

Assessing Youth Experiences of Hydroelectric Development in Fox Lake Cree
Nation's Traditional Territory

By
Randi Thomas

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Department of Environment and Geography
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

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Abstract

Fox Lake Cree Nation (FLCN) is a First Nation community located in northern Manitoba, with approximately 1100 community members, of which approximately 500 reside in the traditional territory. FLCN has been highly affected by the development of five dams within their traditional territory, and have participated in the Clean Environment Commission hearings to share the impacts of that development. The FLCN youth have a unique perspective and experience with development. Youth are impacted by past hydroelectric development projects, and will continue to be affected in the future. In addition to looking at impacts and mitigation strategies, FLCN youth are looking to business and training opportunities that still align with their core values and Cree worldview. Knowledge transmission from Elders to youth is an important factor in moving forward for FLCN youth. Understanding how these experiences and perspectives affect and influence youth in FLCN is important to creating a future that benefits the youth of Fox Lake Cree Nation.

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Introduction

Study Area and Background

Fox Lake Cree Nation (FLCN) is a First Nation community located in northern Manitoba, in and around Gillam, MB. FLCN has approximately 1100 members, with 500 members residing in Bird and Gillam (see figure 1). Members residing outside of Gillam or Bird mainly live in Thompson, Churchill, and Winnipeg. FLCN is signatory to the 1910 Adhesion to Treaty 5 signed at York Factory. In 1947, Canada recognized the Gillam Band as an independent Band and renamed it Fox Lake Band in 1949.

Fox Lake Cree Nation members have been significantly impacted by hydroelectric activity since the 1960's. Four large hydroelectric generating stations (Kelsey, Kettle, Limestone, and Long Spruce) have been constructed on the Nelson River, destroying its natural flow, flooding the land, and introducing development on a previously undeveloped landscape. Another dam, Keeyask begun construction in July 2015. Additional dams (Birthday, Conawapa, and Gillam Island) are proposed in FLCN's traditional territory by Manitoba Hydro on the Nelson River (see figure 2). Some impacts to the community include flooding, loss of gravesites, severe losses in sturgeon populations and habitat, loss of moose and caribou habitat, loss of language, and a general loss in the number of faunal species in the FLCN traditional territory.

According to the Cree worldview, everything is interconnected, and one cannot separate some aspects of the environment from the whole. This contradicts the common business practice of dividing development into separate projects. The cumulative effects of several projects will be much greater than any individual project, or even the sum of all individual projects, therefore it is very important to integrate Cree worldview into Western science for adaptive management purposes.

The purpose, objectives, study parameters, rationale, and positionality included will provide the basis for this study. Cree worldview, Aski Keskentamowin (traditional knowledge), and the effects of hydroelectric development on First Nations people will be explored in the literature review. The methods chapter will outline the qualitative methods used in this study, including content analysis, coding, and post-qualitative inquiry methods. In the results chapter, the coded material will be discussed in relation to each study objective. In the discussion chapter, the study objectives and results are discussed in relation to several theoretical concepts. The conclusion and recommendations chapters provide final thoughts and recommendations for future research topics.

