from there, deciding in which direction to proceed. It is to this end that researchers seeking to mainstream indigenous knowledges necessarily go through a process Kovach (2010) describes as "emerging from the margins". The way to emerge from the margins as seen by Kathy Absolon and Cam Willett (Brown & Strega

2005) is for indigenous scholars, researchers and authors to put themselves forward in sharing who they are in terms of their indigenous identity, and clarify their goals and agendas forthwith rather than claiming or attempting to follow the so called scientific/objective models that encourage researchers to distance their subjectivities from the research. The indigenous experience is a subjective one as indeed most human experience tends to be.

The tools for fashioning knowledge are important. The goals of indigenous people in deconstructing grand narratives is not necessarily to topple over and replace one grand narrative with another, for that risks being just as destructive. It is rather, to fundamentally question the grand narrative by showing that other ways, worldviews, processes and methods exist, are valid and should be recognized as such. Take the subjective nature of experience conveyed through narrative as an indigenous research method for instance. Storytelling is the indigenous way and methods are appropriate that take this into account.

In his book *Cree Narrative Memory*, Neal Mcleod (2007), states that the connection of indigenous people to their lands and identities, is housed in language, expressed through the stories that recount and teach about personal and collective experiences. Stories he argues, are central to the existence of indigenous peoples and they carry the words around with them, transferring those through generations. According to Mcleod, stories travel through generations in the same manner as an echo reverberates through time and space. He notes that although with the advent of settlers and colonization, the 'echo' of the (indigenous) land has seemed to increasingly fade away, one valuable treasure still remains with indigenous people and that is the power of

memory transmitted through stories. As he sees it, narrative memory, links indigenous peoples to their past, their original identities[12] and their original practices and processes; smaller more individual narratives are connected to larger collective narratives that lie in the memories through generations and in the remembering and telling of them, people find their ways out of colonial traps.

Decolonization happens with the awakening of collective memories. To do this, McLeod (2007) emphasizes that it is important to record the oral histories of indigenous elders while their memories still abide on earth. Healing on the personal and collective level as well as cultural survival can come through the recovery of stories and oral histories. Listeners learn of the past that has shaped their lives and then add to the narrative by reinterpreting events in the light of current realities. This manner of sense-making is conflict resolution at different levels – intrapersonal, interpersonal and intercultural.

McLeod further refers to the importance of language in the reclaiming and reconstruction of identity. The loss of language and culture he says, is 'spiritual exile'. Stories in indigenous languages, encapsulate important ideas and epistemologies. When they are shared and understood by indigenous peoples, a sense of shared norms is strengthened. Therefore, indigenous stories build the bridges for return to self and collective knowledge and for reconstruction of a political identity. Stories are thus used in the context of conflict resolution and to help resolve day to day conflicts and to build strong interdependent communities (Duryea & Potts 1993). This is why following grand

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[12] There is reason to believe that indigenous self identity has been affected by colonization. This is evident in the fact that indigenous people in many places adopted new languages, religions and acquired new ways of thinking as a result of their association with their colonizers and other settlers. Some indigenous people today, bear English, French or Christian names for example.

narratives at the detriment of indigenous narratives amounts to cultural suicide when used by indigenous peoples themselves and culturecides when imposed by others. Grand narratives and the intellectual cages they create should be deconstructed and expanded to include other worldviews and narratives in order to make it a more multilayered, multi experiential and shared narrative.

Situating self and building trust

Adhering to Kovach (2010) and Brown and Strega's (2005) recommendation to the researcher to always situate themselves and be clear about their purposes for seeking indigenous knowledge, I situate myself as a Tiv woman seeking deeper understanding of her own as well as other indigenous cultural practices and observances. In addition to the curiosity fostered by my father's deep respect for the Tiv culture, my interest in this study began as a personal journey to understand why conflicts appear to prevail in indigenous communities everywhere around the world and why conflict resolution always seemed to be coordinated by outside 'experts' looking into those communities from outside and making recommendations of what to do. Further, why local people in some of those communities sometimes seem helpless and may not appear to take initiative to end violence decisively even when they can see how it negatively impacts them. Indeed, my own journey into the field of conflict resolution and peace building was a conscientious effort in this direction.

Searching for Solutions

I am part of the indigenous experience and community and my search for answers is my community's search for answers. In this manner do I situate myself in this study, as one seeking relevant knowledge and meaningful answers to the indigenous quest for

peace. My energy derives from both a practitioners' heartfelt search for solutions to real problems as well as from a cultural participant's search for answers.

I ask, can conflict resolution and peace practitioners learn from indigenous peoples and places rather than tirelessly prescribing solutions for them that are fashioned from elsewhere? What are indigenous "medicines" for healing their own communities as William Zartman and his contributors (2000) call it? Paul Lederach (1995, 2005) has insisted that those medicines and measures exist but what are they? Is it possible that an indigenous community in Africa will have similarities to others as far away as North America? If so what will that say of the colonial experience regardless of where it occurs? Perhaps indigenous peoples are better positioned to articulate responses to these questions which are of concern to them.

Having situated myself and built trust and relationships through self disclosure as recommended by Kovach (2010), I was willing to then patiently sit and listen to historical genealogies of how consultants feel connected to their physical spaces. I listened to stories of how groups of people came to be settled in places they find themselves in today. Accounts were made relating to lived experiences of colonization and what that felt like, of some of the struggles that are ongoing between younger and older generations and even some predictions of where the future was leading from indigenous peoples perspectives. Consultants in explaining their processes, told stories of themselves and their family histories, they recounted events that were important in sharing their personal and collective identities and of fears that they had for the future.

I was graciously invited to eat with families; there were times of cooking, eating and playing together. I think that this facilitated my acceptance into the

culture/community because the interactions we had outside of formal interview sessions helped to develop friendly relationships which I find to be an important communication element to indigenous people. Trust was also established after a while because by interacting through informal activities, both researcher and collaborators were able to gauge each other's genuineness on some level and the more that people felt comfortable, free-flowing discussions took take place.

Doing interviews

Steinar Kvale (2007) argues that the integrity of the interviewer is critical for the success of the interview process. The ethical question of whether to maintain professional distance with consultants or foster personal friendships that put the consultant at ease and make the interview processes run smoother, arose as must be the case for most researchers. The pressure to conduct interviews as fast as possible within a limited time frame may put the researcher in the position of faking friendliness, empathy or to commodify rapport. Kvale also states that the researcher's 'empathy" may become a means to circumvent the consultants' informed consent.

However indigenous people are generally comfortable with relational interview methods where both researcher and consultant interact as equals (Chilisa 2012). This position involves interacting in ways that communicate respect and encourage equality; such as being willing to self disclose as much as the consultant requests of the research, participating in informal events such as mutual visits and eating together if that facilitates the relationship. Chilisa also notes that for indigenous peoples, research is ceremony and the aware researcher should allow time for the ceremonious rituals of acknowledging relationships with others around the community and with the cosmos. This may take up

more time, but the researcher certainly gains more of the consultants' confidence and sharing. Yet participating in this ceremony should not be in service of ignoble or sinister motives of knowledge appropriation or other vice.

These steps were observed very early on while visiting both Tiv and Inuit communities. Time was made to acquaint with immediate and extended family members, meals were shared and then meeting plans were made in an appropriate manner. Usually interviews did not take place on the first meeting. Appointments were made after the first meeting. I also learned that it is not culturally inappropriate (in both groups) to demand demographic information about consultants ages or personal experiences. That information was left to emerge on its own and in all instances, it did emerge eventually.

Informed consent was solicited and obtained several days before the actual interview took place in order to allow consultants think about their decision and prepare for the interview. They were also invited to respond to the questions as they chose and were welcomed to provide examples whenever they pleased. Chilisa (2012) refers to this process as 'giving voice to the participants'. It worked particularly well because it allowed consultants in their responses, to travel around their experiences as they pieced together their stories and experiences. Watching emotional interactions with consultants' pasts and experiences was a profound experience. I watched as faces would light up, crease in pain, bow in shame, hold a puzzled expression or break into tears as people traveled down memory lanes. This is arguably the best part of the interaction for the researcher. It indicated that people were opening up about aspects of their lives and experiences that were not often shared about and it also showed authenticity.

Focus groups and impromptu conversation circles

The group-oriented and relationship-focused nature of the participating communities (Lanier 2000) became evident as interview sessions quickly built into unplanned focus groups or talking circles. Tiv and Inuit cultures welcome others to join discussions if they found the topic interesting or were curious about what was going on. People often entered discussions during interviews to offer an example, an explanation or a story to buttress a point that was being made by the interviewee. This added to the richness of the sharing and knowledge gathered. It was also in line with what Kovach (2010) refers to as 'connected interactions'. The focus groups that took place were not organized in quite the traditional sense; they were self-evolving and self-organizing in respectful and useful ways. I classify the discourses that emerged from these interactions as 'conversations' and the actual interactions with target consultants as the "interviews".

Observing and being observed

The Participant Observation model used is one that Michael Angrosino (2007) describes as one of a 'complete participant'. In this model, the researcher disappears completely into the setting and is fully engaged with the people and their activities even to the extent of never acknowledging his or her research agenda. I however acknowledged my research agenda quite early on and also made clear my intention to be an embodied learner/participant. This is because as a researcher of a matter of personal interest, I am also an advocate of the issues that concern the study. Clarifying my intentions in this manner meant that I also became the observed. I was watched and studied by my consultants, as much as I wanted to watch and learn from the participating communities. This promotes mutual learning and respect.

Observations included attendance and participation at two traditional wedding ceremonies, burial ceremonies, a local mediation session, local religious and or cultural events and festivities, cooking meals together and visits to extended family members with consultants as a friend might do, visits to markets and stores, a trip to interior homesteads and "land-based" experience. These experiences all helped in understanding the cultural contexts better and seemed to make previous conversations and knowledge learned with people come alive. For example, I would suddenly be witnessing some idea that I had been told about in an interview or a conversation and the dots would connect and all make sense. For instance, I found out in a conversation with a Tiv woman that the Tiv do not teach their culture in school settings, instead, they are continuously in teaching mode with each other and their children using every opportunity anywhere. Also Tiv ways of learning are more ontological and are grasped by doing and repeating what is learned. This experience comes each time a question is asked that needs some explaining, I would be grasped by the hand and 'shown' the answer rather than just told an answer.

During a visit to one family compound, I noticed a woman digging something from the ground that she washed and put in the pot of soup cooking out in the open near the thatch and mud kitchen. I asked what that was and she promptly grabbed me by the hand and took me to the spot she had just dug, pointed to the leaves on a plant and said "look at this (pointing) it is called *pye mke* (a type of ginger). The leaves turn yellow when the root is ready and you can harvest by digging (she starts digging around the plant and pulls it out without hurting the roots) that is what it is and that is how you harvest it". She then washed the root she had just harvested and offered me to take a bite to determine the taste for myself ...it was very spicy. She then went on to tell me how the

spice is used in soups as well as its nutritional and health value. Tiv learn by doing. Subsequently therefore, I understood what was going on when I would observe a child being *shown* how to sweep using a local broom rather than told what to do. Or why girls always hung by the fire as their mothers cooked to learn by watching and doing. No wonder the Tiv do not have recipe books (at least that I know of yet) people learn how to prepare local meals by standing by the fire and watching.

I had a similar experience with the Inuit when I first tried to interview elders upon arrival. One elder told me that she could share their knowledge with me but then quickly added that I must wait until we made an impending trip 'to the land'. [13] Later, I understood why the "land" experience is crucial for learning about Inuit traditional ways. Profound learning occurs when people immerse their bodies and all of their sensibilities in a situation they are trying to comprehend.

My outlook on the Inuit experience was expanded just by making the trip out to the land with them. I recall looking around me while sitting in a squishy boat, to endless expanse of frigid ocean water and intimidating mountains and thinking 'what brave people the Inuit must be to have survived and lived here for thousands of years'. It suddenly dawned on me that the most important daily task of this people would have been to maintain productive and supportive human relationships for survival because a human can scarcely brave this terrain on her own. Being on the land also puts every word of Inuit teaching into clear perspective. This elder had said that I would *see* and *understand* what they had to teach while on the land. How right she was. Much of the Inuit way of being comes alive on the land without need for much explaining –

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[13] These are visits made to their original homesteads before being moved into settlements. These places are mostly comprised of shacks now used as hunting bases

relationships, modes of production, landscape mapping and the profound connection to the land itself. As I shared the experience of *life on the land* with those brave, brave people, the wisdom in operating rather strict gender roles became apparent as did the importance of cooperation as both a survival and social strategy.

It also became clearer and understandable why firm social discipline would have made complete sense to the Inuit, for deviants seeking to destabilize the group would have been a direct threat to the group survival. For example an elder asked me the question "so can you survive here on your own without help from the community?" I looked around me and the importance of mutual support needed no further explanation. The mountains stared back at me in all of their enormous and fearsome glory, the ocean spoke of danger and the tundra reminded of possible death by starvation. Although nature has plenty to offer for human survival in these parts, it certainly commands much healthy respect for its capacity to both nurture and destroy. All I could do was nod my head feebly in affirmation to this elder's question. My nodding came from a place of deep understanding. He then went on to say, "well, that is why the prospect of banishment was effective in checking offensive behaviours". Once again that statement needed no further explanation for it all made sense.

Observing and participating in the daily life of the community also enabled a personal understanding and description of the groups in a collective sense. Angrosino (2007) stresses the importance of studying people in organized and enduring groups and not just as individuals. In the observation of the collective, including learned behaviors, customs and beliefs, the ethnographer is able to draw knowledge of the culture of the group. The basic elements that set that group apart from others start to emerge as do the

factors that they may share with other groups. Therefore, mundane events such as cooking and going shopping were important opportunities for learning about culture. Particularly rewarding opportunities to mingle, observe and access the soul of the culture came at occasions such as weddings, funerals, festive events or ceremonies in the community. At these times, people had no need for pretense, because the occasions called for flamboyant displays of personality or for uninhibited expression of difficult emotions. This is testament to the power of embodied (self involved and participatory) learning.

Chapter 5 - Tiv and Inuit: Differences, Similarities and Backgrounds

Differences of the Tiv and Inuit

Tiv and Inuit provide polar examples of indigenous peoples with similar experiences and worldviews. First, they live in vastly different climes. Tiv live in the warm tropical climate of Nigeria in Africa with temperatures usually as high as 45 degrees Celsius and the Inuit have their dwellings in the coldest regions of the Canadian Arctic, where temperatures are between 15 to below 50 degrees Celsius.

Secondly, Tiv were primarily a farming people and did some hunting while the Inuit hunted, fished and gathered food from the tundra. Both groups still adhere to these ways of life to some degree. The Tiv hunt and farm all year round but tend more to farming than hunting. Inuit landscape is frozen for most of the year and naturally does not allow for much farming activities, therefore they hunt all year round as a primary means of subsistence.

Tiv are also more in numbers (about 3million people[14]) whereas the Inuit are smaller in numbers totalling just over fifty (50,000) thousand peoples in Canada according to the 2006 Census.[15] This difference raised a question of whether or not numbers make a difference in how society is organized and how social values are understood and adhered to. It turned out that that when values are implanted properly, they permeate society and include all people regardless of how many there are. Society can be made up of a thousand or a million good people. What is important is how they are raised.

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[14] Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Nigeria : Tiv*, 2008, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/49749cd42b.html [accessed 30 December 2011]

[15] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080115/dq080115a-eng.htm [accessed 22 November 2011]

Another difference worth mentioning is that female Inuit elders tend to take up more leadership roles in the community than female Tiv elders who generally leave that task to their male counterparts. More Tiv women function in roles as medicine women and powerful mediators instead. Inuit women reported that they took over leaderships positions as the men were away hunting (most of the time). Responsibility fell on them to ensure that camps were well taken of and, that children were protected, nurtured and raised as best as possible.

Similarities of the Tiv and Inuit

Both groups have emerged from colonial histories. Both did not operate centralized forms of government before colonization. Conflict resolution processes were overseen by elders who mediated between conflicting parties. Gender and age roles were adhered to as a form of social organization to ensure cohesion and maximum contribution of all community members to collective progress and both groups were and still are oriented towards group and personal survival.

Myth has it that both the Tiv and Inuit have been said to be so hospitable and generous a people that they even gave their wives and daughters as gifts to strangers visiting them. Although these myths are controversial and difficult to verify, they speak to the impressively cordial nature of the Tiv and Inuit people. Interestingly though, at certain points in history, both groups were erroneously labelled as being savage, warlike and aggressive peoples (Doward 1974; Dickason 2002). These myths are immediately debunked by the Tiv and Inuit as they tell their own stories and histories. Both groups also tend towards "hot-climate" cultural orientations as suggested by Lanier (2000). But both groups were forced to model and operate "cold-climate" cultural modes of

behaviours, structures and processes through colonial systems. This creates deep identity crises and perpetual states of confusion for many Tiv and Inuit people.

Background on the Tiv

"Everything is looked at from the point of view of the community and actions of an individual which affect the community, are anti-social acts which risk the vengeance of the spirits which we may picture as being behind the akombo" – Downes 1933

Tiv live in the Benue Valley in the north central region of present day Nigeria. When asked, Tiv simply refer to themselves as *onov* Tiv which means children of Tiv. The description tells of their ancestry and of a deep sense of family connection shared by all Tiv people everywhere. The name Tiv is one that has been applied to Tiv by themselves. It is the name of their ancestor from whom all Tiv trace their agnatic ancestry (Paul and Laura Bohannan 1953).

Identity and Social Organization - Tiv live in what is known today as the middle belt of present day Nigeria they mainly occupy Benue state. Several Tiv people are also spread across other parts of the middle belt including Nasarawa, Taraba states and also extend to the foothills of the Cameroun Hills. Bohannan (1953) described the Tiv as the largest pagan tribe in Northern Nigeria by which he meant that the Tiv had religious or spiritual practices other than ones he knew or understood that is, Christianity or Islam (Islam was being practiced to the far north of Nigeria). R. M. Downes was to recognize later in 1971 that the Tiv people are in fact a deeply spiritual people whose

> whole outlook was contained in a religious scheme which permeated their every thought and action…it is certain that may of their religious ideas and practices are unique… there are others that would appear to be peculiar such as the *Ikpindi* or flesh debt and the concept of *Tar* Tiv or Tiv land with its actual visible territory and its unseen part separated from it by a mysterious river or ocean, and peopled by members of the tribe both living and dead that are linked through the living elder by the medium of the *imborivngu* (4).

In other words Tiv have always been a spiritual people but do not separate or compartmentalize their religion. It is a part of everything including daily living; it shows up in small as well as bigger decisions and interactions with others, self and the land. It is significant that Downes recognized that Tiv are born into a world of thought so different from European thought that to try and understand them (Tiv), outsiders have to make the attempt to discard all preconceptions and bias and accept a different premise of interpretation.

Cultural barriers, language and the inability to grasp meaning and dialectic prevented a clearer understanding of Tiv religion on the part of early European colonizers and vice versa. This was at least true for Tiv until the Christianization and education of succeeding generations was to close that gap somewhat. But even then, knowledge has been one-way, with Tiv being compelled to learn and adopt European ways without reciprocity of the latter. The point is that Tiv have an elaborate spiritual system that was notably different than the Europeans for as Downes notes further;

> the Tiv do not separate the actual and physical and the spiritual and immaterial into separate compartments of his mind as we [European] do, or regard the supernatural and unseen as something apart from the actual and visible to him…he does not differentiate between magical and religious ideas (4).

Therefore Tiv consider good and evil to be natural products of human nature and behaviour and that as being supernaturally controlled. They think of good and evil as residing in people *mbatsav* (people of the *tsav*) Bad *mbatsav* are people thought to harbor evil intents to harm others through the use of supernatural knowledge and practices, while good tsav is when people use the knowledge at their disposal to benefit themselves and others. Tiv however maintain that the mere possession of supernatural knowledge does not automatically make an individual evil as may be supposed. What makes people evil is

how they use the power they posses either to harm or to benefit others. Power in itself is not thought to be evil it just depends how it is used.

Tiv religion forms a platform for social organization; it dictates a collective moral code and is used for measuring good or bad conduct. R.C. Abraham (1933) has surmised that to the Tiv, the God (A'ondo) deity is the "force behind nature and is imminent throughout the Universe; in particular the sky is God and God is the sky, and the word A'ondo has both these meanings, there being no other term for God" (41).

Life and Family - Tiv value close-knit families and usually live in communal arrangements that include extended family members. Although surrounded by other ethnic peoples, they generally had minimal contact as they lived self sufficiently as hunters, foragers and farmers. (Bohannan 1953; Abraham 1968; Downes 1969, 1971; Keil 1979). Increased contact with other cultural groups, particularly western education and religion has influenced Tiv spirituality and ways of social interactions but the values in that culture still remain and reins the present. It shows up in Tiv sentiments and emotions, what Downes has referred to as 'imaginative creation and active embodiment'.

Tiv speak the same language the *dzwa Tiv*. Tiv everywhere who speak the language can understand and be understood when they communicate even though there are some slight accents or dialect differences in some parts. Most still communicate in dzwa Tiv with few exceptions of Tiv families who live away from other Tiv speaking people and for various reasons encourage their children to speak other languages because they erroneously fear that knowledge of the Tiv language will jeopardize their children's chances of learning the languages of business where they find themselves living.

Tiv value extended families; parents, parents in law, uncles, aunts, wives, older children and their wives, younger children, as well as matrilineal and patrilineal family members live together in large compound houses. Each wife has a sleeping *iyou* (room/hut). Domestic tasks were shared and family meetings were held out in the open. Clusters of houses and the people living in them were known as *ya* or home and the composition of the *ya* was largely of agnate brothers and their wives who were usually from other clans, as well as their children and nieces and nephews. The *ya* was headed by the oldest male (*or u ya*) who was responsible for the wellbeing of every member of that family arrangement (*ya ngu sa kiev na*). This *or u ya* was responsible for setting the tone of the household by exemplary character (*inja*) and was aware that he did not have absolute authority to control others. Food consumption, for instance, was controlled by the married women. His role was to ensure peace, delegate chastisement as appropriate, intervene and mediate in matters concerning his household and deal with trouble makers who would not change. He could however be abandoned by the family if he proved to be autocratic and heavy handed (Bohannan 1953, 1968).