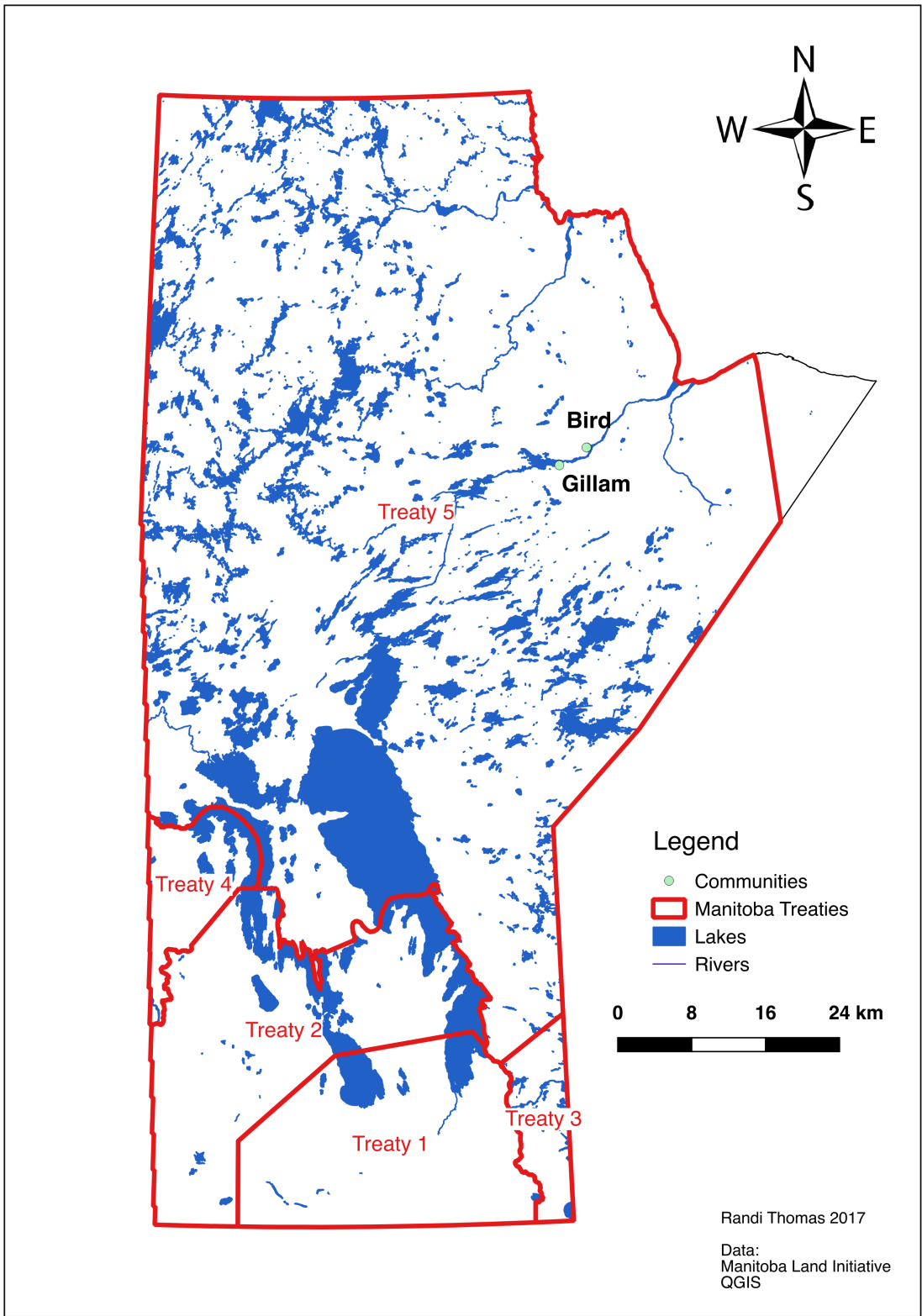


Figure 1: Gillam and Bird.