Government and Politics - It is significant to note that the Tiv in pre-colonial times did not have any centralized governments. Government was organized through genealogical segments that were overseen by individual families and family heads in an egalitarian and democratic manner. Tiv value their genealogies, they often memorize their ancestry. Mvendaga Jibo (2009) points out that place names in Tivland are names of social groups that are reflective of ancestral connections to Tiv and are extensions of genealogies. Naming places by social genealogical units helps the Tiv locate themselves within ancestral segments that are overseen by family, clan and district heads at the various

levels. Ultimately, all Tiv trace their ancestral ties to their father Tiv. Every Tiv person is located in this complex ancestry and considered to be a family member; all are children and descendants of the common ancestor Tiv.

Tiv society is patrilineal, descendants trace their ancestry through their fathers and in such manner is every Tiv individual is linked with the group and ancestor (Jibo 2009). Tiv did not have hierarchical structures and in many cases still have little respect for authority structures that subordinate them. They see themselves as horizontally connected and bound together by a collective sense of respect for brotherhood and family ties. Although following colonization, the Tiv were required to have a paramount ruler –The Tor Tiv– who has come to be much respected by the entire Tiv nation, he is nevertheless seen more as a father rather than as a ruler in the strict sense of the authoritarian word. Tribute labour, appropriation of surplus products and hierarchical control of resources did not exist among the Tiv who went to great lengths to ensure that everyone had what they needed so that people wielding control over others was not an issue.

Economy - Tiv pre-colonial economy was subsistent. Elders had influence that was recognized only as long as that role was directed towards ensuring the common economic good of the entire family, clan or district. Elders were to ensure that farm yields were good, that every community member worked hard to support him or herself and other family members. Aggregating the forgoing, R.C. Abraham (1933) concluded that the Tiv social organization was originally democratic in all aspects. British colonizers had attempted to destroy this democratic system in order to set up exploitative hierarchies and succeeded to an extent but Tiv still resort to their inherently democratic processes in day to day dealings outside of organized government.

Power and Leadership – British colonizers went ahead to amalgamate clans and districts that were previously independent and operated according to well-understood family arrangements. They displaced family or clan heads and replaced them with others of their (British) choosing. Colonial authorities punished Tiv elders in full view of communities and in so doing destroyed a significant aspect of Tiv indigenous leadership and government structure rooted in respect for elders. They therefore created room for lawlessness and disorder which was later to plague the Tiv. In pre-colonial Tivland, elders (*Mbavesen* or *Mbaganden*) were responsible for ensuring harmony and order in Tiv communities. Family heads, (*Mbayarv* plural and *Orya* singular) who are fathers (*Ute'er*) and the keepers of the land (*Mba soron tar*) had social and spiritual responsibilities. This system was based on a basic principle known as *Tarsoron*. Suemo Chia (1991) a Tiv contemporary commenting on the principle of *Tarsoron*, i.e. the spiritual and moral role of keeping or repairing the Tar Tiv or Tiv nation says that;

> *Tarsoron* is the process whereby, a group of people living together, seek clarity in their togetherness as well as coexistence, progress and peace for themselves in their coexistence. *Tarsoron* is in doing such things as to ensure a collective peaceful state of being. To ensure peaceful coexistence, people must 1. live together in community 2. Have the desire to continue living together in peace 3. Be of the same mind in how to achieve their collective goals 4. Acknowledge that it takes work to live together in peace and 5. Recognize that power (*tahav*) and laws (*atindi*) are involved in the task of building collective peace (1).

Tarsoron he argues, guard's harmony and any events that challenges this way of being will ultimately undermine collective and individual and wellbeing of the Tiv. Chia (1991) goes on to describe the processes of *Tarsoron* as one in which every community member is involved, in making decisions and in contributing their resources in commitment to the pursuit of collective purposes. *Tarsoron* is a deliberate and participatory process of community building. He maintains that the peace that is

important is not just of the bodily sort having to do with what to eat, wear or have, but that of the mind, which then extends to the physical realm. This involves the collective cultivation of the qualities such as trust, truth, brotherliness, generosity and hard work.

Judgement and Justice - The collective is important in Tiv worldview. Tiv forms of judgement and justice were also based on preserving collective peace and harmony and protecting the principles that ensured that Tiv could continue to live together without violent conflicts. Jibo (2009) argues that Tiv had customary laws that were handed down by ancestors, the breach of which invited calamity on the individual as well as the community at large. It is therefore the duty of the entire community to see that laws (some of which were fashioned in the form of taboos) were respected and adhered to by everyone and that failure of one person is considered the failure of the community to support that one person and keep to them on track.

Tiv edicts and taboos were much respected. They were talked about in all social circles, sang in songs, told in stories and taught to children across generations. The goal was to communicate a strong sense of morals (right and wrong) so that everyone including children understood the difference between right and wrong and were able to make life choices accordingly. Some crimes were considered evil (*Kwaghbo*) and include such crimes as murder, adultery, incest or suicide and invited calamities on the land if appeasements were not made. Other crimes were considered social disturbances (*kwaghdzaniyol*) and included such behaviours as theft and arson.

In the different cases depending upon degree of wrongdoing, varying methods were employed for adjudicating matters and administering justice. Elders generally deliberated to determine guilt and guilty parties and then decided the adequate type of

chastisement to be applied; including ordeals, fines or banishment depending on the severity of the wrongdoing. Divination was sometimes used to establish guilt or predict future events surrounding issues of suspicious nature such as if a person suspected that another had the intention to harm them or their family members but had no other way to confirm this suspicion. Diviners helped decipher omens or the causes for sickness, misfortune or untimely death. Oaths were used as a means to decide matters. Parties to conflicts took oaths as did their witnesses. The oath was sworn on the *Swem*[16] and this decided matters quickly. Afterwards people who had taken the oath were left to their consciences. Jibo notes that lesser oaths were taken on the name of the individual's father, mother or some other important fetishes. Rituals were also important in deciding matters. Sometimes it was necessary to cleanse wrongdoers of their wrongs before they could continue to function in community. Incest and adultery perpetrators for example had to be cleansed of the curse of those acts before they could re-enter community (Bohanan 1957).

Generally, the Tiv nation did not have law enforcement agents in the form of formal police. But it is perhaps more appropriate to say that they did not need law enforcement in that form as most people respected the customary laws. Obedience was largely owing to the fear of the supernatural (Tsav) and out of deep respect for self, elders and community (age-sets). People understood the importance of community and wanted a healthy sense of belong in their communities and so they did what was necessary to

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[16] *Swem* is the supreme oath of the Tiv as the person taking the oath swears on Tiv ancestors (Takuruku's) words and blessings upon which the continued existence of Tar Tiv depends. To lie while swearing on *Swem* is to jeopardize the entire Tiv collective existence. Such a person would be trading collective Tiv peace and prosperity for a small and selfish gratification. It was a very serious offense and this oath was not taken lightly.

continue to enjoy the families and communities they had and belonged to (Downes 1933; Bohanan 1957; Abraham 1968; Beattie & Lienhardt 1975; Jibo 2009; Dzurgba 2007).

Elders had the personal responsibility to ensure their community's continued wellbeing; this involved making sure that the spiritual and physical worlds were in positive alignment and he does not become an obstacle in that process. Downes (1933) describes a ritual among Tiv in which an elder at seed time and harvest time each year, would call together the entire clan to perform an open ritual by planting the staple foods into a mound (millet, yams, cocoyam, guinea corn). The elder would put the seeds in the mound while declaring that he is of good intent by the community. If it be that he will do anything to harm the land, may he be killed just as if any individual present does anything to harm the land may that person be killed by *Swem*. To which the people respond "we all agree". This is a powerful commentary on Tiv sense of order and their effort to protect and belong to communities that they could trust, participate in and hold others, including elders accountable too.

Culture and Recreation - Another interesting aspect of Tiv culture worth mentioning is their creativity and love of song and dance which is used for teaching, entertainment, conflict resolution and communication and as a means to stay healthy and to remain connected to ancestral spirits. Charles Keil's (1979) perspective on the folk and song disposition of the Tiv is well worth a long quote.

> Tiv composers and their helpers offer a constant corrective for whatever is going wrong and loud praise for those who do right. The tales, as told and enacted, not only return the Tiv to laughter but create a parallel world in which the powerful, the 'big men' are always undone and 'the people' are made wiser in the undoing. The circles of men's and women's dances, in which virtually all young people take part, are the best organized and most enjoyable events in life. The unifying pulse of the drummers at the centre and the encircling audience define a middle ground in which individual actions complement each other perfectly. Here at last,

every individual angle can find its proper place within the circle. The dance perfectly summarizes the Tiv pattern, the best grounds for being in Tivland (98).

This enjoyment of life (*tar yan* or *uma u dedoo*) is what the Tiv strive for in their day to day lives. It is also the reason that Tiv invest in creative approaches to conflict resolution and community building as they tirelessly work towards *Tarsoron* - repairing the land or world; songs make the task of life more enjoyable.

Interestingly, although early colonizers recognized the essentially democratic nature of Tiv socio-political organization, they nevertheless labelled that system "backward" and in need of gradual Europeanized change (Abraham 1933). They forced a hierarchical system that created divisions and disparities amongst people –class, gender and intellectual. Changes brought through colonization deeply affected Tiv who were forced to centralise their government and accept alien, corrupt and exploitative rulers whose sole purpose was to amass wealth for the colonial government to the detriment of the communities. These changes were so culturally stressful that they led to massive Tiv revolts in 1929, 1939 (Jibo 2009) and 1960-64 (Vaaseh & Ehinmore 2011).

Impressions of the Tiv people

Upon arrival in Tivland or Tiv country as it is sometimes called, one beholds a bustle of activity; people on the streets selling wares, cloth weavers busy at cloth making on the main streets, loud stereos playing songs in mainly Tiv but other also in other languages. There is a generally alive feel in Tiv country. The capital city Makurdi, is a dusty town polluted with exhaust fumes from having too many cars driving on narrow roads. Tiv country announces itself by the red and brown round mud huts with thatched roofs littered across large open fields. These huts are the *Ate,* or 'welcoming rooms' to be

found in most compounds even those not built with mud. The Ate is Tiv style; it is also used as a rest place on farms.

The terrain and architecture changes noticeably when one arrives at the edges of Tiv country, wherever one drives from, the first Tiv style hut often surrounded by large farmlands indicates entry into Tivland. Then appear little wood signs bearing names of the various Tiv villages as one drives through. On a good day when it is not pouring rain, wares might be displayed on the road sides for sale. These are often items hand made by the villagers – bamboo chairs, kitchen stools, mortars and pestles, charcoal, cassava flakes, smoked fish and game. The sellers may be sitting by their wares waving to passersby or busy in their compounds close to the road sides.

Tiv are a boisterous people who carry their sense of daily purpose on their faces and in their step. People race to their tasks in the morning, often to their farms to get some work done before the sun rises to scorching capacity (usually by about noon). Then they return from the farms to complete household chores. They busy themselves with farm work in some way almost all year round – preparing seeds and soil, building ridges for planting season, planting seeds in season, weeding, fertilizing and then harvesting and processing produce, the cycle repeats year after year. Some Tiv are also employed in office work but even Tiv with office jobs, have and tend to their farms as well. They usually go to farms as early as 5am for a few hours before returning to their offices and then back to their farms in the evening when the sun is down and cooler. Artisans may also have their farms which they go to first thing in the morning and then return to their carvings, cloth-making, paintings, pottery and whatever else they make. Tiv also hunt,

fish and gather wild food but more time is devoted to tiling the soil. They are a people of the land, agrarian at the core.

Tiv are not given to timidity; they are not shy to express their feelings or to sharply correct impressions about them. It is better when in Tiv country, to maintain an open mind and lose all extreme sensitivities. Thin-skinned people may feel that they are being picked on and attacked when Tiv communicate in their usually frank manner or when they tease each other or the visitor. Tiv are in spite of their energetic nature, a very warm and unpretentious people. They live their talk and are comfortable in their skins. They are a proud people!

Background on the Inuit

This study was mostly conducted in the Inuit community of Pangnirtung. However Inuit people from other settlements in the Arctic were interviewed as part of this research. Having the perspectives of Inuit from other places helped clarify an Inuit experience not strictly limited to Pangnirtung. Pangnirtung is a settlement tucked away on a fiord to the eastern side of the Baffin Island. It is a place that stuns the traveller in terms of its impressive beauty but also definitely by its treacherous terrain.

Pangnirtung is only accessible by air or sea and either of those modes of transportation requires some mental preparation as simply getting to Pangnirtung is challenging. It is the only place I ever went (and I have been to a few places) where upon boarding a small plane, passengers were informed by the pilot that he would only be taking good shot at landing due to the intense and frequent weather changes. If he could not land the plane, he would turn right around and return (to Iqaluit) until further notice. This was a terrifying announcement.

Then there is arriving in Pangnirtung and wondering where you are as Peter Kuchyski (2005) puts it. He goes on to say very appropriately that just when you think that you may be lost, Pangnirtung broadcasts itself with rock spellings on the side of a mountain overlooking the settlement. The words "welcome to Pangnirtung" do little to the seemingly disoriented visitor who may feel like they may have just been transported to another (higher) part of the planet. This feeling was so strong that one visitor up there repeatedly made comments about when she would return to Canada. She had to be reminded that she was in Canada!

Identity and Place - The journey to connect with Inuit on their land is an experience next to none other. In addition to conferring the "I was there" effect on the research that Kulchyski (2001) identifies, it also enables an understanding of the local terrain relative to culture and community functions as no book could adequately convey. The visitor cannot help but wonder about the people who brave the beauty and treachery of the terrain. An Inuit elder in Pangnirtung who said that whenever she is someplace else and people wonder about her or her people, she responds to them and says "I am just a little Eskimo lady, the ones that you have heard about". This elder's response to enquiry about Inuit is a powerful commentary on self definition as well as confrontation of stereotypes all at once. For there have been typecasts about Inuit for the North. By admitting that she is an Eskimo she accents to the labelling imposed on her and all Inuit by colonizing peoples but also simultaneously invites her interrogator to question everything that may have informed their previous knowledge about the so called Eskimos. This elder's stance does not then fail to impress upon the person asking, that there is more to the Inuit than anything that they may have heard previously. Two reactions are then open to such an

interrogator; to turn away from the invitation to inquire further and in so doing forgo an opportunity to re-examine previously held notions or to turn toward that invitation to explore further knowledge about Inuit from an Inuit point of view. As an investigator I chose the latter option, to engage with the Inuit and learn from them what it means to be Inuk (Inuit person). In the process I expectedly became increasingly aware that my previous information about Inuit was going to be challenged by the authentic Inuit story I was about to engage with – one told by the Inuit themselves.

John Steckley (2008) admonishes that the best way to gain realistic knowledge about any people is to interact with them personally; to hear their stories from them directly and not exclusively through the filtered lenses of other tellers. For risk lies in the filtering and interpreting of other people's information and behaviours; information thus filtered, may get twisted and is often made to reflect the author's preconceived ideas of the other. Steckley then offers a cautionary note that is worth a quote when he says that

> Truth is not a popularity contest. Repetition like imitation might flatter an earlier author but it doesn't necessarily lead to truth. Just because there is a huge literature about a subject does not mean that many truths are told, often what you get is the same falsehoods repeated over and over again (8).

This cautionary note is worth paying attention to when one interacts with Inuit, setting aside previous assumptions gained from literature is a good way to stay open-minded to the contemporary Inuit.

Peter Kulchyski (2001) also advises that in order to engage with a culture in an embodied manner, it is critical that the 'expert' information and interpretation "does not indicate totalizing knowledge" of the other in a manner that prevents further discussion or dissent on the subject manner. He admonishes further, that the investigator is best not motivated by colonial intent overtly or subtly. This pure-motive outlook ought to set the

mental background for venturing into indigenous (Inuit) terrain for the purposes of research.

Although a large body of literature exists *about* Inuit, most of it is not written *by* Inuit themselves. This tends to be the case with people who are colonized and become study subjects. Kulchyski (2001) in his article *History and Culture in Cumberland Sound* comprehensively reviews some of the earliest travellers and writers' works on Inuit culture and environment including Stevenson Marc's (1997), Ross W. Gillies's, Muller-Wille Ludger's (1998), and we might add Franz Boas and Clifford Geertz's perspectives. His conclusion that these writers were (and continue to be) authorities in their own right, yet they are all but cultural interpreters-rightly or wrongly, is one warning that no researcher should forget. For to log 'expert' knowledge around like sacred scripture, is to effectively silence the local populations' own perspectives on their life, experiences, history and culture.

Thus while I acknowledge valuable accounts about the Inuit by others, my attitude in conducting this study was to learn from Inuit themselves as much as possible. It was important to validate and compare original Inuit narrative and interpretations of their culture, to what others have said and written *about* them. It is my intention to move away from the triumphal narratives and exotic depictions of Inuit by early travellers, the demonizations of Inuit cultural practices by early missionaries and the treatment of the Inuit as chattel by businessmen visiting those lands. I have paid attention to valuable information and analysis written about the Inuit by renowned authors as well as amplified Inuit voice on the subject matter of their original processes.

Interaction and Change - It is important to interact with Inuit as a complex people and a culture with encoded ways of thought, knowledge, and worldviews. Inuit are not by any means trapped in time and living as they did in the fifteen hundreds, they have changed with time and interactions with others as must necessarily occur in human progress. However, their sterling original cultural philosophies, ideologies and modes of (conflict and Peace) interaction are still in place to some extent and that was the concern of this study. The same general attitude and approach was employed with the Tiv with whom I spent much time interacting on various matters pertaining to everyday life. Through these interactions I was inviting collaborators and consultants to construct themselves in their own words and on their own terms.

Renee Fossett (2001) admits that much of what is known about the Inuit is from accounts that were recorded (and safe to assume interpreted) by others. People who were not Inuit and who in many an instance came close only to kidnap Inuit for exoticized shows elsewhere became the interpreters of Inuit culture. She therefore makes efforts in her work to reconstruct Inuit history from the oral traditions and oral histories from major expeditions during the earliest contact between Europeans and Inuit. Fossett notes that early descriptions of Inuit indicated that they were a;

> perennially cheerful, friendly folk who made the best of their unhappy lot in life, satisfied to survive one day at a time. Their communities were understood to be thoroughly egalitarian, lacking both laws and leadership. Infanticide and gerontocide were thought to be characteristic of all Inuit societies (5).

This description of Inuit by early travellers tells much about the Inuit; first, that they are a cheerful and friendly people. Second, that they are an egalitarian people and third, that they had laws and forms of leadership that were not understood by their

historical precursors[17].   Those who took it upon themselves to describe Inuit at the time, were sometimes prejudiced and attributive in labelling behaviour that they did not understand. Other observations emerging through oral histories indicated that the Inuit are a courageous people with thorough knowledge of their environment, one that poses only dangers to the inexperienced. Fossett thus clarifies that,

> Contrary to much popular belief, Inuit created highly complex, holistic systems of law and justice and leadership and an oral canon for teaching the generations the rules for correct living. The English words "infanticide" and "gerontocide" fail completely to describe the customs they are intended to describe. Neither killing nor dying is implicit in these practices when they are seen in the context of Inuit cosmology (7).

In order to correct erroneous interpretations of Inuit cultural practices, Fossett talks about *etic* (outsiders cultural views) contradicting *emic* (insiders cultural views) of the practicality of Inuit cultural practices and customs. The inflexibility of those holding the *etic* views results in misunderstandings being erroneously passed forward as factual information.

Social Organization - Franz Boas (1964) provides a captivating account of the Inuit that he encountered. He states that they organized themselves from season to season based upon survival models. Their goals were mostly to have sufficient food, which sometimes compelled groups to move their habitations frequently in search of animals that provide food, clothing, energy and their skins used for making necessary items such as tents, boats, sleds and for lining sleeping areas (the Inuit are mostly hunters, fishers and gatherers). Inuit lived in round snow huts (igloos) during the winter and in tents during other seasons. Relationships were tight and roles were separated between men and

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[17] These features mirror those of Tiv people who are also friendly, egalitarian, had no centralised forms of government and were misunderstood by early colonizing peoples.

women; the men went out hunting food for the camps while the women tended to the children, made clothes and cooked for their families.

Life and Creative Space - Favourite pastimes when the camps came together were games, storytelling and songs that were engaged in as community affairs largely for entertainment but also as means to promote relationships and laughter. Storytelling was especially used for teaching and passing traditions down to other generations. Recounting one particularly dramatic storytelling episode, Boas conveys that,

> Old traditions are always related in a highly ceremonious manner. The narrator takes off his outer jacket, pulls the hood over his head and sits down in the rear part of the hut, turning his face toward the wall, and then tells the story slowly and solemnly. All the stories are related in a very abridged form, the substance being supposed to be known. The form is always the same, and should the narrator happen to say one word otherwise than is customary, he will be corrected by the listeners (164).

The importance of storytelling to Inuit (and most oral cultures) is not lost on the reader. Apparently Inuit told stories in unforgettable ways, perhaps as a way to ensure that the messages communicated were not soon forgotten. This is a means for preserving knowledge, for in the telling and retelling of stories in the presence of knowledgeable witnesses; the cultures of the Inuit were hewn and etched into their hearts. Boas goes on to mention that children also told each other fables and sang short songs. This mode of communication seems to have been the Inuit way of teaching and learning the culture and also of the social etiquettes of appropriate or acceptable behaviour.

It appears from Boas' work as well that when Inuit were not hunting or doing household chores, they devoted much time to games, plays and songs that were done in the collective. These were mostly for merrymaking and seemed to have the significant value of keeping the camps physically active with moods uplifted. One elder interviewed,

also spoke of the importance of keeping community members engaged with each other in these creative ways as a conflict prevention strategy. If the people invested much in building relationships through games and songs and storytelling, there would be little time left for squabbles resulting from boredom or from exhausting weather conditions. Boas writes of Inuit men and women who never stopped humming songs even in harsh weather conditions that threatened their survival. When the weather was bad over extended periods, the men could not go hunting and available supplies were quickly consumed leaving the people hungry, yet the songs stayed perhaps to uplift their spirits.

Society and Codes of Conduct - The value of sharing was important in Inuit community (Price 2000; Boas 1964). Kills were shared among households at all times especially following a period of scarcity. People did not generally try to horde food as that would have meant that others could not survive. Boas maintains that social order and law was achieved by maintaining a sense of balance; everyone respected laid down rules of relationships and behaviour including established gender roles. Men provided for their immediate family, parents and parents- in-law while the women cared for the families' household needs, especially that of her husband and children. Everyone knew what was expected of them and did that accordingly. Women were not constrained to remain in marriages that they did not like. They could divorce and be remarried if that became necessary. Laws were generally unwritten but were codes of conduct that were known and passed down through generations. Religious beliefs (espoused in rituals and taboos) were also employed as means to prevent or resolve potentially harmful behaviour leading to conflicts that could be deadly or destructive.

Community Building - Both Boas (1964) and Jean Briggs (1970) discuss Inuit parenting styles with some fascination. They argue that Inuit treat their children very kindly, never beating or scolding them and in turn the children are very dutiful and obey the wishes of their parents. Briggs (1970) also notes among the Inuit an ingenious and effective (indigenous) way of dealing with the problem of aggression. The Inuit have a deep fear of aggression and so put in effort to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships by maintaining an emphasis on values and behaviors that encourage peace such as a maintaining a personal sense of stability, patience, accommodation and an abhorrence of anger. They creatively employ other expressive modes to express grievance and anger (for example song duelling or through dance). According to Eckert & Newmark (1980) these creative Inuit practices, were processes by which parties to a conflict expressed their anger and accusations (through song and dance) in the hearing of the community assembly. This way, there was minimal physical violence as the parties could vent their grievances non-violently in a playful context.

Briggs (1970) also noticed while living among Inuit, that a child was the lodestone in a family that she lived with. Every family and indeed community member went over board to care for the children and to ensure that they got tenderness and love; temper tantrums were understood and tolerated by adults as passing phases in a child's life. Children were expected to outgrow this phase as they transcended into adulthood a phase that was defined by more sense. Inuit understand that children tend to mirror what they see and experience around them therefore Inuit parents show patience with children's failings and weaknesses, humour when mistakes are made and tenderness as

the best way to soften a human spirit. Living this way consistently has to be a heavy task for any parent yet it was undertaken with much creativity and patience by the Inuit.

Cooperation and Non-violence - Exemplary parenting also meant that Inuit actively shunned violent and aggressive behaviour directed at children or the use of violence around children, especially because they live in such close such proximity that the children are always watching and soaking in what is being sanctioned or punished by their parents and the community. This way of parenting sets the stage for children to learn appropriate conflict behaviour and provides the reservoir of knowledge from which to do conflict resolution work as becomes necessary in the family and community.

Inuit value cooperation and obedience to community. People, who chose to operate otherwise, were left to try and manage on their own as a way to communicate to them that their behaviour was offensive. Briggs shares a story of a time when she realized that her adopted family wanted her to share a winter hut with them (this happened after she had had a tent to herself all summer). Coming from a culture oriented to privacy, she panicked at the thought of sharing a hut with the family and decided to set up her own tent away from the family hut which she planned to heat up using a stove. To her dismay, no one in the community came to assist her with setting up the tent even though no one criticised her. This rather uncomfortable way of letting her find out for herself that her actions were offensive to their principle of cooperation, sharing and sense of family, was a more memorable lesson than any words could have communicated. The antisocial behaviour she had displayed was never discussed in order not to further shame her and she was warmly welcomed back into the family fold once she took the right steps back towards community. Codes of acceptable behavior such as Jean describes in her

experience while living with Inuit, are learned and passed through generations without lengthy discussion or analysis. What people need to know will be demonstrated to them and it may involve letting them experiment with their choices in order to decide which ones are useful and which may be negative and alienating.

Leadership and Justice - John Bennett and Susan Rowley (2004) in their oral history compilation entitled *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut,* have documented important Inuit perspectives on several aspects of Inuit social life including commentaries on Inuit forms of leadership and justice. Similar to the Tiv, Inuit did not formally select leaders but individuals emerged whose role it was to ensure the wellbeing of the camp or community. In the family, this person would usually be the father, grandfather or mother or grandmother depending on the particulars of the family. In the community, it would be the individual with the most capacity to organize community into effective hunting teams, who knew the location of game and generally was concerned about the safety of the camp.

It was important that leaders did not abuse their power, indeed they ought not to think of themselves as having any power over subjects, but as having the most responsibility to ensure camp survival. Elders mostly thought to be natural leaders because they had lived and accumulated practical life experiences. Leaders (elders or not) were expected to trust in their humility which was the most desirable quality of a leader in addition to their generosity, thorough knowledge of the culture and ability to mediate conflicts and talk to people gently.

Inuit responses to Bennett & Rowley's questions with regards to justice indicate that elders' roles were to a significant extent, conflict resolution. They did this by

bringing conflicting parties together to discuss the conflicts. Usually done in a deliberately cheerful atmosphere, the elder sought to get to the truth of the matter by asking conflict parties to share their sides of the story. The elders listened and then blame would be apportioned in public so that wrongdoers took correction but also so that precedence was established and others in the community, could learn proper behaviour going forward.

Other creative means of bringing conflicts to the surface was through song duels using wit and satire to confront opponents in full view of the entire community. The community decided which songs they liked best and the composer was declared to be the winner. Composers of song for dueling, strove to expose the wrongful act or behavior that the other had committed. The songs were used to communicate scorn for the abhorrent behaviour exhibited by another. The offending party was embarrassed and compelled to stop the wrong action or behavior. Conflict parties continued in repeat retaliation in song until the entire episode was fully explained and the community now aware of the facts and emotions, was invited to intervene. Through this process conflict parties vented their negative energies, entertained the community and dealt with the problem without violence all at the same time. Sometimes there were mock fights carried out in the full view of the community where parties to a conflict could challenge each other in the safe glare of the community and the community could step in to separate the fighters if the fight became too violent. Yet another method was avoidance where people skirted around issues rather than deal with them so that the issues eventually fizzled out. Or relationships were abandoned altogether. But when a person was thought to have

become insane and dangerous or had become a threat to the community, they were killed in the interest of safety.

Colonization and Culture - Changing tides however impacted Inuit culture. Dorothy Harley Eber (2008) documents through Inuit stories and reconciliations with travel journals of early European travelers to the Arctic. She finds that the encounters between Inuit and Europeans began to alter Inuit life and the resulting changes were mostly not very positive. However, there is some argument that Inuit have economically advanced through trade that brought them weapons and other sorts of foods (most notably tea, coffee, flour, and sweets).

Nancy Wachowich (1999) documents life histories of three Inuit women who narrate the specific ways in which changes initiated by encounters with Europeans affected their lives. Education for instance, meant that the women were separated from their families physically (going to school) and ideologically (parents not having influence or teaching them any longer). Children who went to schools suffered disconnect from families and had the ideas that they were free standing individuals and could organize their lives away from their cultures and traditions. Inuit parenting was questioned and discouraged, girls and boys were massively de-skilled and significant Inuit traditional knowledge began to be lost as generation after generation of Inuit were colonized and assimilated. The devastating impact of this experience is better understood when one understands just how Inuit organized themselves differently from mainstream Canadian society. They group themselves into extended family arrangements with members sharing common ancestors with other members of the same dialect groups. Knowledge has continued to be passed down from one generation to the next by family members through

oral and mimetic mechanisms (Purich 1992) even though the system in its original form has been seriously impacted by contact with Europeans and ongoing forces of globalization. For example, schools and conventional education is imposed as the most valid system of knowledge generation and dissemination.

Spirituality - Shamanism was replaced with Christianity. Shamans used to be thought to make the necessary connections between the human and the spiritual worlds. This was a necessary mediation service to ensure that people were living in spiritual balance. The presence of a shaman likely commanded reverence, for people wanted to be in good balance with the spirit worlds. Decisions affecting community members were made by open consensus under the watchful eyes of competent elders and shamans. Shamans are not as actively recognized as used to be the case in earlier times. Their roles have mostly been replaced by religious clergy and the Christian faith tradition. Inuit elders now seem to earn more respect if they profess a clear commitment to God through the Christian faith. However, a few others still adhere to their indigenous spiritual traditions. Several elders repeated often during interviews that they were good Christians and are proud to pass their Christian values to their children as much as possible. Perhaps what was lost along with the Shamans is not the religious beliefs (or absence thereof) but the healthy reverence that their presence commanded. Christianity replaced that with the prospects for individuals to end up in hell if they commit sin and heaven if they live good lives. But the sense of dread that causes people to refrain from wrongdoing so as not to destabilize collective balance for the community has largely been lost. People now rationalize that they earn recompense for their wrong behavior as individuals and so they need not worry

about others. This undoubtedly has consequences for maintaining social decorum and collective peace.

Government and Power - Inuit were oriented to roles; this means that everyone in a community arrangement knew who had authority over them or who they had authority over, less in the sense of control and more in the sense of influence as the Inuit did not have hierarchical leaders (Boas 1964: Briggs 1970: Bennett & Rowley 2004). Occasionally when elders could not resolve conflicts, Community employed such methods as competitions, wrestling, gossiping or shaming, ostracism or execution to intervene and help parties towards a resolution. However, a new form of centralized government meant that all power was vested in political structures and systems. Everybody now knows that the government has authority over everyone else. The cooperative structure is thus challenged with much confusion ensuing.

Subsistence - Inuit primarily lived off of the land as hunters and gatherers. But stores and foreign items changed their lifestyles and diet. Whether this is a positive or negative development is left to subjective argument. In many cases though, Inuit supplement store bought foods with original diets of game hunted directly off the land including seals, walrus, fish, whales and caribou. Undeniably though, colonization has brought many changes to Inuit yet strong affinity to their original culture and language through processes for social organization remain obvious (Foussett 2001; Brody 2001). The new self government is a testament to how that culture is being put to work in a new political dispensation.

Impression of the Inuit

Inuit are quite a remarkable people; humble in disposition, welcoming to strangers and have no problems socializing easily with others in their midst. I find the most beautiful attribute of Inuit to be their expressiveness; it seems to me that Inuit wear their feelings on their faces. After about a week of interacting, I could understand what people were trying to communicate by looking at their faces. Agreement, decline, pleasure, displeasure, excitement, fear and discouragement, anxiety and many other emotions can all be read on Inuit faces and sometimes on their body posture without them ever needing to use words. It becomes easy tell an experienced and fearless hunter just by observing how he looks around and surveys his environment from a boat on the ocean waters, a happy child maintains almost a permanent broad grin on her face as does an elder. An unhappy woman carries the pain in her eyes and the contours of her face such that you want to hug her right away and somehow ease some of that agony. To confirm my observation, I decided to get to know more about the people whose lives and conditions I thought could read on their faces and found that in 100% of the cases, my initial reading of them was accurate. This speaks to the genuineness of the people. The way of pretense is not the Inuit way.

Traveling through the gorgeous yet treacherous terrain of the Arctic, a deep respect for this people increases with each step and each paddle while on boat rides on the ocean, one imagines life without modern equipment back in the day and how Inuit survived. What a gallant people! A tour through the museum in Pangnirtung provides a better appreciation of what life was back in the day; with stone and bone ware and hides for making virtually everything from clothes, to buckets, to tents, and beds etc. The

images command awe at Inuit drive for survival, one bears witness to the remarkable history a surviving people in every sense of the word.

As a conflict analyst, I generally tend to survey peoples conflict behaviour soon after contact and what sticks out with the Inuit is their unequalled capacity for paralingual communication. It is safe to say that Inuit are a performing more than a wordy people. They seem to demonstrate rather than explain factors or concepts. When an explanation is offered, it is usually not in too many words. I remember trying to learn from a highly skilled elder how to prepare seal skins for making shoes and mittens. She tried to explain the process to me in about four words and then despairing of the words to continue (even through an interpreter) simply took the seal skins and demonstrated the stretching process while I watched intently. She directed me to sit, showed me how I was to position my body for the task and how to handle the tools. Then she stood back and watched me work at it, giving me gentle pushes on my back to show me the correct way to positive and move my entire body while working, and not just my arms or fingers. She showed me the correct way to handle the scrapper and watched me do it for about five minutes, stopped me a few times to reposition and rebalance my body again until I could correctly work the skins. I was left to continue on my own only when she was sure that I knew what I was doing and would not grate my knuckles in the process. Similar to the Tiv, teaching and learning by doing is the Inuit way.

Inuit may be described as a shy, quiet and friendly people with calm dispositions. They encourage silence or at least not being too loud and obnoxious. Inuit children play more quietly than I have seen anywhere else. People establish eye contact as they walk by and communicate amiableness by a wave of the hand or a whispered greeting. During

interviews, I felt after about an hour that I was exhausting consultants with much talk. They would just resort to grunts and paralinguistics to confirm agreement or disagreement and this is how I learned to just allow necessary silence fall upon the discussion before returning to it when the consultant initiated.

One gets the impression that Inuit are generally non-confrontational and tend to avoid conflicts as much as possible where possible. The reason for this has been expressed by elders as the importance of keeping conflicts out of camps in order to avoid costly disintegration when people could not agree. There is a clear understanding of the importance of sticking together for survival and everyone in camps or in communities is important. Community members know that their contributions to others are important and they worked hard to preserve relationships. Divisiveness causing separation potentially endangered collective survival and such behaviour was strongly discouraged. This was so well engrained that it has passed across through the generations and still defines much of Inuit behaviour today.

Inuit are welcoming and curious about others; upon meeting a stranger, people ask several questions to get to know who the person is, where they are from and what brings them. This probing is to help them locate the stranger and to include them in the community. True story accounts of Inuit by outsiders confirm this aspect of Inuit culture, James Houston (1983) in his book *The White Dawn,* refers to Inuit as a "peace loving people" (authors note). He describes their community life, belief systems and social organization in ways that leave the reader definitely assured of Inuit tendency for inclusion, community and non-segregationist leanings.

I remember flying off to the Baffin Islands and wondering how I would be received once I arrived there, would people be seeing a black woman for the first time? I worried about how my research proposition would be welcomed or not, would I be able to connect with people, would I be understood and other thoughts along those lines. Then I arrived at the airport in Pangnirtung and I could have been a part of the tundra that people see every day. Nobody gave me special attention (certainly not in a negative way for being different as tends to happen in several other places that I have been where intolerance is poorly masked but surely pervasive). I had not exactly expected any mistreatment, but had anticipated some curiosity about my skin colour at least. I was more than a bit surprised to be just another person and soon I was to find out why.

After I settled in and got a chance to acquaint myself with my new surroundings, I started reaching out to people in the community. We left our belongings in the community school and camped out on nearby hills. I noticed that there were always children around the school. The children were respectful and quite naturally curious. They asked my name and wanted to know where I was from. They admired my twisted braids. One cute little girl wondered that my tongue was pink; she expected that my tongue would be dark as my skin (I have not stopped laughing at that one). The kids had the most refreshing questions for me each day and I enjoyed their highly expressive faces when I talked about myself and where I was from. The children helped make good inroads to the community and soon, I had adults waving vigorously and smiling very broadly at me as I would walk through the town. I was impressed by how friendly everybody was. In fact, I was quite surprised when someone in our group mentioned how horrible she felt walking downtown because she noticed how people frowned at her as

she would try to wave 'hellos'. Her assumption and judgment of that situation was that the women in the small town probably felt threatened by the women in our group because they feared their men may prefer the visiting girls to their own local girls and so they did not want to have much doing with the new threats. Interesting take!

My experience was entirely different than hers and her conclusion had not at all crossed my thoughts. This puzzle resolved for me somewhat when a woman that I had become friendly with came by one day wanting to talk to me. With a serious face that said she had something important to discuss, told me how she and several people in the town had African ancestry (great great grand fathers or maybe further back). I was to learn that black African whalers who had come to the Arctic sometime in the 1800s married and had children with Inuit women. I was now meeting these individuals and my presence was to them like seeing some distant relative with news from a foreign home land (I am still digesting the impact that information had on me for future analysis). I was later to meet several other individuals with African ancestry and truly enjoyed the strangely bonding relationships that were formed thereafter. This experience was also positive in that it opened doors for immediately relevant or broader focused interviews. Yet the manner in which I was welcomed is the Inuit way, it definitely speaks to the inclusive nature of Inuit culture. This openness is extended to most people that the Inuit view as harmless. Subsequent interactions with Inuit from other communities have consistently confirmed this impressive Inuit quality.

Inuit and Tiv today

Both groups now have some political independence from their colonizing nations. Each group currently has political structures that include a form of self government.

Interestingly however, both groups have largely retained inherited structures complete with foreign processes and prescriptions. This is so even when research has shown in some cases that such legacies may become a source for intra-cultural conflict (Blanton, Mason & Athow 2001). There is an almost palpable sense amongst Inuit and the Tiv (at least within the communities visited) that things may irretrievably fall apart if any attempts are made to overhaul the systems and processes that they inherited. So each group is making the most of a less than ideal situation by maintaining what Peter Ekeh (1975) refers to as "two publics" that is, two identities, economies, two political spheres and inevitably two legal systems complete with often incompatible *modus operandi*. This condition forces Inuit and Tiv to live dual realities necessitated by circumstances that are often not in agreement with their preferences. Indeed people are somewhat confused about their preferences.

Peter Kulchyski (2005) argues that Inuit have learned how to make the most of a bad situation. They have crafted ingenious ways to exist and build economies that support both their cultural as well as economic needs within their new political arrangements. Perhaps this is true. Today, Inuit in serving the needs of tourists who are curious to see the beauty of the Arctic, get to visit their original 'lands' when they transport tourists. During that time, they take the opportunity to hunt and fish with tourists. They earn some money for ferrying their passengers, to satisfy practical needs (such as bullets, hunting gear and foreign foods). They also gain satisfaction from staying in touch with their original lands and cultural practices. The settlements created by the government currently serve purposes closer to being places of recourse and refuelling from time spent on the land.

Kulchyski notes further, that self government for the Inuit means that the opportunity is created for increased local organization to meet local needs. It does offer the room for Inuit to define their vision as a people and have the liberty to follow that vision within the larger Canadian project. This process is not easy or smooth, for as he shows, original Inuit processes and Canadian laws continue to rub in uncomfortable ways as evidenced by the power-over relationship between the communities (including Pangnirtung) and with law enforcement agents. There is a conflict of perception; the community perceives the law (enforcement) as oppressive and the law perceives itself as bringing order to the community. That relationship needs to be better defined in more collaborative terms so that communities and the law are in a mutually supportive relationship.

Chapter 6 - Inuit & Tiv Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking Principles

The prospects of discovery through research are appropriately exciting feats. The researcher prepares much for this adventure and then when the time comes to head off into the world of discovery, it is not uncommon to simultaneously harbour feelings of dread, expectation and thrill. Mental preparation may have the researcher conjuring images of the field, to question; what will the people be like, sound like, smell like, behave like? What might be the best form of self conduct? Might friends be won in the process, is that even desirable? The researcher may also be under pressure to accomplish her task within a time limit and find herself drawing up plans to speed up tasks as well as accommodate delays. In reality however, that journey may progress quite differently than the laid out plans.

Having gone through my questions repeatedly, I felt certain that I was ready for interviews that would be focused and direct enough to ensure minimal waste of time. My first lesson in the field however, was me being reminded that Inuit and Tiv have a different understanding of and adherence to time. Neither Tiv nor Inuit are overly concerned with chronometric time or rigid structure in the strictest sense. Every day events unfold organically and may be directed somewhat or not. Neither group may be found in any particular hurry about life in general. This meant that I had to slow down and operate at a different pace and slowing down was physical as well as mental. There was to be no strict scheduling or rushing consultants to any scheduling commitments yet once sessions began, the task (interview) was treated with utmost diligence and sense of importance. Discussions could go on for lengthy periods without consultants needing to rush off unless some became physically tired, especially very elderly people.

My second important learning was that although I had set out to find "processes", Inuit and Tiv are way more concerned about principles, norms, and values than about the specific event of sitting down to problem-solve. Indeed, the event (procedural structure) of resolving conflicts is considered bankrupt unless a robust value deposit is available and can be drawn upon to serve the purpose of peacemaking. Therefore, although an elaboration of process does emerge, a bigger focus is devoted to outlining the principles that drive the purpose of conflict resolution and peacemaking.

Finding number 1 – Understanding the conflict resolution process

The process employed by Tiv and Inuit for intervening in conflicts with a goal to help resolve them and possibly re-establish peace is fairly straightforward. It can be summarized in roughly ten steps: any of the steps may branch into other areas of peacemaking work depending on the complexity of the conflict. Or some steps may be skipped if the issue is resolved early in any of the stages. The steps offer a meaningful problem solving framework and the practice may be flexible in a case by case basis.

The process presupposes that most community members sufficiently understand the cultural values, norms, and codes of acceptable behavior. They ought to be versed in the understanding if what constitutes *right* and *wrong* by their cultural standards so much so that when necessary, they can enter into a conflict resolution process and function effectively in that capacity. Knowledge of the culture including the language is important and clarity about the values is critical. If a person's help is solicited who does not feel equipped to enter the problem solving capacity within that cultural context, she may invite the expertise of someone else in the community who is trustworthy and reasonably knowledgeable in that culture. Community members can easily identify such people.