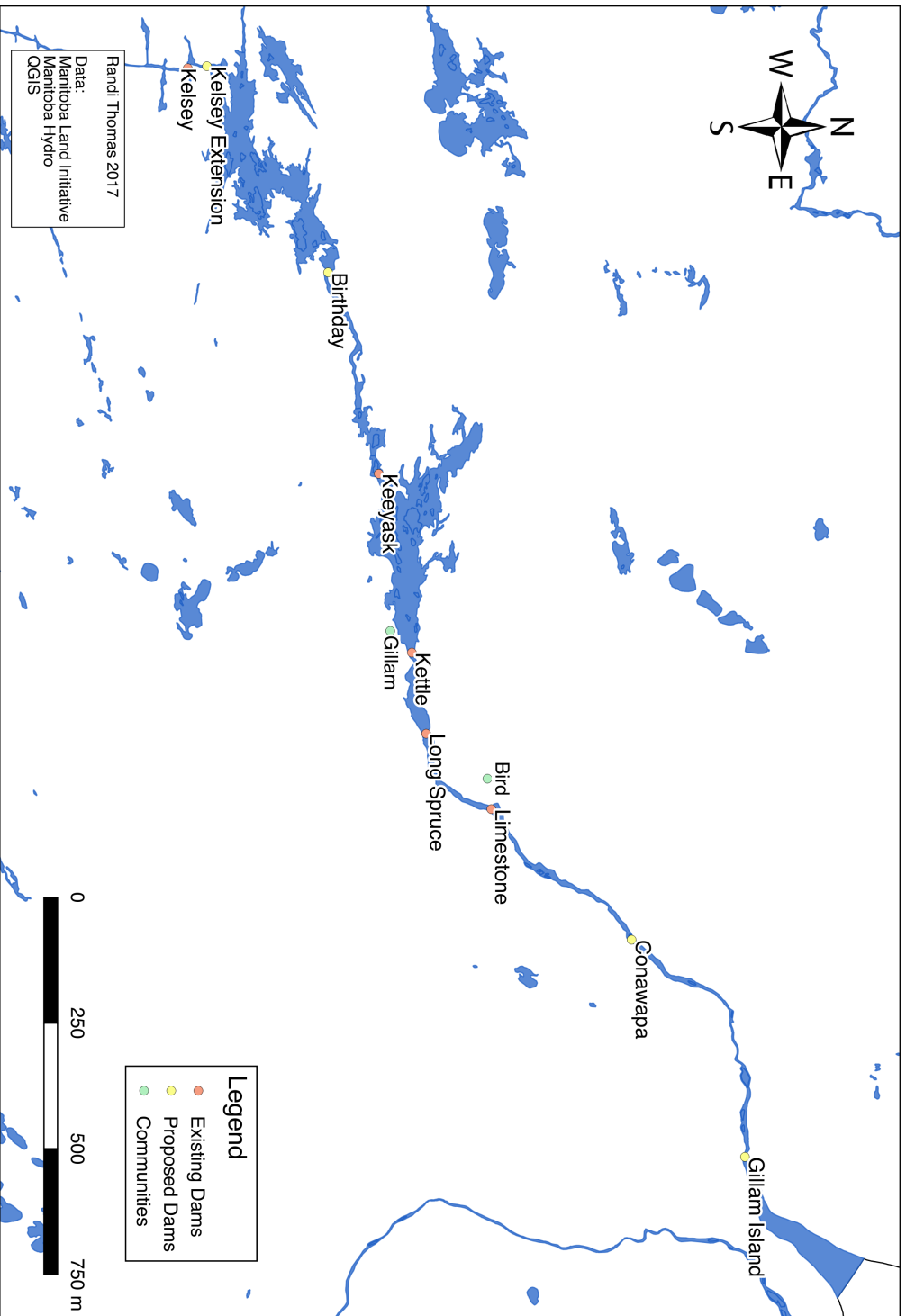


Figure 2: Manitoba Hydro dam sites on the Nelson River.

Table 1: A brief history of hydroelectric development on the Nelson River.