Step one – A complaint is usually initiated by one or more conflict parties; often the more displeased person or group seeks help first and then the other party is drawn into the process. A conflict situation is brought to the attention of a trusted third party (problem solver 1). The problem solver may be a family member, friend or respected community member who listens to both parties and asks questions for clarification. There is great emphasis on *listening* and *understanding* at this stage.

Step two – The first problem solver then builds what might be termed a third (3rd) story, that is, her understanding and interpretation of the problem, of what happened. She confirms with the parties to ensure that they agree with her statement of the problem and her interpretation of the situation. At this point, the problem solver stays close to the middle, but based on the three (or more) stories, the fault may become clear, at which point the problem solver may decide who was wrong or right and tell the parties. She may apportion some blame if necessary, but mostly focuses on clarifying the problem as she has heard and understands it. Parties start to feel heard and understood at this stage and simply hearing the 3rd story may already help them see where they may have been wrong or right without needing to be told. Through the story development process, the problem solver starts to take on a *mediatory* position.

Step three - Determining and apportioning fault is a critical part of the process. Steps toward resolution can only be taken in good faith if the problem as well as the cause is clear in the minds of the parties and they understand and accept responsibility for mistakes and wrongdoings. If conflict parties accept the (guilt/innocent) verdict based on clear communication then the problem solver proceeds to work with the parties to determine the best course of action such as how restitution will be made. Sometimes, it

becomes necessary to involve another problem solver who also listens and corroborates the 3rd story. This removes the feeling of bias especially if the party who did not choose the first problem solver feels that she would like added neutrality by inviting someone that she also can trust to hear her side fairly. Two problem solvers balance the equation. Once fault has been determined, this stage involves some mediation, reparation of any damage done, restitution of any lost property and apology leading to forgiveness and reconciliation (if desirable). Sometimes parties may simply want reparation and restitution and may not be so invested in the relationship as to desire reconciliation.

Step four – The problem solvers may oversee an elaborate process of reparation, restitution (if necessary) apology and forgiveness. Value laden questions are crafted and posed to the parties such as 'do you feel that you have wronged Mrs B by your action? How would you feel if this was done to you? Do you feel sorry about your action or inaction? Would you like to apologize for what you did and for the hurt that you have caused?' These questions are intended to help the wrongdoer understand and acknowledge their wrongdoing. It is intended to help create empathy towards the wronged party so that genuine remorse can be communicated between parties. The problem solvers also inquire to know if the wronged party acknowledges the remorse and apology of the wrongdoer. If the apology is accepted the problem solvers congratulate the parties on their willingness to see the humanity of each other in agreeing to put behind their differences.

It may be the case that a wronged party still feels dissatisfied or vengeful. She may in such a case be entreated by being reminded of times she also wronged someone else and received mercy or forgiveness. Or she may be reminded that she does not stand

blameless before God or ancestors and should consider being graceful if only for that reason. It may also be the case that a wrongdoer has refused to acknowledge guilty or responsibility for a wrongdoing even when it is clear that the wrong was committed. The wronged party is still admonished to extend grace to the wrongdoer on the basis that no one gets away with wrong doing. The wrongdoer will pay for her wrong one way or another.

Step five – A moralising period follows the initial fault finding, blame apportioning and reparation/reconciliation session. Here, the problem solvers shares stories intended to praise good character and behavior or that debase poor character and bad behavior in general. One may think of this as the *sense making* and *normalizing* phase of the conflict resolution process where the fracturing effect of the conflict however painful, is used as a teaching tool. Questions such as why does conflict happen may be addressed and a response often conveys a moral lesson. For example, a problem solver may stress to the parties that conflicts occur so that people can learn to love imperfect brothers and sisters despite their wrongs or so that we can firm up good relationships and turn away from unproductive ones. This normalizing and sense making phase ensures that conflicts are not thought of as out-of-the-ordinary experiences but as a part of life.

Step six - If one or all parties do not accept guilt or do not feel satisfied with the process so far, if they disagree with the problem-solvers positions and decisions then they may seek appeal with other interveners including mainstream law enforcement agencies. If a law enforcement agent becomes involved, the case proceeds through the justice system. Or the appeal may be made to a problem solver with higher authority than the previous problem-solvers, such a well respected elder. This process continues until the matter may

be brought before a wider assembly consisting of the entire community (all interested parties) and overseen by a council of elders. Council courts, community meetings and mediation are used at this stage.

Step seven - If the matter defies settlement at the community level and one or more parties has been found consistently guilty, the council of elders plead with her to accept guilt and do necessary reparation, restitution, apology or other requirement in the face of overwhelming evidence against her. If all parties are found to have been equally wrong, they are helped towards a mutually satisfying resolution. Or it may be the case that no one emerges guilty because the entire situation was a misunderstanding. In any case, if parties are still discontented at this point and refuse any verdicts of the courts, councils or community, they may turn to the justice system for assistance and take a legal pathway.

Step eight – While turning to the justice system is certainly an option, it does not happen frequently because it is an option that tends to leave a bitter taste behind for the conflict parties as well as their families and community at large. The community in such an instance may negatively regard the individual who turned to the justice system as one who is unable to see the familial relationship in his fellow community member and resolve a problem amicably. The action of dragging a community member through what is considered an impersonal judicial process is thought to be merciless and the individual who does this self-ostracises on some level. There is some understanding and expectation that a persistently dissatisfied party will stomach his dissatisfaction in the interest of familial bonds.

Step nine - If the wrongdoing was such that violated collective peace, then the community gets together in "big meetings" to discuss the nature of the offense and the

course of action. A community may decide for example that a thief, who steals from several people in the community, be placed under community surveillance. This collective decision places the thief and his/her family on alert and the accompanying shame may be the chastisement for that action. On the other hand, if the offense is one that threatened or violated the spiritual wellbeing of the community then some ritual may be involved to help the community heal, keep misfortune at bay or facilitate the re-entry of the wrongdoer into the community. Incest lends itself as a good example among Tiv who believe that an offense of this nature calls consequences upon the entire community. When it occurs, the community must be ritually cleansed to protect continued spiritual wellbeing. The wrongdoers are not the only ones at risk of harm in such cases.

Step ten – Parties may resolve to let higher ordinates decide the final verdict as they must do without fail. This decision is made at any stage of the conflict resolution process either early on, or after parties have exhausted all solution seeking avenues. Some swear that the verdict of the supernatural is final, impartial, retributive or vindicating. The intervention of the supernatural brings satisfactory closure to parties. The idea is strong; that no one gets away with any wrongdoing and all debts certainly reconcile themselves. This assurance has been the premise for some people deciding to offer mercy or forgiveness regardless of another person's ownership of a wrongdoing. They hope that the intervention of the supernatural will eventually produce peace. The community bears witness to this resolution.

The conflict resolution process in the first, through the sixth steps, involves problem identification, negotiation, mediation between the parties and conciliation with the entry of the 1st, 2nd 3rd and possibly 4th party problem solvers. Somewhere between

that negotiation and intervention-of-the-supernatural stage, a peacemaking process is initiated. The *peacemaking* process is intended to help the parties deal with the issue and maintain a good relationship despite the problem. The peacemaking process is not usually separate from the conflict resolution process but focuses more on preserving the quality of the relationship between the parties. It includes the effort toward reparation, restitution, acknowledgement, remorse, apology, acceptance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

This seemingly uncomplicated process, used both by Inuit and Tiv, is held together by principles that are understood by the parties within their cultures. Behaviors, decisions and actions are regulated by the values inherent in the principles that (successfully) guided the process of restoring peaceful and functioning relationships in the aftermath of a conflict.

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                    ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────┐
                    │  1st Problem      │   │              │   │              │   │              │
                    │  solver           │   │   Problem    │   │   Party A    │   │   Party B    │
                    │  family           │   │              │   │              │   │              │
                    │  member/friend    │   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────────┘
                    └──────────────────┘
            ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
            │  2nd problem      │  │  3rd problem      │
            │  solver           │  │  solver           │
            │  family head      │  │  Law Enforcement  │
            └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
       ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
       │ 4th Problem   │  │ 5th Problem   │  │ Council of    │
       │ solver        │  │ solver        │  │ Elders        │
       │ Elder         │  │ Council of    │  │               │
       │               │  │ Elders &      │  │               │
       │               │  │ Community     │  │               │
       └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
       ┌──────────────┐                     ┌──────────────┐
       │ 6th Problem   │                     │ Justice       │
       │ solver        │                     │ System        │
       │ left to the   │                     │               │
       │ supernatural  │                     │               │
       │ verdict       │                     │               │
       └──────────────┘                     └──────────────┘
       ┌──────────────┐                     ┌──────────────┐
       │ Offender      │                     │ offender      │
       │ decides to    │                     │ feels         │
       │ comply while  │                     │ justified but │
       │ awaiting      │                     │ self          │
       │ vindictaion   │                     │ ostracized    │
       │ of higher     │                     │               │
       │ ordinates     │                     │               │
       └──────────────┘                     └──────────────┘
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Illustration of a likely conflict resolution process among Tiv and Inuit

Finding number 2 - Conflict resolution is a way of life

Inuit and Tiv do not separate between who a person is and how they live from how they resolve conflicts. It is believed that a person will bring their philosophies and values into how they wage and resolve conflicts. Both groups had similar convictions on effects of personal beliefs on conflicts and their resolution processes. There was the distinctive idea that conflicts, their impacts on relationships and resolution processes could not and should not be separated from the wider culture that forms the ideologies and belief systems that set forth and define those relationships in the first place. That is, factors mediating how people conduct themselves on a day-to-day basis are the same

ones that ought to regulate conflicts emerging from those relationships. For example, if a person believes that parents are an important factor in growing children into responsive and responsible community members, then parents and parenting will be considered a natural tool for conflict resolution.

The principles and values used when raising responsible children and for molding future generations would therefore be ones that can be drawn upon to help in dealing with conflicts. When people have been grown on values, those values can continue to be used as reference material for peacemaking when the people so raised, deviate. A child who has been taught from birth to refrain from physical violence against others can be more easily placated using that value when she finds herself in a fist fight with another as an adult. Inuit and Tiv believe that a deviation from moral values in and of itself causes tension in relationships.

Consultants in both groups found the question "what are the conflict resolution processes of Tiv or the Inuit?" more than a little confusing. Several consultants had to reframe the question before they offered a response. For instance, an Inuit elder asked if he was being requested to comment on a new justice initiative that was being established by the government or if he was to speak to the criminal justice system? The question drew images of processes outside of what he may have thought of as an Inuit indigenous process. Thus this elder said he knew little about the new initiatives and nothing about the criminal justice system. Upon clarification that I was interested in *Inuit original* conflict resolution methods and processes, his face broke into a big smile and he said "well that is a different discussion; it has to do with who you are as a person".

A Tiv elder also reframed my question and said that I was asking to know about, *a eren aa Tiv* or 'Tiv ways of life' as the Tiv do not think of their conflict resolution processes as separate from how they conduct themselves on a day to day basis. Everything is interconnected and operates fluidly. He maintained that the Tiv do not stop and ask themselves what their processes are in a detached way instead they live it out from day to day and it becomes a part of them.

Finding number 3 – Who we are to each other: familial relationships

Inuit and Tiv both emphasize the importance of a shared sense of brother and sisterhood that is essential for strengthening relationships and modifying behavior in community. Day-to-day interactions are conducted with a clear understanding of the paramount role of kinship, connection and cooperation. This sense of familial connection is often invoked for conflict resolution and peacemaking. Community members know that they owe others a certain minimum loyalty and mutuality and so people are willing to cooperate even in the face of differences and wrongdoings. It is common sense that for families to survive and thrive, all hands should be busy working together. In Pangnirtung, people contribute financial resources to pay flight tickets for a sick community member to get to Southern Canada. Families watch the children when the individual has to be away for extended periods and almost the entire community stops in recognition and mourning when a person dies.

Inuit consultants attributed their sense of brotherhood to their smaller numbers (population). One elder thought that pre-settlement communities were safer because (Inuit) knew each other. He said "back then it was smaller and we did not have so much disagreement. Back then we did not have so much distraction." His argument seemed to

be that the smaller communities are, the easier it is to foster a shared sense of brotherhood, connection and cooperation. Another Inuk consultant said,

> Being in small camps, it was rare for people to commit crimes against each other because the camps were small and everyone knew each other. I do not remember anything serious conflicts or crimes occurring. Everyone was related in the small camps. Today, different camps have been brought together into communities and people need to learn how to relate like that. In small camps, we were all related families, we all knew each other.

I suspect that in addition to knowing people in small camps, people were less given to crime because it would mean that they were offending a family member with who they still had to relate.

Although Tiv communities are larger in numbers than Inuit settlements, I was also constantly reminded of how important it is for all Tiv to have a clear understanding of their lineage and history as all Tiv trace lineage to the one ancestor -Tiv. The knowledge that each Tiv person is a part of one extended family is promoted and used as a platform for peacemaking. One Tiv elder explained that things have somewhat changed as Tiv move away from homesteads and lose touch with some aspects of their culture but the fervency of familial connections remains. As they find themselves among different other cultures, they navigate those new complexities while struggling to keep their Tiv identity. Mingling with other cultures has created new dynamics for relationships and therefore for conflict resolution, yet the principle of brotherhood thrives and can still be applied for conflict resolution with reasonable responsiveness amongst Tiv because they are taught not to harm your *angbian* (brother or sister). To illustrate this point, a Tiv elder shared a storied example of how Tiv families and clans resolved conflicts.

He said that in the course of migration, Tiv people separated into clans organized by family settlements. These settlements continuously broke into smaller groups to search

for new farm lands and allow for new family units to flourish in new spaces. When conflicts arose between clan communities, elders on both sides would converge at a *Ilyum* (boundary demarcation) at the invitation of a neutral (not participating in the conflict) clan. Elders from the conflicting clans would then stand or sit on their side of the *Ilyum* with the mediating clan in the middle. The mediating clan spokesperson would begin the intervention by asking either conflicting clan a critical opening question *ayor tutu kivene ka uno*? that is, "whose cooking fires do we see on your side?" (Clan communities lived close enough that they could see the smoke from the cooking fires burning on either side). Each clan spokes person would respond by calling out their clan name *Ayor tutu ka se mba via shin mba via* ("we are the such and such clan"). They were expected to mention whose descendants they were as indicated by their clan names (names trace lineage and connect all Tiv to the common ancestor – Tiv). The goal of having them call out their clan names was to remind both clans of their more enduring sisterly relationship. The mediating clan would ask "why then are you fighting with each other seeing that you are sister clans?" Or why are you relentless in seeking vengeance against your *angbian*?.

The idea of being united in a fundamental and profound way is crucial for problems solving, it becomes easier to think kindly of another person when one feels a connection to that other person. Therefore the principle of brotherhood was a uniting factor and basis for conflict negotiation, mediation and peacemaking among the Tiv. It still is for the most part.

Although Inuit do not trace lineage back to a single ancestor as is with the Tiv, one female consultant said that she could travel all the way through the Arctic in confidence because she knows that if she encountered any Inuk she would be welcomed

and helped on her journey because "all of us *Inuks* are family". Good relationships create a favourable attitude that allows parties in a conflict to accommodate shortcomings in the interests of wider and longer term associations.

Finding number 4 – Elders are way-pointers to peace

A sense of equality amongst all people is maintained in (Inuit and Tiv) community so that everyone feels that they can be part of every social process. This can be attributed to both groups not originally having any kings or paramount rulers. Instead, they welcomed the coordination and way pointing roles of elders in the community. The elder's role was to intervene in matters to ensure that conflicts were resolved in the most productive ways possible and to remind all community members of the primacy of their relationships to each other. In this role, elders were pointing people towards the best paths of life. Yet elders were not necessarily more powerful than any other member of society, they simply were accorded peacemaking tasks based on the vast personal experience they could draw upon as a respectable resource. Elders are seen by Inuit and Tiv as symbols of cultural and moral authority. They were (still are) expected to act as facilitators of moral dialogues and to pour themselves (experience and wisdom) out for their communities. The community on the other hand, was (still is) expected to respect elders almost to a point of reverence.

Unfortunately, British colonial rule imposed a *Tor* on Tiv people in order to facilitate indirect rule and a tax system. Over time, Tiv came to recognize a system of hierarchy with a *Tor* at the apex. [18] As one elder said,

> Tiv elders were the authorities on all matters, usually the eldest man in the clan but this individual did not have any power over any other Tiv, he had moral

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[18] *Ator* is the plural term for *kings*. *Tor* is singular for *king*

authority and commanded respect due to the wisdom that he possessed, usually from lived experience and a product of earned and tested knowledge. He was supported by all the other elders in the clan and other sister clans in thinking through and making decisions for collective interest and well being of the Tiv and for conflict resolution. Everyone knows who the eldest individual in a clan is at any given time and those next to him in succession would be his supporters. He would never be thought to be a king or having power over anyone necessarily; he simply had knowledge and responsibilities towards his brothers and sisters and understood his stewardship role to ensure order and smoother running relationships for community benefit.

The ideal of elders not having distributive powers to control people in the community was repeated by several people in conversations around this topic. One Tiv youngster said that if a community became burdened by a divisive and fraudulent elder, the community would make moves to ostracise or sideline such an elder because the relationships had to be founded on moral authority and not on communities being fearful of elders. The community gauged elders' moral standing and worth.

An Inuk consultant with previous experience as a probation officer, compared her knowledge as an Inuk to her role within the criminal justice system. Her frustration was evident when she argued that foreign processes were difficult to implement in Northern communities because they do not appeal to Inuit on a deep heart level as would the intervention of an elder. The community knows that elders have protective roles. She advises that the socio-cultural organization of such communities be considered before making laws to be applied up North. Otherwise the laws do not accomplish more than keeping people apart as a solution to a problem. Another elder said

> Inuit are so peaceful people that they did not have to deal with major conflicts but maybe sometimes one-on-one conflicts within the people. But usually the grandmothers, the elders are very important to help resolve the conflict they always taught us to be peaceful and not to engage ourselves in conflict with others. To be respectful and in turn we will be respected back. I have learned a lot of things …and having to work as a probation officer for four and a half years, there was a lot of difference between traditional justice (although I don't like to

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say "justice" because there is no Inuktitut term for justice) and southern justice systems.

I asked my father one day how they used to deal with troubled kids and one of the elders in the community replied and said there were a lot of ways. If the child or teenager or an adult did something wrong against a person, they would have an elder sit and help them deal with the problems and the issues, and they would take disciplinary actions against the person who did wrong and if someone did steal something from your tent, they may send them on an island with absolutely nothing over night. Although that may sound harsh, they got that person to really think. People were left in a "*hamma*" (shack or shed) by themselves.

But today they (Federal Corrections) have to come to understand that part of the southern legal system doesn't fit into the northern rural communities because their cities are way bigger than our communities. I told them and used an example of when an offender is put on probation for assault and not to have contact with the spouse, as soon as the court is over, they are back together again and we (as probation officers) have no power over them because they are not used to having conditions put over them or them being apart. I honestly told them (FC) that is why I don't reach them because "no contact" does not work in small communities people are bound to meet each other somewhere on the road, in the stores or somewhere else. That is all I had to say to them, some of their conditions that are mandated do not fit into northern communities.

The orientation of the law in this case is confusing to the community which seems to expect the law to fill in a similar role as would an elder. But the law falls short. This consultant eventually resigned from her job as probation officer as it presented too much personal conflict for her in her struggle to choose how to operate based on her job training or her indigenous ways. Her culture supported the role of elders and dialogue to encourage the building of broken relationships while her job suggested separating conflict parties by orders and perhaps a less conciliatory approach.

Finding number 5 – Talking outwards: community support for peace

Inuit and Tiv believe in dialogue because it clarifies goals and expectations in conflict situations. Talking takes place in the most relaxed environment (under trees for the Tiv and on rocks for the Inuit). Everyone is welcome to listen or to contribute in the sessions. This promotes a spirit of transparency and social participation. An outwards

flowing pattern of talking is also adopted to resolve conflicts. This means that conversations should begin at the smallest unit of interaction before it is brought to the open talking assemblies if necessary. For example, if two or more people are in conflict, they first attempt to resolve the situation among themselves, then they involve their families or friends. If the families are unable to come to a satisfactory solution, then they bring it to the clan heads who will in turn bring it to the attention of the assembly of elders and community. By the final stage, the matter becomes a public case and is decided out in the open with every interested member of the community in attendance and participation. One Inuk consultant said,

> There were not very many people in settlements so as a family we talked together to resolve conflicts. This was our tradition. There were no courts sessions if there was wrong doing in the community the relatives discussed what ought to happen and find a solution or punish the offending person.

Similarly, the Tiv congregated in open "courts" to discuss matters where all community members could observe proceedings. Community members would be welcome to contribute to resolve the matter if they knew anything about the conflict. However there was recognition that some conflicts were better off discussed in private such as problems between married couples having to do with intimacy.

Conflictants' voice was important whether matters were resolved out in the open or within the family. Parties had voice and could speak for themselves with others supporting them. Another (Inuk) former corrections officer spoke to the justice systems seeming disregard for family privacy when all matters must be brought to public for hearing. An Inuit elder whose children have been involved with the criminal justice system expressed distress at the shame and confusion she suffered when conflicts

involving her children were aired in public first. The ex-probation officer stated her preference for the Inuit way of discussing problems within family enclaves;

> Back then, whenever there was harm done to another person, it was dealt with in the family. Even if they lived in the same camp, people would mind their own business and conflicts were resolved within the family. During a hearing, parties to a conflict have lawyers to speak for them and they are based in Iqualuit, when we have a court hearing here, he (lawyer) is back to the position after he has been gone for a while (implying the disconnect between lawyers and their clients). A lot of times, I have been told by offenders that they were upset because they did not really have a lot of time to speak, but I wish that elders can start leading the younger generations again, I think that if they start doing that, it would reduce the crime in the community, as they (young people) would listen.

She also expressed distress at how even small problems that can be resolved within the community by the people concerned, are being taken to the RCMP and to the judges that come in from time to time. She admonished that it is better if people talk amongst themselves rather than take it out to the RCMP. "People take small problems to the RCMP. I hear when things occur but I do not say anything because it is not my business, the people in the conflict have to talk together to solve the problems."

One Tiv elder supports the centrality of dialogue to conflict resolution process as well as the need to convene dialogue in convenient places. He says,

> In every given society, conflict resolution involves dialogue and dialogue itself involves complaint, by one of the parties and then response by the other. When this is done, the issues in dispute become clear. ...this way of resolving conflicts can start within the smallest unit of the family; it may be between the husband and wife, or it may be between one man and another of his relations or between one group and another but the pattern of resolving conflicts would be the same except that where the magnitude of the problem is identified to be bigger and they require more heads to sit together and discuss. Usually discussions are never written, they are oral discussions. It is only in this modern time that sometimes, some records are kept because of courts that sometimes attend these resolutions too.

This response stresses not only the importance of dialogue and mediation but also the place of orality. "Court[19]" sessions were conducted orally even if they had to be repeated several times with the parties telling their stories several times over. There was expectation that people would remember what had been said previously and trust that even though decisions were not written down, they were binding nonetheless and would be adhered to by the parties. People remember and honour unwritten decisions made by elders or agreed upon in public meetings because in the presence of community witnesses, they have moral obligations to honour final decisions made. So the onus falls on them to listen actively and to register what is being said in responsible ways. Another Tiv elder who is a retired judge put it this way;

> ...our own system of adjudication differs from that of the English or European conflict resolution. You have a moral obligation to obey the elders and bow to the opinion of the community. If they resolve *"de"* (that means stop, drop the matter) then you have got the obligation to obey and in most cases, the people obey and abide by the decisions.

He recounts many instances of helping to resolve conflicts this way and added that government courts often defer to, recognize and uphold decisions of the traditional courts. He thought that also confirms that decisions made by elders are well thought out and based upon principles of fairness that could not be muted at any other appellate courts be it of elders or of the government courts. Where a decision may perhaps not be pleasing to one or more conflict parties, the dissatisfied party is still free to seek redress to other clans and then move all the way to government courts.

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[19] Referring to informal meetings to discuss conflicts between individuals, groups or families; such meetings included all relevant people and sometimes other interested community members volunteering to help would be involved too.

Consultants and other collaborators maintained that Tiv and Inuit process of adjudication is founded on trust for elders. Agreement is echoed by an elder who stated that "... we defer to our elders, we honour them by age, every tribe honours age and they believe that with age there is also wisdom. So we defer to them and when we go to them, we believe that they will adjudicate properly". Therefore, most conflict parties voluntarily submit to decisions made by elders. It also emerged from conversations with some Tiv that there is still wide preference for consultations with elders first before seeking any other redress for matters through the courts. Most of these people also reported that they would go with the elder's decision rather than the courts. They sometimes viewed government courts as places and processes that cost money and can be manipulated by richer parties.

Finding number 6 – Parenting is peacemaking

Another significant aspect of Inuit and Tiv conflict resolution is effective parenting. Teaching children from a young age how to be peaceful was mentioned several times by people from the community. People in both groups believe that conflict or peace behavior is learned behavior. Therefore if a community wants peace, they must begin by raising peaceful people. One elder illustrated this with a Tiv proverb *Taver u koom kon ken ganden* (mature trees are not easily pliable). It is easier to bend young trees at the stem but less so with mature trees. People must be "bent" towards peaceful ways and behaviors from a young age before they attain an age where these teachings become harder to inculcate.

Similarly, Inuit cultural decorum was taught and inculcated in children from birth, everyday behaviors were intentionally made to model what the community wanted to

maintain. Parents promoted relationships that actively avoided conflict but responded in culturally accepted ways when conflict became unavoidable. To highlight the importance of relationships and cultural standards of good behavior, children were named after individuals who were known within the community to be of good repute. It was hoped that the child named after that individual would grow up with the pride of being associated by name, with someone with a good reputation. One female Inuit elder commented thus;

> Inuit culture is so unique, it is in every culture and nationality this uniqueness but in our culture, I was taught the culture right from birth... the naming is very important. That child who is named after another becomes that person even just in a name. They respect the naming so much that usually they name after a respectful person even if that person becomes bad down the line. I was also taught that survival has been very important for the Inuit people, you know it from the start and the teaching starts from the grandmother to the mother to the daughter and then to the unborn.

Thus parents are indispensible in any peacemaking process. Government intervention in Inuit parenting philosophies has been identified as one of the major problems in Inuit communities. One Inuk elder had this to say,

> The parents had to teach the children how to grow into good people. That was their work and they spent all of their time doing that. Parents could discipline their children to teach. It is not like today because the kids are not listening to their parents, the government tells them they do not have to listen. And if the parent slaps the child, then social services take the children and teach them that their parents are bad. Our lifestyle was really different, really different.

Parenting is so critical to peacemaking that both the Tiv and the Inuit believe that once the liberty to parent according to cultural values is diminished, the family units start to fall apart and with that, the vital core that is intended to ground future generations in principles and behaviors that are essential for interpersonal communication and peaceful relations over the long haul.

Finding number 7 – Interventions of the supernatural: no one gets away

Tiv and Inuit believe that no one gets away with wrongdoing even if they are not immediately caught. This is because of an important conviction that human beings are connected to higher ordinates that ultimately oversee human interactions and conflicts. They eventually met out consequences to each person. These ordinates may also be consulted or invoked to help determine matters when that becomes necessary or when people do not want to wait for the verdict for prolonged periods. These ordinates are thought to be supernatural.

Sometimes they are contacted through rituals and abstinences or other practices and their mediums are shamans and medicine people. Thomas Stone (2010) erroneously suggests in his article *Making Law for the Spirits* that Inuit belief in the intervention of the supernatural occurred due to illiteracy and a lack of questioning of ancient traditions passed down through generations. He concludes that belief in the efficacy of the supernatural perhaps lost its function when Christianity arrived among the Inuit. He argues that rules translating into law are better predicated on some text rather than ascriptions to the world of spiritual beings. He nonetheless acknowledges the difficulty of attempting to exclude or dismiss the revelatory and rulemaking role of the supernatural in Inuit socio-legal culture. The mere fact that modern Inuit (and literate Tiv for that matter) continue to welcome ideas about the intervention of supernatural powers in human (conflict) affairs is at least worth some attention. The problem seems to be that the conventional legal system does not yet know how to incorporate such dispositions into the adversarial legal system. Thus Stone is right when he recommends that attention be paid to the role of the "spirit world" in socio-legal research.

Both groups continue to believe in the role and intervention of supernatural forces. The deterrence factor was sometimes achieved by operating rituals out in the open where every community member was welcome to observe. This open system makes it hard for parties to lie blatantly or to implicate others wrongfully. When it became difficult to determine the truth of a matter among the Tiv, problem solvers would require parties to take oaths in hopes that the guilty person would be exposed. A Tiv elder described the *Igbe* oath that threatens to kill a guilty oath taker by swollen stomach if taken dishonorably. This means that people who were guilty of an offense but still insisted that they were right, would die if they took an oath while still insisting on a telling lies.

Two examples of guilt oaths taken amongst the Tiv are the *Igbe* and *Ikyioor*. According to this consultant, the *Igbe* is a process where parties swear to *the broken pot* to indicate that they are innocent. Any piece of broken pot can be brought for use in this ritual but people initiated into a certain "cult" are responsible for choosing the pieces of broken clay pots and overseeing the oath taking process. If a lie is involved, it is believed that the liar will begin to purge endlessly until the innocent party saves them by a release ritual. The (release ritual) involves washing special clay for the sick individual to drink before they can get better. These rituals made most people reveal the truth of what was happening, otherwise the consequences for lies and deceit would be very severe.

Females swear to the snail *Ikyioor* (snail). The oath associated with the snail draws its potency from the sacred nature of the virginity of the woman which is highly respected amongst the Tiv. If a woman taking the oath was lying and swore on the snails everyone in the community would have ill luck. In general, the importance of these

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rituals was to keep truth paramount in any process. Community members knew of cases of people suffering after untruthfully swearing to the *igbe* or the *Ikyioor*. This consultant also mentioned that the physical symbols- of snails and broken pots –could be used to protect gardens too "because if you do not protect your garden by putting in something to indicate that you do not want your crops harvested then passersby that are hungry can harvest and eat and it is not considered as theft according to Tiv culture. If you want to protect a garden from passersby you can put that symbol and people will be scared away". The use of the *igbe* was mostly in severe matters, simple matters needed not be referred to it.

Inuit consultants also shared about the role of *Angakkuit* (shamans) in the community. It is claimed that their presence and supernatural powers provided a healthy sort of fear to deter wrongdoers in the community. Shamans were thought to have connections with the supernatural worlds and could conduct séances and other rituals to either help or harm communities (Stone 2010). Shamanism served to keep community members from devious ambitions and behaviors. Shamans' roles can be likened to the police or the law in mainstream society which commands similar kinds of reverence to keeps people from wilful wrongdoing. The *modus operandi* of the shamans also suggests that they were the connection to the eternal and supernatural world. Unlike the elders, their mediation extended between the real and unseen worlds. There was the sense that shamans had the extra eye and could supernaturally decipher a wrongdoing or identify a wrongdoer as well as met out punishment in supernatural ways. Elders suggested that the presence of shamans in community made it needless to have jails as people did what they were required to do.

When the shamans still existed there were no real jails. If there as wrong doing, they would conduct a séance to see who did the wrong and then would plan revenge. And if another shaman had greater power than he had, then he would go over to negotiate with that other shaman or community. We did not have jails. The shamans could fly into people's lives and homes, and knew a lot.

Taboos were also used to encourage or control social behavior. Among Inuit, some taboos were employed through shamanic institutions. An elder explained that if taboos got broken the survival of the group was at stake. He provided an example of taboos that were put in place to ensure that the Inuit would always have food to eat such as not fishing or hunting in certain parts of the wild at certain times of year. It was the task of shamans to protect the taboos in place. "Now it's up to the shaman's job because if a person breaks a taboo, it brings bad luck and we can't catch animals or can't kill the animals. A shaman can be anybody, they do have to be old people but they would have to have real powers. The shamans go to every house not in person but by spirit to find out who broke it".

Finally, the supernatural not only intervenes to regulate human conflicts but also to facilitate healing. There is considerable belief that supernatural forces can be invoked for healing especially when people are at peace with all natural forces of life. Elders on both sides talked about promoting healthy living through the use of indigenous medicines and healing rituals. They maintain that their processes are better for their health and cite the example of women who birth healthy children at home only with the help of older experienced women and the use of traditional herbs. They argue that women who use traditional herbs are physically healthier through pregnancy and may be able to manage the birthing process on their own. I witnessed this in one village among the Tiv where a woman gave birth at home took a bath and then went over to inform the neighbour that

she had just had the baby. We went over to see a healthy baby all washed and wrapped up by a smiling young mother. I also noted that the baby had been washed in water mixed with herbs and the mother who said she had not been to a hospital during the entire pregnancy, was already looking for a certain kernel to make a special oil for the baby's needs.

Finding number 8 – Learning from everyone including children

Since indigenous courts are open events, everyone present at a session is welcome to speak including children who can express themselves properly. Children are drawn in by adults who would ask them what they think about what is being said and they can say whatever they think reasonable. A Tiv proverb goes *"wan ye yange ka er I bugh ya Ityool"*. The proverbs reminds all Tiv that their game carving skills were the idea of a child in their midst who thought up the solution. The story goes that elders once killed a buffalo and were at loss as to how best to skin the animal without having to cut it into pieces. But children offered an ingenious way to skin and carve the kill. This saying is often repeated to remind Tiv people that children bring an important voice to all matters in life including conflict resolution. Their innocent perspectives on events can generate brilliant solutions to problems affecting a community.

Finding number 9 – Our judges have our best interest at heart

A wrongdoer can be assured that his or her family members who are normally in support of him or her are the ones meeting together to decide on the best solution to a problem concerning them but the family members cannot be biased under community observation. This offers wrongdoers and other conflict parties the comfort of knowing that the people deciding the matter have his or her best interest at heart. However, if such

an individual rejects this family council's decision, then s/he was encouraged to seek second opinions elsewhere including to "government" courts. A Tiv elder described the process of a regular court session thus;

> When people had conflicts (*Iyongo*) and even today, clan members, (*ityo* this word also includes extended family members) will be called together to sit, listen and deliberate (*tov*). The wrongdoer will be cautioned not to continue in his wrongdoing and then the conflict would be resolved. Each family and clan has insiders who usually collect together to share resources and to support each other. They must be people who were present at each other's children's marriage ceremonies and who generally band together when matters involve any member of that clan. They consult with each other and make decisions together. Well, these are the people who would be present at conflict resolution gatherings.

The idea of assembling close family members to deliberate issues with other clan members was to communicate a willingness to help people in conflict rather than make it a cold process of fault finding and blame apportioning. This elder explained that by "share resources" it meant that if an accused is found guilty of say stealing something that he had used up and could not repay in restitution, his family members would be willing to contribute to help such an individual. This is so that their family name does not come to shame and the individual can also feel that he has some support. It was also important that the people present were those who shared such strong bonds with the conflict parties, that they would not be likely to ridicule them, remembering that they had deeper affiliations. This elder went further to say that,

> if the wrongdoer refuses to listen and continues in his way, the clan will conclude that they have decided on the matter. If the wrongdoer still refuses to listen and remains adamant, he is challenged to take the matter elsewhere for a second opinion and he can move to all the other clans seeking opinions including the English court but most times, the English court will also request to know what our meetings have agreed and uphold that decision. This is happening more and more now.

Conflicts were often resolved because wrongdoers knew that moving the matter beyond the immediate clan members was risking shame and ridicule if it came to that and perhaps judgements that may not entirely be in their interest long term. Such an individual in some sense, was also throwing trust back in the faces of his/her family and it felt uncomfortable. When conflicts involved outside communities or other ethnic groups, Tiv took a slightly different approach, to include neutral mediators. The same elder commented that;

> Conflicts between Tiv and non-Tiv people is usually over land and these lands are usually our lands but they want the lands so they start trouble (*Ayorsu*) breeding fighting (*num*) with each side refusing to back down. But in this case, outsiders will have to intervene or the conflict continues. Resolution is initiated by selected members of the community known as "repairers of the world" (*Mba soron Tar*). These are foreigners living amongst us who have been selected to go and be neutral voices. Where they did not exist, the fighting continued until people became tired and mutually initiated peace and resolution.

It would seem that Tiv people are at a place where they are in dire need of *mba soron tar* since they are experiencing multiple intra-clan and interethnic conflicts. The Tiv recognise quite sadly, that some of these processes are being eroded by dangerously vile forms being adopted by some Tiv, including the forgetting of the principles of brotherhood. This elder's comment speaks aptly to the situation.

> This is harder now. In those days, people understood the meaning of brotherhood and even if someone was not Tiv, you understood that by virtue of their humanity, they are your brother, you were taught this at home. So you fought over things such as land or to protect our women, but then you stopped to think and resolve.
> But today that idea of brotherhood has reduced and once there is a problem between people, they want to fight to the finish not caring about the other person's humanity. There are still people whose task is to ensure conflict resolution and peace (*Ator*) but sometimes, their work is not successful because there is no basis for their interventions. They need something that both parties can consider as their stopping points in order to start moving towards peace. And that

is a sense of brotherhood. Brotherhood stopped people in conflict and forced them to change their thinking about the other and the situation.

So if that teaching and understanding is missing, nobody wants to back down and if you do not see yourself as connected to the other person in the conflict, then you can destroy them and it is fine by you. I think that these *Ator* are tired too so they hand things to the *Uke* (foreigners referring to English/government courts) who don't know what to do either so they take money from the people to stop them from fighting. But then the courts blame the *Ator* for their own (government court's) inability to resolve problems and sometimes remove them (*Ator*) from their positions.

The Inuit and Tiv should re-examine the changes that they have embraced and decide on a renewed path to peace for change does not always imply progress.

Finding number 10 – Power confers responsibility on elders and leaders

A very significant change that has occurred both among the Tiv and Inuit is a misplacement of power brought about by the politicization of traditional institutions. This is a situation that has now seen elders and local chiefs become employees within government tiers. Traditional elders and chiefs can now be hired and fired by government representatives, mostly politicians who may not prioritize the protection of indigenous values and processes. Elders on the other hand, experience this change in their roles and power as a violation at least and as sacrilege at worst. Many reported this misplacement of power to be the principal reason for the myriad of social problems facing their communities today. While Tiv and Inuit readily identified this problem, many were not very optimistic that the situation could be remedied. One Tiv elder's response is very telling;

That is also a big problem. Our *Ator* (kings) and elders in those days were not government employees, they were not paid, they did their work as a God given mandate for their people and whenever they went to deliberate a matter, it certainly was resolved, no matters went unresolved at anytime. But these people

(elders and chiefs) these days are selected by politicians and paid by them to do their bidding and when they fail, they are removed. Nobody removed our elders before. That is a problem. I think that it is very problematic to restore our processes today because these situations that have come up these days are different. Now children have taken over discussions and major decisions because they have money and it is hard for the elders to become involved in the same way as they did before. Children cancel out what elders are saying and do not listen or respect the teaching any longer. Our young people need to be instructed again on listening and respect for our ways and processes. Many of them no longer understand anything. They cling to money but it does not take them very far in life issues.

Trust previously vested in elders has been seriously challenged. Communities scarcely know how to relate to elders who are being selected and paid by the government. There was widespread suspicion of such elders. Many community members in Pangnirtung for example, shared that it is difficult for them to approach elders if they were a part of the government. There was some sense that an elder who now gets a salary will defend the government rather than his/her community when necessary. On another level, there was also the widespread feeling that such employees of the government had lost moral credibility to adequately address issues of culture on a profound level. While this may not necessarily be the case that elders become "sell-outs" once they become government employees, there needs to be a mechanism for minimizing the cooptation of elders into unfamiliar systems and vice versa. It is however necessary to find ways to remunerate elders for the work that they do without requiring compromise of cultural values or ideals.

Finding number11 – Resolving conflicts quickly

Timing (not in a mathematical sense) is of the essence in Inuit and Tiv indigenous conflict resolution. Issues are best dealt with quickly as they surface so that they have no

time to fester and grow bigger. In all communities visited, it was common that people would suddenly stop whatever they were doing and cluster around a situation occurring in a community members' house to help resolve the problem. On one occasion, we were sitting under a tree during an interview session (in Tivland) when suddenly there was loud crying in one of the houses nearby. Everyone stopped whatever they had been doing right away and headed in that direction. Questions were asked in quick succession in attempt to find out what was happening. The woman who had been crying sobered somewhat and managed to explain the distress of a situation she had been undergoing for a while. It was not immediately clear to me what the problem was but most people around me were nodding as she spoke. I understood then that the reaction we were witnessing had a history that the community knew about. I withdrew to allow the conversations continue. My interview was quickly rescheduled as the consultant explained that this problem had to be attended to right away so that this woman would have some peace. Chairs were quickly brought out, children were sent on errands to fetch other family members, a mini court was about to be convened "so that this woman would have peace" That was remarkable!

Further probes in the community revealed that if matters were not resolved quickly, then sometimes people forgot the lessons that they needed to learn from the problem. But also the problem may get bigger as people had time to wallow deeper in their hurt and anger. The elder I had been interviewing later commented on why he sent me away in order to attend to a situation speedily.

> I just remember that we never took so long to resolve matters; If something happened at night word would be sent out and those responsible will get involved immediately. They might recommend after a hearing that everybody be calm and wait for the morning to talk some more or if it became necessary to take some

kind of action that night it would be done. That is how making peace is important. You do not let problems continue to sleep in your house or in your heart. But the government takes so long. you go to court they will say go and come back next month, in three months, next year, and then people have the time to start planning how to attack the person that wronged them because they live here together, they see each other, and the problem is not resolved. If something happens, resolve it quickly.

Admittedly, not all conflicts can always be resolved speedily but still the idea is

important that conflict resolution requires urgent attention so that peace can be restored.

It is good that the focus is on the peace and not on the conflicts.

Finding number 12 – Conflict as a break in relational progress

Tiv view conflicts as a breakage or fracture in need of repair or as a disturbance to

be removed. The repair of broken relationships can also be done preventively so as to

avoid dealing with bigger damage at a later date. When conflict is considered to be a

normal part of community life, it frees people to approach it as simply a break in the

natural flow of human relationships. Solutions can then crafted to deal with the problem

but also promote personal and collective growth in the process. The latter part is

peacemaking. A Tiv elder's discussion of the role of conflict merits a long quote.

> We Tiv people believe in repairing things. We have a saying that goes "*Kwagh ka a vihi man isor ye*" (loose translation things go wrong or get broken before they need repair, with reference to human relationships) but that does not mean that we sit around waiting for things to go wrong, sometimes you start to repair things even before they break down so that you can save time. The time that you would have used up in repairing the damage can be invested in building the relationship. Wherever there are people, there are bound to be disturbances (uses this word for conflict) *dzaiyol ka vilu*. These occur because there are different types of people living together, *mbawanbo* (selfish people) *mbanyion a sima* (people given to anger) *mbawanhuev* (lazy people) *mbalun a mimi iyol ga* (lying or deceitful people) *ver mba jighjigh kpa* ka ve lu ye (but also upright people). So there are different types of people who lived together in the same place and when it is like this, there is bound to be disturbances.

So when those disturbances happen, people could either fight (*vi ta adzu* which translates throw blows) until others would come and ask them what was happening and then try to help them repair the problem or people would just get them to stop and then arrange for the matter to be heard by the elders. But not all matters went to the elders if people could talk by themselves and resolve the problem.

The important thing was to talk because if you do not talk, then the blows replaced the talk. That is why if you have seen stamerers, they are given to much anger because they struggle to get the words out and when the anger overtakes them and they cannot get the words out quickly enough then they throw the blows instead. It is a difficult thing not to be able to talk. People must talk, speak to one another to explain what they are thinking in their hearts, what disturbs them and say why the feel disturbed by what is happening.