Year	Development
1950s	Development of Kelsey Generating Station (GS)
1960	Kelsey GS began operating on June 23
1963	Study conducted on the hydroelectric potential of the Nelson River
1966	Upon completion of the feasibility study, an agreement was signed between the Manitoba government and Hydro (now Manitoba Hydro) to begin development of the Nelson River, on February 15
1966	Development of the Nelson River commenced
1970	Kettle GS went into operation
1971	Bipole I was constructed
1971	Radisson Converter Station (outside of Gillam) went into operation
1974	Kettle GS completed and went into operation in November
1977	First unit at Long Spruce GS went into service
1978	Henday Converter Station went into operation October 1
1978	Bipole II was constructed
1979	All 10 units at Long Spruce GS went into operation
1984	Limestone GS construction deferred. A camp, town, and Stage 1 cofferdam were already in place and were consequently shut down
1984-1987	Gillam to Churchill transmission line constructed over three winters
1985	Limestone GS construction begins again
1990	First unit at Limestone GS goes online
1991	A road to the proposed Conawapa GS was constructed
1991	Limestone GS officially opened
1993	Construction of Kelsey GS to Split Lake transmission line
2004	FLCN, Province of Manitoba, and Manitoba Hydro sign settlement agreement for past adverse effects on the Nelson River
2007	FLCN and Manitoba Hydro sign process agreement for Conawapa GS

2007	Bipole III plans announced
2009	Joint Keeyask Development Agreement (JKDA) signed and FLCN becomes a partner in the Keeyask GS
2013	Clean Environment Commission hearings on Keeyask GS
2014	Bipole III clearing begins in FLCN traditional territory
2014	Conawapa deferred following the Needs For and Alternatives To Business Case for Keeyask
2015	Construction on Keeyask GS begins July 15
2015- Present	Construction on Keeyask GS continues, as well as the construction of the South Access Road (between Gillam and Keeyask) and the Keeyask Transmission Project (KTP)

(Manitoba Hydro, 2010)

Purpose

To determine the experience of hydroelectric development on youth in Fox Lake Cree Nation's traditional territory.

Objectives

1. How do Fox Lake Cree Nation youth experience the impacts of hydroelectric development in their traditional territory?
2. What are the perspectives of youth on the benefits of hydroelectric development, if any?
3. How is important knowledge transmitted to FLCN youth about development?

Study Parameters

A review of existing literature was compiled that pertains to Fox Lake Cree Nation. This literature was analyzed to determine the historical context of hydroelectric development in FLCN traditional territory.

A content analysis, coding, and post-qualitative inquiry of a portion of the Keyask Clean Environment Commission (CEC) transcripts was done. There was additional participation throughout the entire CEC, but only a sample of these transcripts was studied due to volume. The portion assessed was the participation of the youth in the Concerned Fox Lake Grassroots Citizens. This study was unable to take into consideration the details of any additional regulatory processes. This study utilized data that already exists in an effort to avoid interview fatigue that exists due to the constant development in the area. This study did not utilize quantitative methods because the transcripts used were not designed for quantitative analysis.

Rationale

Many knowledge-holders contribute significantly to hydroelectric development related regulatory processes, such as the Clean Environment Commission. Often, community members note that they feel as though their contribution hasn't had the appropriate impact. This study ensures that the knowledge shared by community members is respected and that it contributes to the growing body of knowledge on hydroelectric impacts.

Positionality

I am providing a statement of my position to give the reader a better understanding of me as a researcher, and the relationship I have with this subject matter. I am a female and speak only one language, English. I am familiar with Cree because my husband is Cree and his family speaks the language, but I do not understand or speak it. I was previously employed full time as a researcher by Fox Lake Cree Nation from 2013-2017, doing traditional knowledge research for negotiations with Manitoba Hydro, and I spent a lot of time in the FLCN community, traveling to Fox Lake approximately 2-3 times a month.

Literature Review

The literature that was most helpful in accessing understanding of the research questions at hand were on the topics of Cree worldview, traditional knowledge, and the effects of hydroelectric development on First Nations people. These three topics were explored in this literature review.

Cree Worldview

Indigenous worldviews are diverse and differ greatly from the Western worldview. Cree worldview contains many aspects such as social values like reciprocity that are notably different from the Western worldview (Berkes, 1999). In Cree worldview, all things are connected, and it is impossible to separate people, health, or the environment from each other. It is a very holistic approach in which cumulative effects and community/species relationships play a large role in decision-making.

Cree epistemology aims to understand the reality of existence and harmony with nature by looking inward (McKay, 2013). This is in direct contrast to the Western notion that knowledge is an access to power, something that must be accumulated and possessed (Sutherland & Dennick, 2002).

Cree worldview is embedded in language, and a comparison of English and Cree languages is helpful for understanding differences in worldview. For example, Cree language is relational, not hierarchal, and primarily about connections, while the English language is competitive and is about relations of power (McKay, 2013).

Cree worldview emphasizes connections, inclusion, and value of all beings. Due to colonization, and continuing colonizing practices, most Indigenous peoples are immersed in Western knowledge systems (McKay, 2013). There is a strong notion that Western knowledge systems are superior to Indigenous ways of knowing, and this disturbs the Cree worldview.

In Cree worldview, nature is not external to the Indigenous people living within the context of nature. There is a very strong emphasis on harmony and relationships, as one researcher writes:

“Balance at the outer level is about maintaining respectful interconnected, reciprocal and sustainable relationships beginning at the individual level embracing family, community, nation, and extending out toward the environment, plants, animals and cosmos.”

(Michell, 2005, p. 40)

Aski Keskentamowin (Traditional Knowledge)

Aski Keskentamowin (AK), or traditional knowledge (TK), is a ‘way of knowing’ based upon an accumulation of observations. There are many social mechanisms and social-ecological practices within traditional knowledge (Ballard & Thompson, 2013). Traditional knowledge can be used to monitor a landscape, and is found in Aboriginal or Indigenous communities that are sustenance-based. This information is highly sacred, and is used by these communities to manage their natural resources. Traditional knowledge employs both literal and metaphorical aspects of knowledge to live off of the land, and manage their natural resources (Scott, 1989).

Traditional knowledge operates within the Cree worldview for Fox Lake Cree Nation, and is embedded in everything. The holistic nature of Cree worldview is apparent in traditional ways of knowing. Indigenous people view the land as part of themselves, and feel a responsibility to be keepers of the land and ensure harmony (McGregor, et. al., 2010). Sharing traditional knowledge comes natural to many Indigenous peoples, because of the focus on connections and relationships. However, traditional knowledge has become guarded from outsiders due to misuse and abuse of that knowledge. Indigenous peoples now must protect their sacred knowledge of the land to protect the land itself.

Traditional knowledge is highly valuable because it contains knowledge about interconnecting systems, continuously over time. Research continuity over time is one of the most important aspects in understanding, as Indigenous communities have been active in continuous research for time immemorial (McGregor et. al., 2010). The traditional knowledge that is transmitted generation by generation by Indigenous peoples is the most comprehensive and deeply understood research possible. The challenge for Indigenous communities is often how to express this research in the context of Western systems, such as land claims or development (McGregor et. al., 2010).

Effects of Hydroelectric Development on First Nations people

Indigenous people in Canada are highly affected by the impacts of hydroelectric development. A wave of corporate water development has been

occurring in Canada project by project. “The tendency of governments to separate resource endowments into discrete categories to be pursued independently is at odds with the integration of natural processes” that Indigenous people experience (Quinn, 1991, p. 141). In addition to separation of projects and aspects of the environment by government departments, jurisdiction over resources can be conflicting as well:

The province claims ownership of the water while the federal government claims jurisdiction over the fisheries. It has been our experience that in practice, while both governments will jealously guard these rights against Indian...residents, they are quite prepared to give them away to large corporations to the great risk to other users and for uncertain and ill-defined economic benefits.

(Gitskan-Wet'Suwet'En Tribal Council, 1984)

Artificial changes in water distribution and levels are particularly harmful to Indigenous people because often they are still living close to nature, adapting to the cycles of high and low water levels and the biological resources that sustain them (Quinn, 1991). Most water management in Canada is typically a single-purpose project, such as a generating station, and this development monopolizes the resource, while other interests attempt to salvage what they can, and react in self-defense (Quinn, 1991). Some of the basic principles guiding corporate development are detrimental to Indigenous worldview and livelihood, such as:

1. Regulation of the natural water regime improves its utility to society.
2. Economic (withdrawal) water uses take precedence over traditional (instream) uses.
3. Riparian minorities in the way must be displaced for projects which serve the common good.