If they could not make this talk happen without the blows, then they needed the elders to sit between them, they needed others that they could respect, who would watch over their talking and make sure that they were talking to respectfully to each other and to everybody else. This is a good thing. This is how we try to work with disturbances here. Everyone needs to have someone in their lives that they can call upon when words become difficult, somebody to help them see the sides of the problem that they are having and elders have the time and insight to do this so people went to them.

One can conclude from the forgoing that if talking together is removed from relationships, then it will be directly replaced by blows. The tendency towards revenge may occur when parties in a conflict do not feel that they have the liberty to explain how they feel about a situation or towards an opponent. Talking however helps conflict parties diagnose and repair the break in their relational progress.

Finding number 13 – Making space for contemplation and change

Inuit and Tiv deal with miscreants by admonishing them to shape up or deal with consequences. An Inuk consultant said that offenders could be reminded that they must pay attention and act on community recommendation or face the impact of the (punitive) law. In his words to an offender, "You have been given the opportunity to change and if

you do not then we hand them over to this other (Canadian) law." The Tiv also thought of government courts as a serious type of punishment where deviants and persistent offenders should be sent as a last resort.

Both groups recognize the importance of disciplinary actions but use discipline as a way to teach and correct rather than merely punish. They may sometimes deliberately recommend seemingly harsh repercussions as a way to teach the necessary lessons. For instance the Inuit abandoned persistent offenders on an island as a form of discipline. They explain that this is done to get such people to reflect about their wrong doing but, much more than that, it reminds that individual of the importance of the relationships s/he has in the community. It reminds them of the centrality of community, and of cooperation Banishment only became permanent when people became worse and did nothing to show their willingness to change for the better. A female Inuk elder explained Inuit ideology and use of discipline when she said;

> We have stories that were told that if people did not observe community rules, they were taken out on an island to try and manage by themselves, to teach them a lesson that community is important it and survives when people band together. They were told to come back when they were ready (that is when they had learned). The banishment was not permanent, people just had to learn. But there are cases when people became a burden and that time when there was so much fear and shamanism, if people became links to evil, they were banished permanently. The fear kept people in check.

Re-entry into the community was possible but only after the individual had acknowledged the mistake they made and could indicate that convincingly. But there was also a process for accepting such people back into the community. Often re-entry involved the individual sitting with elders and sometimes the entire community to explain

what they had learned or they underwent some rituals. The community knows that this person has learned from his mistake.

Finding number 14 – Naming, blaming and shaming as deterrence

Inuit and Tiv communicate that if a person is made to see his/her wrongdoing and that awareness results in her feeling ashamed of her action then she will be less likely to repeat that wrongdoing in future. In fact it is sometimes necessary they argue, that others around a wrongdoer see the consequences of wrong action and refrain from doing it as well. This view was shared by an Inuk woman who explained that growing up as a child, she got confused messages when she got reactions to her poor behavior, that were different at home with Inuit parents versus when she was in school with teachers that were not Inuit. In school, she would be asked to sit in a corner of the classroom and take a time-out when she behaved badly. For her, sitting in the corner was a waiting game, soon time would be up and she would be back doing whatever she had been doing. At home, her poor behavior would immediately be pointed out; she would be called in public[20] and she may even get some lashing. The other people around could chip in to enforce the views of her disciplinarian (mother or grandmother) or speak in her defense. Whichever the case, the result is that she took the open reprimand to heart because she did not want a repeat episode of her being cautioned again. The drama of the event also stayed in her mind much longer and was very effective in helping her to learn that her actions were wrong and likely offensive to others too. Even more effective, was that she had been called up in a clear manner; her wrongdoing was clearly communicated in such a way as to make her think about how her behaviors would be interpreted by others. She

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[20] The "public" was really her family, usually of an extended nature. Several families in Pangnirtung still live together in small homes and matters tend to be discussed in full view of everyone present.

was not allowed to carry on as though her actions only affected her and no one else. The shame she felt about her actions and the realization of how it affected others was an effective reminder not to repeat the action in future.

Within a community context, it is important that people feel the shame of their wrong doing and are made aware of how it affects others so that they do not repeat the same behavior many times over. A Tiv woman told of an event that had happened in her community to illustrate the role of shaming in conflict resolution.

> A man was caught here (Gboko) a few years ago, who went to sleep with his friends wife, (adultery). He had been doing this for several months and the neighbours knew about it but did not know how to tell the husband. But they told him after a while. Well one day, he told his wife that he was traveling and would be gone for a few days but he did not really go away. He just wanted to find out if what he had been told was true. The man who used to sleep with his wife, frequented his home during the afternoons, when everyone else would be at work. That husband came back to his house the following afternoon and sure enough, a man was with his wife in the room. So he just got in and told the man to leave his house immediately, the man reached for his clothes to put them on but the husband said "no! you cannot put on any clothes. Since it was not important to you to cover your own shame by keeping yours and my wife's clothes on, why are you worried about being naked now? Just leave my house and go back to wherever you came from naked. After all, you think that when you sneak into my house at this time of day, no one will see you so when you leave now too, no one will see you". The problem was however that outside, a crowd had gathered because some people saw the husband return unexpectedly and knowing that the other man was with his wife, got excited and waited to see what would happen.
> So the man had no choice but to step outside without clothes and as he ran to his house, the huge crowd that had gathered, chased after him throwing things at him and chanted insults. He ran all the way to his home.
> In this case, even the children who were witnesses to this, have learned a lesson and such a matter does not go to the elders any longer because the problem has repaired itself. If the husband no longer wants to live with his wife, no one will think bad about him or if the wife chooses to leave the community and return to her parents community because she is ashamed, she is free to do so but if she stays and the marriage continues, then the elders must ensure that that family is not tormented beyond what happened, they will call a meeting and discuss the

importance of letting this people live in peace, because mistakes can happen. But then everybody learns from this openly shameful event.

This consultant gave this example in a discussion where she was highlighting the importance of shaming but also of truth telling for conflict resolution. She insisted that to tell the truth is more important than avoiding the shame that may result from telling the truth. Some people have to be shamed, some things need to be said out in the open so that others learn from that and understand that their actions have negatively affected others. Adultery is an open matter, it will bring shame on those who do it, but the shame of being exposed will also teach others that this act is wrong.

Finding number 15 – Humour eases tensions and heals relationships

Teasing and laughing at each other is obviously a socially accepted method of helping to ease the tensions of conflicts among Inuit and Tiv. Women and children frequently teased and made some of the most hideous faces at each other. Men also tease and laugh at each other. In one instance in Pangnirtung, we had been on boats headed for campsites and the boat that I was on lagged behind because it had mechanical problems. The rest of the party in better boats went ahead and then realizing we were still far behind, docked and waited for us to catch up. The slow progress on the boat was unnerving for everyone on our boat but perhaps even more so for the boat owner who was frantically working the engine to get us going faster. When we got closer to the party that had been waiting, I expected some sympathy (especially too that someone had also forgotten to put food on our boat so we were hungry). But the men made faces at our captain and teased him for having such a slow boat. He took it in good faith and shrugged it off laughing as well. Yet it was not that those men were not sympathetic to what had

happened to us, their teasing had a kind ring to it and served a different purpose of softening what may have resulted in bitter reactions. The man's wife had sometimes chided him too on the journey but rather than invite angry retorts, the gentlemen smiled and responded with jokes of his own. That kept the slow journey on the terrifying Arctic Ocean light and even jolly sometimes.

A Tiv elder had also made the point that sometimes it is better not to take things too seriously and to laugh at life instead. That comment stayed with me not only because it made so much sense, but because I also witnessed this behavior when Tiv people interact together; they are persistent teasers, they taunt, joke and laugh hysterically at tense situations. A story was shared in which someone had been laughed at almost to scorn but that individual joined in the laughter and a delicate situation was transformed. It was of a man who claimed that wanted a divorce because he had become tired of endless quarrels with his wife and wanted to return her back to her father (The *return* is a divorce rite in Tiv culture). He sent his wife back to her parents saying that he would visit in a few weeks to explain (to her parents) why he no longer wanted the marriage. The wife moved back to her parents and waited for the day when her husband and his parents would show up for the discussions leading to divorce[21]. While she waited, she planned out the events of the upcoming (divorce) occasion. She decided that she wanted that day to be grand (consistent with Tiv cultural arrangements for events of social significance) because her in-laws were coming too and she wanted them to feel welcomed, properly

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[21] A common way to end a marriage among the Tiv is by agreement. The parents and extended family of the couple discuss the problems of the marriage. If that assembly and the couple decide that for good reasons understood and accepted by all present, the marriage has irretrievably broken down, they proceed to dissolve it. Usually the wife will stay back home with her parents for a healing period and then go wherever next she chooses. There is some expectation and hope however, that the period of separation will help clarify the couples thoughts and emotions and they may rethink their decision to end the marriage. Some couples may find in that period, that they miss each other and want to return to the marriage relationship.

cared for. As the day approached, she busied herself making preparations to ensure that everyone would be fed and happy.

Meanwhile, her husband had also done some preparing and bought presents for her parents (this is also customary) and then figured he would buy his wife some as well in order to impress her parents. The day the visiting party arrived, the meeting was so happy and jovial that by the time they had exchanged presents, eaten some food and sat down to begin the (all men) talks, the officiating elder simply instructed the husband to take his wife and go home in peace. He was obviously a husband who still loved his wife as evidenced by his show of love and respect to the family and particularly to his wife on this visit. Then turning to the husband, this elder asked *"or is this not so?"* The man looked so embarrassed that everyone present broke into much laughter and he joined in. The man confessed that we wanted his wife back upon which the meeting focused instead on helping the couple sort out some of the stressors in the marriage that needed to be repaired. They discussed how other family members could be usefully involved to help their conflicts going forward. But the bigger lesson is that *laugher* helped, it changed the conflict dynamic by creating a relaxed atmosphere for discussion and for bringing up sensitive issues the couple faced.

Finding number 16 – Creative tools for conflict resolution

Stories, songs, proverbs, sayings, games, dance, puppetry and the like may appropriately be referred to as the conflict resolution and peacemaking tools of Tiv and Inuit culture. Norms, morals and legal codes are packed into Tiv stories and songs (Keil 1979). When they are sung, Tiv songs are intended to instruct on good behavior. They are also used as non-violent weapons. In 2010, gubernatorial elections campaigns in Tiv

country were waged almost entirely through songs. Two candidates in opposing political parties ran neck-to-neck and clashed often. Sometimes campaign slurs turned nasty but rather than take up arms, they hired composers and traditional singers to creatively convey their supposed political prowess and convince voters.

Similarly, proverbs are used in conflict communication to convey meanings, lessons or warnings that can scarce be interpreted but that engage conflict parties at a deeply emotional and cultural level. Proverbs, sayings and puppetry are used for socio-cultural instruction; they create safe avenues for venting, illustration and admonition. Proverbs especially, pack compact life lessons in their lines that compel deep reflection on issues of conflict, peace and life in general.

Finding number 17 - Death- the great equalizer

Death is used as a reminder in indigenous teachings. Community is constantly reminded that life as we know it does come to an end and when it does come to an end, it leaves behind memories and consequences of actions, inactions and misactions of the people gone. What they leave behind may continue to impact the world of the living. Tiv speak of ancestors awaiting good people who ascend to them after they have lived good lives while on earth. This teaching is present in many community rituals; birth rites, death and burial rites, marriage rites etc. One burial rite of people considered to have lived worthy lives involves blowing horns and singing dirges to alert ancestors that a worthy individual is ascending home after death. When a death is considered to be of a person who lived a bad life, the individual is quietly laid to rest and people leave quickly away from the burial site. Thus people aspire to join ancestors by living with integrity and purpose while on earth. They live in such a manner as to not harm others, they uphold

good moral values (as prescribed by that society) and strive to do good as much as possible.

Many Tiv shared that some people deviate from their indigenous values to embrace nonchalance these days, because burial rites are changing to more clinical performances. The connection to the ancestors in the great beyond is not emphasized enough therefore people forget that they are mortals while the business of life endures. In one elder's words,

> People have forgotten that there is death. People still die! But once my brethren (*angbianev* –male and female) have money in their hands, they think that they are excused from dying. Then they realize that the time comes when they have to leave all that money here and go to our ancestors. Then the question becomes, when I get there, what will I tell them? What will I tell them that I did for the children, how have I lived my life? If there was no death, I wonder where people would be, people would purchase the sky and only let us see the sun if we can pay for it. But thankfully God is still here with us. That is my hope.

I was privileged in quite an unfortunate way, to witness two deaths and funerals while conducting research in Pangnirtung and three funerals in Tivland. In Pangnirtung, it was first the sudden death of a female elder whose presence was such a gift to all the people who had come into that community to learn from the Inuit. Aged and frail, she had been proud to accompany the group on a trip out to the "Land".[22] While on the land, this elder had been patient in teaching the group how to set up tents and ensured that they were warm inside. Also, she demonstrated how to prepare seal skins to make mittens, boots and other useful items. I had tried to get an interview with her but she sat silent for a few minutes and then broke down and cried for a while before disclosing through the translator that she had lost her memory to illness a few years back. She was very

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[22] Going out on the land is an expression used by the Inuit to refer to the times that they go back to their original settlements or new hunting camps to re-experience life as they knew it before they were brought into the settlement arrangements as they now live, in makeshift towns.

distraught about this and shared that some days, she was not sure who she was any longer but knew that she must have had a good past living in communities on the land where she was born. She died suddenly after we got back from the land from a heart condition. During her funeral, people spoke very kindly of her (typical of funerals). However, an Inuk woman who had known the deceased elder well, said that she felt confident and at peace about the deceased elder because her good deeds would go before to ensure that she had a good resting place!

A couple of weeks later, another death occurred of another elder. He had shared with me the importance of rituals and taboos in Inuit conflict resolution. He was a well respected man in the community. Most people in the community remembered him to be a brave hunter and a good family man. He fell out of his boat into the Arctic Ocean while on a hunting trip and died of hypothermia. His wife said that she would miss him but had no doubts that he would rest for he had been a good man. She said that she hoped instead, that their children and others in the community had tapped sufficiently into his spirit to continue the work that he began through his life.

Death is very present in Tiv and Inuit communities. It is not a distant event that happens in secluded homes with few people knowing about it, death is out in the open and everyone in the community attends funerals. In Pangnirtung, the entire community ground to a stop when the elders died and almost everyone was at the funeral. The unavoidable and poignant lesson is the constant reminder that death happens! People are neither immortal nor invincible. When people die, they are gone and all that remains is the memory of the life they left behind – if that life was good, it continues to be referred to and used for teaching the next generation, if that life was bad, then it ends at death but

the legacy left behind will continue to remind of exemplary qualities or to warn the next generation that emulating that bad life is not the way to go.

Standing by the graves and listening to the conversations, was transforming; I was reminded that life is short – I need to live it well and leave behind a teachable legacy. It was also common among the Tiv for elders intervening in conflicts, to begin a problem solving session by remind the parties that life is short and peace is precious. A common phrase in Tiv language is *umane ka nyi he we*? Meaning, "what is this life to you?"

Finding number 18- Death the moral exit

Tiv say that "death is better than shame". Some people take this literarily. The Tiv person will do whatever they can to avoid a circumstance that they consider to be embarrassing and if that becomes impossible, then the embarrassed person starts to reminisce about dying to rid themselves of the shame. This is another reason why shaming is such a powerful method for dealing with serious offenses among the Tiv. They even talk of *good* and *bad* forms of death. A good death (*ku u po or*) would be of an individual who was known to lead a good life by his/her people and to have built and maintained a good reputation. A bad death (*ku u kunya*) is of an individual who dies in a manner considered shameful or of an individual who led a shameful life and did not maintain a worthy reputation.

On some level, Tiv may accept the death of a person who led a bad (wicked) life as a welcome even moral occurrence. The dead person will be thought to have finally reclaimed face in death. Their exit forces people to find and think of aspects of the deceased person's life that was good because there is also the saying that 'no one remains bad or ugly in death' (*or vihin ken ku ga*). If the deceased did not know how to repair

their lives and paths in their lifetime, they will be "re-laid[23]" after they die. In this manner did a Tiv consultant speak of a man who had been killed in the act of theft. The young man had been a known armed robber for a while. He was eventually killed by the police in the process of armed robbery. To this community, his death sad as it was, was nonetheless welcome because it was better for him to die and be *re-laid* than to live the shameful life he had led. Death had afforded him a moral exit.

An Inuk consultant speaking of the rampant suicides in his community said that he thought that death provided a "moral exit"[24] to the young people who did not see a future for themselves. He shared that the feeling of being trapped is not a pleasant one. He had lost two family members to suicide and once he recovered from the initial shock of their passing, started to think that he would have liked to know what they were thinking just before they took their lives. Even though the reason for the suicides is generally understood to be the loss of identity and culture resulting in a listlessness that accompanies that significant a loss, this consultant believes that the specific words of a person contemplating suicide will likely have a clear and powerful message for the community. He therefore decided that he would henceforth invite young people contemplating suicide to trust him with their hearts' ponderings; he would request them to tell him what they wanted to be said at their funerals. This elder reasoned that creating room for young people to share what they wished to say by their deaths (rather than trying to stop them by force), would be much more useful. Perhaps in so doing, they

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[23] The Tiv word *a sor un a gbir* translates into the phrase to be "re-laid" in the sense of perhaps re – laying a foundation of a building. It however speaks more to the act of re-storying a person's life. That is to tell good things about the person, that may not have been known to others or that may have been overshadowed by the more negative things the person did in their lifetime.

[24] This is how I got the title for this finding. The words "moral exit" are a powerful statement on the action of ending one life as a means to prevent harm to others

would be willing to share their deepest thoughts without needing to exit in order to make a statement. They would *feel* heard because they would be heard by someone who is not trying to criminalize their choice of a (moral) exit but someone who is welcoming and understanding of their thoughts and values. When looked at in this light, the attempt to takes ones life (suicide) is not so much a crime, but is a reaction to an enforced silence made complete by the decision to end a life. What then needs to be re-opened is a trustworthy channel of communication to ensure that people will speak and be heard and not feel like their only option is to take the exit.

Another Inuk consultant shared that the Inuit today do not see that they have options; they have to live like they are told, act as is recommended and endure leaders they have not chosen or want. It used to be that if their leaders (elders and shamans alike) became problematic the community would get rid of them, some were killed. This purged the community of the corruption of dishonest, tyrannical or wicked people. Today, his people are forced to endure bad people whose actions poison the entire community and no one can do anything about it because they are imposed and protected by the government. A similar sentiment was shared by Tiv, who shared that the death of a "bad" leader or elder was not really mourned as their exit had cleansed the community of their toxicity. Such people were to be buried quickly and left to their rest.

Finding number 19 - Natural law as the indigenous worldview

Aggregating knowledge gained, I find that the sphere of law that most closely fits an indigenous worldview, is what J. Budziszewski (1997) has referred to as *Natural Law*. Although most people would credit the development of this idea to the early philosopher Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Budziszewski condenses vast information on this topic

into a relatable and applicable layout. Natural law is the idea that there exists in all people, an inherent knowledge of good and bad put in place by God the creator. The law is written on human hearts and is accessible enough that each individual operating under its influence can tap into it and act upon is dictates. This natural form of law can be employed for personal and collective good or less desirable, for ignoble purposes by political entrepreneurs[25]. Chief Oren Lyons an indigenous leader of the Onondaga nation (Nelson 2008) confirms the foundation of indigenous law when he states that;

> The spiritual side of the natural world is absolute. The laws are absolute. Our instructions, and I'm talking about for all human beings, our instructions are to get along. Understand what these laws are, get along with the laws and support them and work with them. We were told a long time ago that if you do that, life is endless. It just continues on and on in great cycles of regeneration, great powerful cycles of life regenerating and regenerating (24).

He urges further, that our collective focus as humans should be to know, understand and apply natural laws. Cliff Roberson and Dilip Das (2008) consider natural law to be a moral instrument, an embodiment of principles of reason and conscience implicit in human nature. This idea is contrasted against positivistic schools of thought that prefer to promote law as a "political instrument", as rules, that are promulgated and enforced by rules and policies of government.

Natural law is predicated upon the initial understanding that there exists *One* greater than all in an atmosphere of fundamental equality and that has instituted a higher reason for existence. This *One*, has standards for mediating human and all interactions and also holds all things in place working harmoniously to higher purposes. The basis of

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[25] I use this example because several consultants when they gave examples of times when indigenous law was misused, tended to suggest that the most culpable people were people seeking power, money and fame by all means, even when they clearly did not deserve it. I think that a gentle way to refer to these people, is political entrepreneurs. This way, the entire complex process of politics is not entirely criminalized.

natural law is moral excellence that is guarded and elevated as the standard of existence, association and community. It is the quality that sharpens human reason by enabling it make sound moral judgments predicated upon discipline of mind and truth.

Nigel Biggar and Rufus Black (2000) surmise natural law to be the matter that brings fulfillment into a human life. Its objective and goal is that a person pursues and gains personal enrichment while also enriching others in the process. It is important to be aware that the pursuit of such objectives and goals is a conscious and deliberate endeavor informed by the conscious choices a person makes; in how to live their lives in consideration of others to whom they are affiliated and responsible.

Natural law calls people to recognize that they are essentially people in relationship to others, they are together connected by supernatural forces, they are at liberty to pursue objectives and goals of personal enrichment, yet enrichment gains that quality especially when goals extend good to others. Thus adherents ought to be mindful that choices have consequences for self and others. This understanding impacts perceptions on everything–community, relationships, personal and collective choice, peace, conflict, reconciliation, business, religion and society. The result then is an active pursuit of harmony vertically and horizontally.

It seems that the central idea of the common good inherent in promoting natural law is especially important for indigenous contexts because people establish their community associations and partnerships essentially for that reason. Budziszweski puts the idea of the common good aptly when he explains it thus;

> To have something in common is to share it. But there are two different senses in which a number of people can have good in common. In the weak sense, the common good is whatever is good for each of them irrespective of whether there is any bond between them. You do not have to know that Tom is married to

Rosemary to know that having shoes that fit is good for both. But in the strong sense, the common good is what pertains to their *partnership* in a good life. Marital love is a good for Tom and Rosemary in a wholly different way than having shoes that fit; apart from their bond it cannot be understood (33).
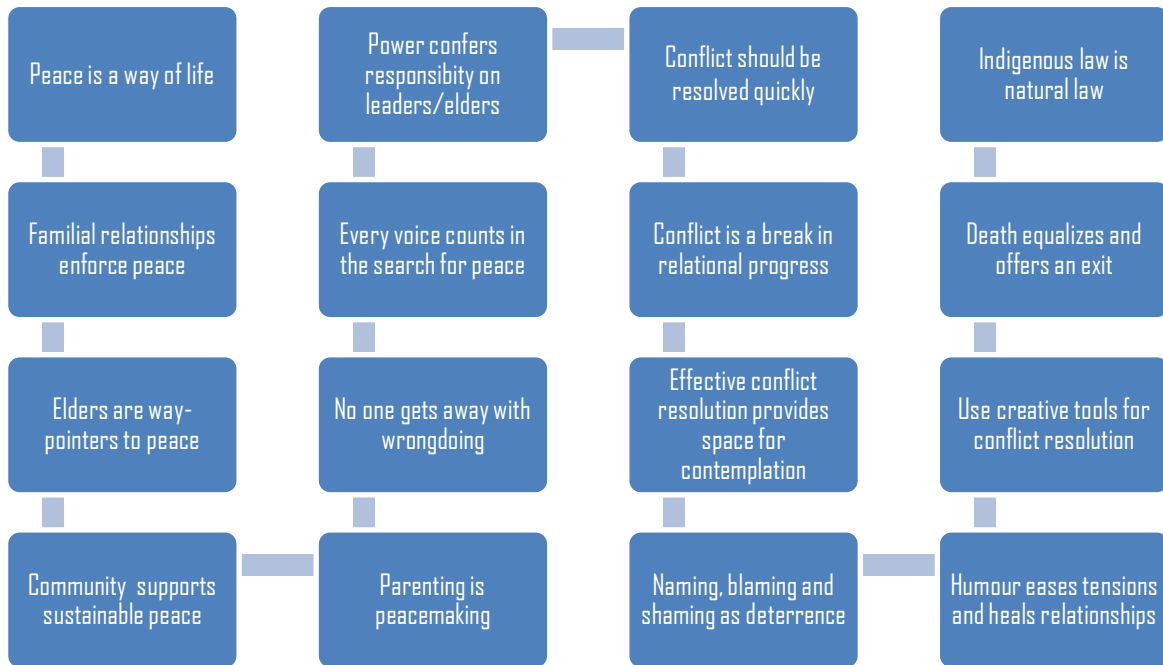
In similar manner, indigenous (peoples) laws are geared to shelter the dignity of the *human person* whether or not we have an immediate tie or connection to them. It also guards the connections and partnerships that are shared in community (think of clans and kin relationships that are such a respected binding factor). Indigenous law is borne by all people in such community arrangements. It is taught right from birth such that children grow up knowing these laws by heart, everyone has an unwritten understanding of relevant principles, values and virtues that are expected and shared by the community and most people in those communities perceive their shared rules, codes of ethics, virtues, and values to be just and tenable.

Fred Alford (2010) states that natural law is neither a position to be defended nor a philosophical claim to be justified, it is a knowing of right and wrong that leaves us only the responsibility to act accordingly or face personal or collective consequences. He does not wish people to waste any time attempting to prove natural law or to demonstrate its truth because to call natural law 'natural' means that it is wrong for the same reasons everywhere just as fire would burn the same way in Canada as it would in Persia. Alford argues further that although the knowledge of natural law is intuitive, narrative is functional in communicating its obvious values and truths about right and wrong, good and bad. I have made this argument elsewhere regarding the power of narrative (storytelling) to transport the moral imagination (Kyoon 2009). Narrative allows participants in natural law make sense of the abstract they know intuitively and also to convey that knowledge to others while at the same time making appeals to that other

intuitive knowing of right and wrong. This explains why indigenous law favors the use of storytelling, proverbs, ritual and other creative means in the conflict resolution and peacemaking process.

Indigenous law is about peacemaking. Peacemaking according to Douglas Noll (2003), requires a different set of tools for analysis; whereas law school curriculums teach the resolution of conflicts through a fact or evidential analysis of a conflict in order to determine what rules apply in reaching a solution, peacemaking takes dynamics into account including a relevant view of human nature and values ruling relationships as well as human capacities for change and cooperation. Peacemaking concerns itself with the repair and maintenance of human relationships to the best possible extent. This does not implicitly rule out the presence or repeated occurrence of conflicts or the use of adversarial processes for resolution but definitely emphasizes the centrality of healthy human relationships and the work required to guarantee those.

Summary of the Principles

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Peace is a way of life	Power confers responsibility on leaders/elders	Conflict should be resolved quickly	Indigenous law is natural law
Familial relationships enforce peace	Every voice counts in the search for peace	Conflict is a break in relational progress	Death equalizes and offers an exit
Elders are way-pointers to peace	No one gets away with wrongdoing	Effective conflict resolution provides space for contemplation	Use creative tools for conflict resolution
Community supports sustainable peace	Parenting is peacemaking	Naming, blaming and shaming as deterrence	Humour eases tensions and heals relationships

In summary, value-laden principles guide Tiv and Inuit conflict resolution and peacemaking processes. They are intended to restore relationships to a place of peace. Principles are not separate aspects of the peace process but are at the heart of it, working to shape the outcome thereof. For example an elder intervening in a conflict may inquire about the conflict party's family, may want to know what kind of people her parents have been may seek to know what personal philosophies the parties and their families hold and then incorporate that knowledge into helping them deal with any hurts and wrongdoing against them. In deciding on a forward course, the parties may be encouraged to seek solutions that help them emerge from the conflict with their emotions and good beliefs about life and each other intact. For at the end, they want to continue to maintain peace with themselves, their communities and their spiritual spheres.

Indigenous Relational Pyramid

Relationships are central to the indigenous conflict resolution and peacemaking model. The individual is encouraged to always contextualize their experiences; to look both at themselves as well as their place in the community in dealing with conflicts with others. The individual's sense of self and being is informed by the community in which she lives in the same way as her actions also affect the community.

The community is made up of familial arrangements. Parents within this pact may be compared to a giant council of governors in a state political setting. Parenting is very important and parents mutually support each other in helping bring up children to embrace shared social values. Elders are the go-to mediators when relationships are threatened by wrongdoing and elders also support each other. Higher ordinates are thought to be the final arbiters in their supernatural wisdom.

Indigenous relational connections represented by an inverted pyramid.

Higher ordinates (God, ancestors)
Elders
Parents
Community
Individual
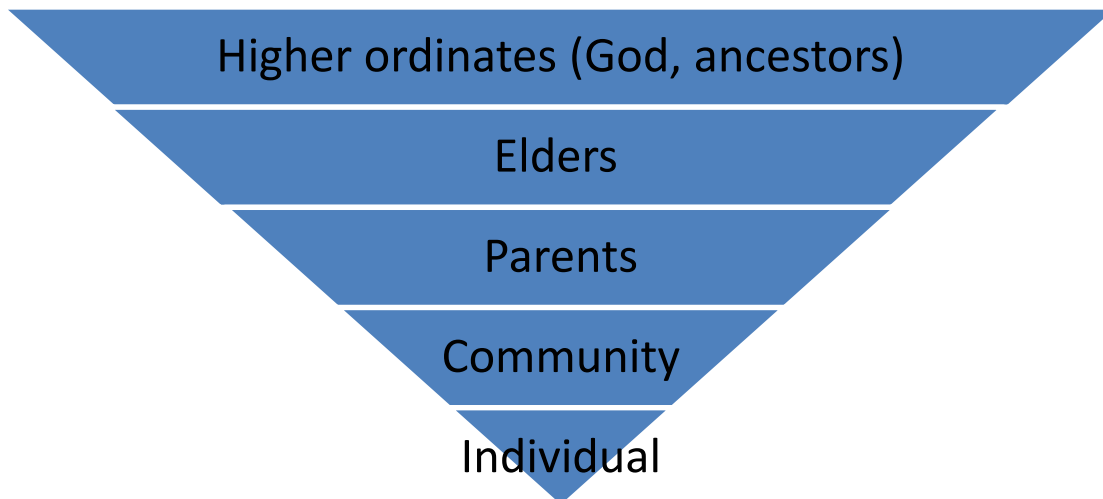
Chapter 7 - Problems of Indigenous Conflict and Peace Practice

Questioning and improving indigenous processes

The question has been asked as to whether indigenous processes are being questioned and improved or if they remain in their archaic state. This is both a question and an accusation. The accusation or at that question at the very least, suggests that indigenous processes may not be that useful in contemporary times. Some have expressed concern that indigenous people may be left at a disadvantage if they are not changing with the influence of modern times. Well, to counter that, one wonders what the wisdom is in constantly needing to change things and processes that work. If a tool still works, why change it? Or if a pot still cooks as it should, then why get another pot? Other than the aesthetic quality of a fancier tool or a new and perhaps bigger pot, it makes no sense to change a working tool or replace a functioning pot. In the same way, it makes little sense to change time tested indigenous processes and principles that work even if times are changing. People may get better clothes, bigger houses, drive better cars, but they still need sound principles to live by.

Having made that point however, it is important to acknowledge that indigenous processes have not remained static over time; contact with others and experimentation has meant that some aspects of practice have been abandoned and others adopted. Tiv for instance, no longer apply the sasswood ordeal in determining guilt in an offense and they now have written agreements following community court decisions. More so, research by indigenous scholars in various disciplines contributes to the questioning and improvement of indigenous processes and practice because it highlights useful aspects of

practice, identifies and outlines prevailing challenges for further investigation and makes recommendations for change and improvement where necessary.

Indigenous methods are also re-emerging from the margins to which they were banished through colonization. So they first need space to complete their re-entry and then be examined in order to appropriately refine its practice. By comparison, conventional processes have enjoyed centuries of uninhibited examinations and refinements that must now be afforded indigenous processes as well. In any case, the effective principles of conflict resolution and peacemaking built on cultural values and ethics, need only be strengthened and applied rather than scrutinized and changed. But as with all processes, some challenges have been identified by Inuit and Tiv in the use and application of their processes and principles.

Challenges faced by Tiv and Inuit conflict resolution processes

Study consultants reported some problems with (their) indigenous conflict resolution processes. An often repeated challenge is that outsiders' may misunderstand and misinterpret indigenous cultural practices and so negatively label them. The Tiv for instance talk of the abolition (by British colonizers) of the use of Sasswood as a deciding factor in determining a guilt offense. Sasswood is a poisonous bark that was used by the Tiv to frighten guilty people into confession of wrongdoing. Wrongdoers were told that they would not die by drinking a sasswood potion if they were not guilty. Guilty parties often refused to drink the potion. The Tiv argue that the goal had not been to kill people but to get offenders to the point of deciding between telling the truth or facing death.

Similarly, Inuit decisions to banish persistent offenders to lonely islands may be interpreted in contemporary perspective as being harsh treatment of an offender, but the

emphasis in both cases, is on highlighting the values and setting the standards for all individuals to follow equally. I recall the reaction of a non-indigenous colleague during a conversation with an Inuk elder. The elder was explaining why Inuit banished persistent offenders to treacherous islands in the Arctic. He said that sometimes when a person was banished, he or she had the time to think through their actions and if they decided that they wanted to change and still be a part of their community, would request to be accepted back into the community and that was good because they had learned some valuable lesson. But at other times, such people assumed that they could tough it out on their own and ended up dying from harsh weather conditions or were killed by wild animals. That was a lesson for the community even though it came in a difficult way.

My colleague was shocked to hear this. She suggested that that practice amounted to abuse of the individual's human rights. The elder responded by saying that the persistent offender also had to have the community's right at heart because rights ought to work in both directions. But he also said that the language of individual human rights is not really in Inuit conception although Inuit deeply respect everyone and uphold the sanctity of every life including the life of animals. My colleague was not convinced, she was miffed, but she was also an outsider (to Inuit culture) attempting to filter Inuit indigenous ideology, worldview and practice through her cultural lenses. The result of that was misunderstanding and labeling of an aspect Inuit cultural practice abuse (of Human Rights). One Tiv consultant's response to the question of Human Rights was very telling;

> Human rights as you see it are very alien to our tradition. The moment you start saying that (unwillingness to abide by collective rules), you are courting ostracism, they (community) will just cast you away. They will have nothing to do with you and you will not feel comfortable. These processes are not different

than what you know, but maybe you are not understanding what I am saying (referring to me). Take *opinion* for example, you talk about public opinion in a society, we talk the same thing except that ours is about *community* opinion, and you as a member of that community must abide! If you are to be a social animal, you must abide by the rules and tenets of the community. The moment you go outside and refuse to obey, you are indirectly expelling yourself (said in an emphatic high pitch voice). We will have nothing to do with you.

Misunderstandings created by misjudgements fueled by any one culture believing itself to have the best practices, are a problem to other cultures everywhere. What each culture has at its disposal, is a set of values that appear noble within that culture's particular perspective but that set of values, may need some refinement in other contexts and perspectives in order to make sense. The solution to cross-cultural misunderstanding and misjudgement is when cultures make genuine effort to view the world from other lenses. Individual human rights viewed from a community oriented standpoint, may need some expansion to accommodate the rights of communities to exist and hold collective views.

Consultants also reported that the option of choosing between indigenous or mainstream practices is a difficult one of some people. Sometimes people become frustrated and tired of adhering to indigenous structures (particularly deferring to elders) and decide to do their own thing by adhering to whatever feels most convenient. When this happens, the bond of cooperation to uphold collective values is broken and those relationships suffer. One elder explained that there was no such thing as a person deciding to do their own thing in spite of correction in Tiv country. Decisions made by the community and elders were the final verdict, parties could not turn away from those decisions. There was nowhere else to go if they turned away from the decisions. So, whether or not they felt immediately comfortable with decisions or were in agreement or not, they stomach the decision in understanding that the wisdom of the collective decision

is greater than their feelings. Another consultant likened the decision of elders to the supreme court of justice. He said;

> I can liken elders to the Supreme Court of Justice today. Once the Supreme Court makes a decision, appellants have to accept the ruling. People did not reject the Tiv processes or rulings made. Community was organized such that there was no place else to go, people were interdependent on each other and understood codes of associations, brotherhood and interdependence sufficiently to want to do what was collectively deemed to be right. The elders were the final authority and even if you did not like the final decision, you had to stomach it. Stubbornly refusing to adhere was virtually unheard of.

He goes on to explain that judgements were fair and sometimes lenient to make it easy for wrongdoers to obey verdicts, explaining that people were sometimes pardoned on the basis of previous good reputation (of their family). He said;

> Judgments and rulings were built on much consideration and relationships. For example, sometimes a wrongdoer was absolved based on the precedent of the honour of their family name. A wrongdoer may be pardoned without being shamed when the traditional council decides to cover over their wrong by telling him/her that they do not believe that s/he will have engaged in such an act because their family is known to be good and never to engage in such acts, he is told to go and continue to uphold his/her family name by being and doing right. People receiving pardon in this manner, realize that the onus lies on them therefore, to act responsibly in future including making amends if necessary to redeem the family name from being soiled by their wrongdoing.

As such, wrongdoers are offered the opportunity to put their actions or inactions in perspective and work to protect theirs and their family's honour. The elder stated further that in most cases, the absolved individual went away and did their best not to repeat the wrongdoing. This was a system based on trust and the understanding that each community member needed mercy in the face of truth and needed community beyond self. As the elder observed, "you must realize that conscience is powerful and it judges people even better than others can. Conscience if allowed, works to reform people and we

believe in that". But even so, some people still went away dissatisfied and sought revenge or other measures through law enforcement, the justice system or simply took matters into their own hands.

The decision to turn to measures outside of indigenous processes then creates a third challenge; that of diminishing (elders and community) influence over members. Both Inuit and Tiv consultants blamed this development on contemporary forms of education. They were not against conventional education per se, but argued that a dilemma is created when education offers students ammunition against their cultures; an individual understanding of human rights was cited as an example of how this happens. They also argue that new forms of knowledge offer young people the means to make money but not necessarily the knowledge they require for life and for living the life of a (Inuit or Tiv) person. One Inuk woman said that "elders are very knowledgeable and they know how a society should work but because of the distractions, people are not listening to them. There are too many powers in the societies and because of all the other powers, people are not listening. But they (elders) know how to live healthy lifestyles and how people should live. Even if the elders are thinking about something, they do not say it these days. Before schools, everything was our knowledge. Now in modern times I can see that we can have two ways existing together–the white way and the Inuk way".

Conventional education may not place appropriate value on indigenous survival skills. A consultant feared that his children may become useless to him and the community if they do not understand Inuit ways. It is difficult to survive in the arctic if people do not have 'land' skills (hunting, fishing, tool making, camping, animal trail detection, etc) but some of the children who spend much time in school, do not get to

learn the land survival skills and this worries their parents. In agreement, another Tiv consultant lamented thus;

> people may think that I am talking too much but I will speak because you have come. Our politicians do not know how to build. Those children even though they are our children, have become something abhorrent (*kwaghbo*). They have stopped adding to the good ways that we have and are spoiling the land (*Mba vihin Tar*) the land is no longer as it used to be, it is spoiling even more (*Tar ngu vihin ser a ser*). What they forget is that when you spoil the land, you spoil yourself too and when you spoil someone else, you spoil yourself in the process so then we must not spoil. Our collective task is to repair the land (or world).

According to several Tiv consultants, modern education which promises to be the all encompassing model to being and having a better life is not quite delivering these dividends in expected ways. One elder mentioned how instead of drawing upon good values, well educated Tiv people become greedy and insensitive to other human beings. As soon as this happens, the entire community suffers leadership crises because those that should be preparing to take over headships and advisory roles are corrupted.

This builds into yet another problem of corrupt, incompetent, senile or downright wicked elders. The indigenous conflict and peace system is one based on trust; trust for elders, for community and for process. When the trust is broken, it is understandably was hard to reconcile the betrayal in the minds of the community. Thus an ongoing challenge to indigenous processes is maintaining the integrity of elders and community. Untrustworthy elders are particularly problematic. A female Tiv put it this way,

> we are looking for truth everywhere and it is becoming hard, I wonder what the future will be. Look, if you take truth out, a good conscience can be sold. I cry for my children because there is nothing worse than a lying elder, he is like disease (*angev*) to the community. All that such elder can give is the disease that they have contracted. This is a problem. So the few good ones that we have, we support them (*cii iyol sha ve*) and pray for them because they are the light for the children coming behind.

When elders lose credibility, the community will be in turmoil. It is important then, to oust such an individual somehow. Inuit consultants suggested that chronically bad elders and leaders were killed to rid society of the malaise. The Tiv also killed such a chronically bad person or,

> his eldership would be creatively sidelined by the next in line of eldership. But it was important not to strip the incompetent or corrupt elder of his dignity, so he would always be at court meetings or other family meetings. He continued to decide on matters that he demonstrated competence in and or acted in clear conscience. But the entire community would be aware that his eldership had been surpassed and they would know where new allegiances lay. This was also a way of disciplining corrupt elders and keeping tyrannical elders in check.

But, if the elder was hired by the government and not chosen by the community as was traditionally done, then a problem is created. The community ceases to respect that elder and the elder may become tyrannical in attempts to impose himself and his decision on the community, he may also lose focus of his traditional role as a person who should be protecting his community and working towards peace. When mutuality is broken, the result is distrust and conflict. Such elders cannot then help with any form of conflict resolution.

Another challenge identified, is that of dwindling respect for rituals and deterrence institutions. Consultants were convinced that the reason that political entrepreneurs today misbehave arbitrarily in (Tiv and Inuit) societies and seem to get away with it, is because they no longer take oaths to use their power for the benefit of everyone. Once the force of culture is erased and a person dissociates from and ceases to be grounded by the potency of cultural norms, then they float around doing whatever they like without being responsible or accountable. But consultants believe that people in

positions of power who misuse the privilege pay heavily for their irresponsible actions just as others end up suffering too. Inuit and Tiv believe in the power of the supernatural to intervene in such matters and that although consequences may not happen immediately, people get what they deserve for their actions. Christian beliefs and practices for the most part have replaced indigenous rituals (both Pangnirtung and the Tiv communities are currently heavily Christianized). Yet even those who practice Christianity believe in the power of the supernatural to intervene when power is misused by stewards.

Unfortunately, Christianized Inuit and Tiv demonize indigenous ritual practices and abhor taboos. Inuit processes such as shamanism were demonized to the extent that Inuit who turned to Christianity feel ashamed of their indigenous rituals and would not even talk about the practices. This situation creates a sense of confusion in younger generations who are at loss for what to believe and follow. Thus Christianized elders create an ideological dilemma of indigenous processes versus Christian teachings. Although I do not think that those options are mutually exclusive, actually those ideologies share many attributes and could strengthen each other on many levels. For instance, both the Bible and indigenous law detest deceitfulness practices and can be mutually reinforcing to root out negative behavior. One consultant talks about a wrongful use of language in a way that I think that the Christian Bible would support;

> Those people (political entrepreneurs) also lie a lot. It seems today that if you have money, you can get away with anything. Those lawyers are liars; they say incredible things in broad daylight and can defend the worst criminals. This is why I say that English language is good. You can make it say anything! if you stand here to defend a known murderer in Tiv language, how will you start, which words will you use? For me I really like English language, if *Buter* (colonizers) did not have that language, they will not have confused us (*chimin se asema*) and

our laws (*atindi*). So you can continue with what you are doing but I don't think that you will be able to fight that language and maybe you will not be able to change anything. I am also learning English today in my old age. That is how I will be able to make money or do business; I have seen how people use it. But I am also happy that you have come to us.

Indigenous processes can explore more opportunities for collaboration with positive teachings in other religions as some Inuit and have Tiv are doing today.

A diminishing sense of cultural identity is another problem faced by indigenous communities and processes today. People use processes and principles that they understand and feel connected to. If Inuit distance themselves from their Inuit identity and the Tiv do likewise, Inuit or Tiv processes and principles will make no useful sense to them. That sense of cultural identity has been seriously challenged by colonization and now by the ongoing forces of (cultural) globalization. There seems to be an impending doom of massive cultural amnesia. This makes establishing a cultural identity all the more critical to Tiv who believe that their rituals were used for that purpose; to the extent that ritual helped community understand Tiv values and become grounded through a clear sense of place within their culture. As an example, one consultant described a Tiv birth ritual thus;

> all children born to the Tiv were *tumbu* (a process of blessing and committing newborns to the care of community and ancestors) so that they grew up strong and connected to their communities and lineages. But children now a days are born far away and this process is not respected so they are confused about who they are and suffer from a sense of disconnection. You may not understand what I mean by this, but it is an important Tiv practice. Selected elders would bring a pot, grain stalks (*amine*) and a special bark (*gusa*). The grain stalks were tied together and placed in the pot and the pot tied through the roof of the hut to the middle of the room. Then incantations would be made and libations poured to all the Tiv clans with the liquid from the pot being poured in all the directions of their settlements across Tiv land. Then the child would be given some of the fluid to drink. The purpose was to connect the child with their ancestors living and dead, to

pronounce them as members of the clan and to invite all the clans to become protectors and family of the child with full responsibility to care for the child in all that he would need in becoming a person and a member of the Tiv people. But Christianity considered these practices to be ungodly and banished them. Some people have stopped doing this, some still continue. But the children who had this were never sick or tormented and our medicines work for most illnesses.

Practices such as described here, are being forgotten or undervalued with modernization but what should not be lost is the purpose for which those rituals were conducted. It is important to the Tiv that their children have a sense of place and a solid cultural identity. That identity keeps them connected to the processes and principles of the Tiv. Although a similar point was not raised by Inuit consultants, I suspect that Inuit who are rooted in Inuit culture and develop a clear sense of identity, will likely feel more connected to their processes and therefore will draw on the resource for conflict resolution and peacemaking as necessary.

Modernization therefore challenges the core of traditions and indigenous worldviews. Elders mentioned modern day gadgets as major distractions to children attempting to be grounded in their traditional cultures. Conversations with several Tiv and Inuit actually revealed that both the young and older generation think of themselves or their children as being "lost" to new ideologies. While I do not think that the term *lost* was used in a finite sense, it was clear that there was some confusion as to what ideologies should be followed by people, the popular culture being conveyed through gadgets and media or the ways of life and ideologies being passed down from generation through generation. The latter has a difficult time keeping up the pace, intensity and fashion of the former. Moreover, lack of knowledge of the culture leaves young people

confused about what to believe and the purposes for certain practices. One particularly

concerned elder had this to say,

> It seems as though there is no way any longer to return to our *a eren* because people are unwilling to go back to these practices and principles. The biggest mistake that our people are making even in all of Nigeria is that they do not understand what culture is. They think that when they are dancing, then they are practicing culture but that is not the most important thing. Culture is far more than that. At best it (dancing) is just the expression of an inner culture.
>
> The inner culture is the values, the standards, the ideals that society is based upon and not the outward expression of it like face marks that some Tiv have. These are just the expressional aspects of culture. So when colonizers brought cars, motorbikes and motorcycles, clothes and all sorts of good things - Our peoples style of dressing was the *chado* (piece of cloth around the waste) and the married women had the *Atisha* (wrapper) and younger maidens had the *Itcha* (a covering made of cotton ropes) maybe you don't even know what that means (referring to me). Anyway when colonizers brought these things that attracted us and we thought were better, then we started to throw out our modes of dressing and ways of doing things and with that, our values and principles of operation along with the ways of life. So if you want people to live by those principles now, these days, it may be hard as some people no longer even know what they are any more, a re-learning will need to happen.
>
> But note that human beings cannot exist in a vacuum, while you (referring to my generation) threw away the values and standards and borrowed others from somewhere, now you know those new ways to be your values and you see things through them. Those have become the picture through which you see life because that is what you now know, and what you have now acquired has become to you the original value and what was before, you no longer know. So attempting to take people back to how they used to be will be difficult, but not impossible.

A return to an indigenous values and ways of being is not impossible if the

challenge of knowledge displacement is addressed. Several consultants lamented that

since so many children born today go to schools and learn that the best and perhaps only

valid way to learn is to read a book, they disregard oral traditions. Oral traditions and

histories are the ways in which indigenous peoples communicate knowledge, learn about

their histories and construct their identities with the help of experienced elders.

Modernization and education have however profoundly challenged elders as valid authorities for knowledge. The result is that the younger generation is not asking the older generation to be taught or even for clarifications of their histories (that have mostly been reconstructed in colonial terms).

Displacement of power and confusion of values are another challenge faced by indigenous conflict and peace practice. Power is displaced from elders to youth because power is now defined in terms of how much money a person has as opposed to how much knowledge, experience and wisdom they bring to the situation. This has created crises of leadership and followership; political leaders are vilified as liable for unethical use of designate power and for not governing based upon indigenous laws which emphasize a more collaborative use of power. On the other hand, financially powerful youth, have no regard for elders. This has created a chasm between the older and younger generation such that much mentoring is not happening as might be expected.

While the power versus values conflict is challenging indigenous processes, there is also a problem of parent versus children. Consultants reported that their children accuse them of being "outdated" or behind times and therefore are not listening to what they as parents have to say to them. They compare their parents to media images of parents and parenting and judge their parents poorly as a result. Several elders complained that children are not listening. One mother shared that,

> I think that children now are not listening, they are distracted by TVs, modern music and gadgets. You (younger parents) have to insist on what you are teaching, apply pressure until about when they go to University because that is when they gain clarity about life issues. Before then, they just go through life following whatever feels good to them and these things have consequences, left alone they become confused about the choices they made and why you stood by and watched them make those mistakes, they feel lonely in the world even with

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you there because you did not speak up and insist when you should have. This is your task and everyone in the society's task too.

It seems that there is much *noise* going on but very little *communication* between generations to change the perspectives of either. The reason for this is attributed to the heavy influence and preference for gadgets.

Another concern that came through several times in interviews was that people are preoccupied with money to the neglect of other important aspects of life. Consultants in both cultures reported that the current generation focuses almost exclusively on how to make and spend money and not very much on what relationships are lost in the process. Intergenerational relationships were the most at risk of being lost. A female (Tiv) elder complained that,

> Our children are not listening to us; they are listening to people with money. Our daughters are chasing after the same thing money. Marriage is not working out and children are neglected. Because when you look at it everybody is chasing after money. It is when they get old like me that their brains return to them and they start to feel bad that they lived an empty life (*uma u ahumbev*) but at that time, their life would have passed them by. So if they are listening we will be telling them of our mistakes so that they will sit back and be in peace when old age comes. You too should learn my daughter, start early. Look after your children, teach them how they must live when they grow up.

Another female Inuk elder said "They (children) say that we are the bottom people. They think that because they have more money that they are a lot more happy, that the richest people are happy but really they (children) are always just miserable and always wanting more and more and more." These consultants were lamenting the exchange of relationships for ephemeral gains. If the channels (relationships) for passing on valuable principles to help people effectively deal with conflicts do not function

effectively, then the entire system for regulating conflict behavior and building lasting peace is in dangerous jeopardy.

Chapter 8 - Contributions to Research and Practice

Findings Overview

Culture is important–Perhaps the most powerful illustration that comes through Tiv and Inuit indigenous processes, is the imperative of culture. Culture defines people, garners personal and collective confidence, confers self esteem and grounds individuals. People who are solidly rooted in their cultures have the necessary supports to tackle otherwise daunting life experiences including conflicts. One gets the sense that a well adjusted Tiv and Inuk person can overcome any situation by reaching into an almost endless source of strength offered by cultural knowledge, identity, and support by community.

Peace maintains a connected view of others–Tiv and Inuit understand the importance of interdependence and cooperation amongst people. Thus they strive in their daily lives, to build and rebuild relationships. Careful attention is paid to how people conduct themselves, the choice of words that are used for communication and also how body language is employed. Relationships are also the basis for conflict resolution. There is less emotional stress when conflict parties know that they can deal with issues and still preserve their relationships. They are likely more open and cooperative if they know and can trust the mediators of their conflicts.

Role orientation versus power orientation–The orientation to roles is still strong in Inuit and Tiv communities and is not considered to be a bad thing. Women in either community did not express the need to fight male roles and youth were comfortable deferring to elders because they felt a sense of contentment in their roles. This changed somewhat once questions were intentionally directed towards

complexifying power relations. But overall, the roles were seen as cooperating to create balance and not to be used for hierarchies.

In relationship with the supernatural realm–Without necessarily imposing their understandings of the supernatural, both groups argued that there is a power outside of people that regulates human affairs. Rituals and taboos are thought to mediate the relationship between the supernatural and the physical. Healthy fear is also thought to be an effective way to control otherwise damaging behaviour.

No one gets away with wrongdoing–The idea is strong in both cultures that ultimately, no one gets away with wrong doing. By the laws of nature, everyone pays a price for damaging another or the earth. This idea is supported by the understanding that Natural Law holds each individual accountable for their actions. A clear sense of right and wrong is prevalent and a wrongdoer knows intuitively that they have committed a wrong. That knowledge demands that they act to correct the wrong. When this sense of knowing (conscience) is ignored, it will be met with inevitable repercussions. The wrongdoer will be aware that she is paying for her wrongdoing even if she was never caught or reprimanded.

Discourage punishment, emphasize discipline–Both cultures agree that punishment just for the sake of it, is not productive in shaping behaviour or for preventing or resolving conflicts. Discipline on the other hand is the bedrock for molding behaviour even when it seems harsh. Children they argue, need to be actively restrained from learning and persisting in damaging behaviour by the parent's. It is the parents' role to provide direction, appropriate discipline and healing to their children and to the

community by extension. Community should therefore support their parents in accomplishing this onerous yet noble task.

Conflict resolution is always an opportunity for teaching and learning– When a wrong is committed, the goal is not just to resolve the issue, but to use that process as an opportunity to teach and model good behaviour, as well as warn others of the wider impact of damaging behaviour. Inuit and Tiv indigenous worldviews seem to indicate that people can learn and grow from all experiences that happen to them good and bad ones alike.

Role of elders-Elders (male and female) are natural mediators by virtue of life experience. They are the go-to people for interventions in conflicts. These are people that community recognizes to be reputable and generous with their life skills. They are usually individuals who in addition to having taught and raised responsible children of their own, can now apply cumulative wisdom and knowledge to continue teaching and serving in their communities as interveners, conveners, mediators, arbiters, healers etc. They deserve the respect of their communities.

Equality and Voice–Both are important ingredients in mediation and conflict resolution especially if parties are to emerge from the process feeling satisfied. There ought to be a trusted intervener in conflict resolution processes who ensures that all parties' voices are encouraged and heard as best as possible and that talking continues until all parties have sufficiently aired their feelings and perspectives. Elders are often the conveners and interveners of choice especially when they are humble, patient and gentle.

Naming, blaming, shaming-Inuit and Tiv cultures favour approaches that allow community witnesses and elders to name guilt, identify guilty parties and openly discuss

issues in a manner that sometimes amounts to the shaming of a wrongdoer. Elders or other problem solvers apportion blame for wrongdoing, and allow shaming to take its toll on guilty parties as necessary. The goal is not to encourage stigma and violation of the wrong party, but to expose a wrongdoing for what it is and how it affects its victims. It is not unusual that when a wrongdoer has experienced shame when a wrongdoing was exposed, for elders to instruct all present and the community not to further taunt or over flog the issue or person.

Resolve conflicts quickly–The expediency of resolving conflict matters quickly is shared and encouraged by Inuit and Tiv. Resolving conflicts as quickly as possible, allows people involved to clear their emotions move on (physically, mentally or spiritually). It is believed that when issues are left unattended or dragged out over a lengthy period, it may acquire a more complex nature and potentially harm parties beyond what the immediate problem was. Others may also start to be dragged into the problem, making it bigger and having the capacity to needlessly affect more people.

Effective parenting is peacemaking–Inuit and Tiv emphasize the role of parenting in peacemaking. They maintain that peacemaking is not just about resolving conflicts, it is about making investments that yield peace as a long term return. Peacemaking seen as such, begins right from birth. Parents continue to deposit seeds of peace in the child until they arrive at such a time that fruit can be reaped from that solidly planted tree of peace

Working with and within government–It is possible for indigenous (Tiv and Inuit) ways to work cooperatively with newer government structures and courts if effort is appropriately applied. One way is to deemphasize power and hierarchies between

judges and elders. Elders' knowledge is valuable and should be acknowledged and validated by mainstream legal systems. Another way, is to promote linkages between indigenous practices and the religions they adhere to. Mutually reinforcing traditions and values can be indentified and strengthened especially since many Inuit and Tiv have been Christianized.

Humour transcends all cultures-Humour and laughter bring ease to the human soul and should be used in peacemaking processes to defuse the distressing impact of conflicts. When people can be brought to a place of laughter, at themselves and/or with others, they are less likely to feel threatened or insulted. Genuine laughter (in amusement not scorn) with others makes it is easier to re-humanize and empathize with them. Tiv and Inuit expend much energy creating laughter to ease conflicts and stress through creative storytelling, dance, songs, puppetry, jokes, teasing, games and discussions.

Upholding diversity, honouring knowledge–Elders argue that if the indigenous (Inuit and Tiv) ways were not there, modern courts would be overwhelmed by cases. Indigenous processes, principles and courts help clarify cultural perspectives on conflicts. They are convened the in homes of elders, at kitchen tables and under trees but the value that they bring to the search for peace is enormous. More funds should be devoted to research that further elucidates indigenous knowledge and allows it to be validated and utilized more widely.

Rewarding indigenous elders-Commending and remunerating elders who serve as conflict resolution practitioners in their communities makes practical sense. Not because elders have asked to be paid for their work, but because that is how contemporary society acknowledges valuable work. This gesture will send messages to

others in the community to the effect that indigenous knowledges and practices are valuable. A Tiv lawyer suggested, that "we (public) can give them (elders) prizes... Some (elders) can be picked and recognized by the state at various tiers of governments- from district, local to state and federal governments so that they continue their work of resolving conflicts in their localities. They do not have to be absorbed into government service but they can be commended without absorbing them". This should be easy to organize if governments prioritize the work that elders do in their communities.

Living peacefully is possible–Indigenous peoples exemplify that people are peaceful not because they never encounter conflicts, but because they develop sound principles for dealing with life and human complexity. For while generations of people will continue to change, the power of a sound idea communicated effectively remains valid through the ages. Simply realizing than conflict is natural and peace is possible frees people to pursue creativity in engaging conflicts and pursuing peace.

After thoughts

This work has explored indigenous conflict resolution and peacemaking processes with a focus on the Inuit and Tiv. Principles and ideologies of various indigenous groups have been considered as a background for understanding Tiv and Inuit conflict orientations and practices within a wider context of an indigenous worldview. It emerges, that the category of peoples who are referred to or that refer to themselves as indigenous peoples share broad historical and contemporary qualities that have been briefly highlighted. I have argued that indigenous peoples had original cultural processes for organizing life at all levels–socio-political, economic and legal. Those processes were

interrupted and slowed down through colonization by foreign cultures and continue to be challenged by aspects of globalization.

There is immense pressure to create uniform conventional procedures across cultures but uniformity does not serve all cultures in the same way. Foreign legal processes imposed on indigenous peoples have worked to some extent, but have continued to be confusing for the most part; there is little local ownership of the processes and they have frequently been used inappropriately by corrupt political entrepreneurs to oppress their indigenous communities. There is however a general sense of cultural revitalization aimed at strengthening original practices of indigenous cultures, that were effective for conflict resolution and that ensured sustainable peace-within, between and among people.

In order to challenge the push for universal and conventional processes of conflict and peace it has been demonstrated that a drive towards convention silences dissension and voice by denying other worldviews-ideas, philosophies and methods. The consequence is an obliteration of diversity and rich potential for collaboration at least, and the creation of deadly intercultural/ideological conflicts at worst. The latter fuels distrust and unproductive competitions between peoples. Therefore work seeks to promote diversified voice, advocate for cross-cultural and intercultural cooperation and collaboration among all people. It invites conflict resolution and peace scholars and practitioners to consider diversifying their skills, tools, capacities and orientations to include indigenous methods. Inuit and Tiv cultures have also gained awareness of cultural similarities and differences between Inuit and Tiv. Opportunity was created to share their processes for conflict resolution and peacemaking with each other and with

the scholastic community. Each culture has contributed to the diversification of the conflict and peace practitioner's toolbox of ideas and practice and has also supplied ideas to help develop conflict prevention strategies for theirs and other indigenous communities.

Recommendations for Future Research

This work certainly does not end here, other aspects of indigenous conflict and peace practice merit further elaboration and examination. This is a first step and the following aspects are especially crucial for further investigation;

Women's Perspectives: Female consultants raised some critical questions that may perhaps challenge contemporary gender and power ideologies. I started out intending to consider gendered aspects of Inuit and Tiv methods in addition to the general scope of work, but found the feedback I was getting to be worth another study in its own right. It is important that a gendered discussion of Inuit and Tiv processes does not get lost in a broad discourse. Although it operates within that discourse, it also stands apart in terms of capturing women's experiences of their cultural practices. Thus I recommend that separate and proper attention be accorded this most important topic in another research project.

Indigenous Tools for Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking: Tools employed for conflict and peace processes merit attention including storytelling, proverbs, songs, sayings, games, dance and dialogue. Most consultants for example, responded to questions through stories; they gave personal examples to illustrate points, shared other people's personal stories, share of incidents that had occurred in those communities or

told fables to explain or buttress points. These stories are themselves worth analyzing for their multiple meanings and also to expatiate on their effect in regulating those societies.

Proverbs, songs and sayings were also used in day-to-day communication as well as in meetings (especially of the Tiv). I noticed that in addition to promoting a sense of 'shared meanings' among community members, proverbs, songs and sayings convey cryptic meanings that have almost miracle effects in quelling negative behavior. Most people who understood Inuktitut or Tiv language shared a collective understanding of the warnings or admonitions when a proverb or saying was used and that understanding was sufficient to prevent a conflict and get conflict parties working together to find amicable solutions.

The role of traditional games and puppetry in mediating intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup level conflicts also deserve further examination. Tiv and Inuit traditional games and puppet shows would present interesting case studies for continuing research. Taken together these represent indigenous tools for conflict and peace practice and deserve further elaboration in a research context.

Human Rights in Indigenous Processes: A clarification of the indigenous conception of individual and collective rights and how that conception influences personal and community development would also be worthwhile. Some consultants seemed to suggest that the focus of human rights on the individual and her exclusive right to personal freedoms, may prevent that individual from entering into another one of what ought to be her fundamental right, which is the right to enjoy a deep sense of community and her right to do what is necessary to enable a full and enjoyable participation thereof. Without intending to diminish the importance of individual human rights, indigenous

cultures seem to call attention to communitarian and collective rights as being as equally necessary and important as individual human rights.

A Word to Tiv and Inuit

In the introduction, I asked "what can indigenous people do about the problems they face?" I can now respond that Inuit and Tiv should put their indigenous processes into practice. Although their cultural practices have been challenged by historical and ongoing socio-political dynamics, the knowledge that has been preserved is valuable and applicable. If it can be articulated as eloquently as consultants have done, then it can and should be applied with vigour and conviction.

Unfortunately, each group heavily depends on their governments to make all things good happen. I would say that governments happen on one level, community takes place on another; indigenous people can continue to build community alongside political structures. The foundation for building effective communities is relationships as amply recognized by Tiv and Inuit and as they have shown, the way to ensure effective relationships is efficient conflict resolution and peacemaking. Ultimately, the secret to sustainable peace in these communities lies in the application of the processes and principles that they have identified.

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APPENDIX A – Research Questions

Research Questions

In order to understand indigenous processes of conflict resolution and peacemaking

practices among Tiv and Inuit, the researcher addressed the following questions;

1. What processes do the Tiv/Inuit use to resolve a) interpersonal conflicts b) intra-
   group conflicts, and c) inter-group conflicts involving other ethnic groups?

   o How often are these processes for conflict resolution applied to conflicts

2. What is the status and involvement of Tiv and Inuit women within their
   communities in terms of helping to resolve conflicts?

   o How are women involved in the shaping of conflict resolution processes
   in their communities?

   o To what extent do women participate in these processes?

3. What are some problems associated with the use of those methods?

   o Have those methods tended to fail or succeed and why?

   o How can these methods/processes be improved upon (if necessary)?

4. How might these (indigenous) processes be applied in the wider world and
   possibly other cultures?

5. How do the Tiv/Inuit define conflict? And Peace?

6. Further thoughts on the topic?

APPENDIX B – Ethics Approval Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Ethics
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APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

November 24, 2010

TO: **Grace Kyoon**   **(Advisor P. Kulchyski)**
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Bruce Tefft, Chair**
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: **Protocol #P2010:062**
"Original Ways: Conflict Resolution and Peacemaking Processes of the Tiv and the Inuit"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol, as revised, has received human ethics approval by the **Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval has been issued based on your agreement with the change(s) to your original protocol required by the PSREB. It is the researcher's responsibility to comply with any copyright requirements.   This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

-       **If you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to the Office of Research Services, fax 261-0325 - please include the name of the funding agency   and your UM Project number.   This must be faxed before your account can be accessed.**

-       **if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval;   otherwise the account will be locked.**

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html) **in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

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