4. Mitigation/compensation arrangements are afterthoughts, not part of the development planning and not available to all interests.
5. Deterioration in water quality is the unavoidable price of industrial progress.

(Quinn, 1991)

These principles of operation are harmful to the First Nations people living amidst rapid hydroelectric development. It can be difficult to adjust to an ever-changing landscape, and adapt to challenges, such as reduced access to natural resources for sustenance. These effects are felt on health, well-being, culture, identity, and livelihoods.

Indigenous lives are disrupted in innumerable ways by corporate water development, and while industry is just starting to adjust their basic principles of management to include Indigenous interests, there is still a long way to go. From the beginning, hydraulic imperialism has marginalized First Nations peoples in Canada through the manipulation of watersheds and their resources (Macfarlane & Kitay, 2016). In addition to the construction of hydroelectric implementations, there were often jurisdiction boundaries established alongside the development, further impacting First Nations living in these areas.

Methods

This research project employed several concepts in qualitative research methods. Content analysis, data coding, and post-qualitative inquiry were used to gain an understanding of the study material. Within the post-qualitative inquiry, methods such as assemblage, thick description, and diffractive analysis were used to further deepen understanding.

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research uses non-quantitative methods to collect information in a more natural setting, and seeks to understand phenomena in a context-specific setting (Golafshani, 2003). Quantitative researchers seek, “causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings,” while qualitative researchers seek “illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations” (Hoepfl, 1997). Qualitative research is important because it allows the researcher to glean greater meaning without manipulating the phenomena. Another important aspect of qualitative research is the ability to glean unanticipated results, due to the open-ended nature of the research. Researchers can develop relationships and consider their role within the research, rather than remaining object. Qualitative researchers recognize that their positionality as a researcher has an influence on the research, and embrace their involvement with the research, immersing themselves in the subject (Golafshani, 2003). However, both qualitative and quantitative research need to demonstrate credibility. Quantitative research achieves credibility using proven instruments of research, while qualitative research relies on the researcher

as the instrument (Patton, 2001). Rather than determining the reliability and validity of research, as quantitative research does, qualitative research seeks to ensure credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003).

Qualitative research aims to see the subject matter thoroughly and to work through the complexities and individuality of each phenomena in its specific context.

Content Analysis

Content analysis has been used in many studies, including gender studies, education research, and cultural anthropology. It is a systematic search or review of texts, in which the researchers attempts to draw inferences from (Krippendorff, 2004). For successful content analysis to be done, the following measures are necessary:

1. Theoretical and conceptual backing.
2. Clearly defined scope of the research.
3. Review of past research and development measures.
4. Definition of the population of messages to be analyzed.
5. Immersion in the message pool.
6. Decision on whether to use human coding and/or computer coding.

(Neuendorf, 2010)

Content analysis is a valuable qualitative analysis tool, but needs to be approached with rigor and attention to detail.

Coding

Coding is a type of qualitative data analysis that is used to determine recurring themes throughout research material. A challenge of analyzing qualitative data is determining what material to focus on. Coding can provide a focus on theme throughout the data and highlight priorities for analysis (Vaughn & Turner, 2016). Using grounded theory, themes and codes are developed with the research material, and the material is then coded to categorize the information for analysis.

Post-Qualitative Inquiry

Coding alone is not enough to analyze transcripts due to the inevitable “decontextualization and fragmentation of interview discourse into ‘codable’ elements” (Nespor & Barylske, 1991, p. 810). Once coding has been completed, additional theorization and qualitative data analysis must occur to ensure that transcripts are not treated solely as brute data without additional theoretical value (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Qualitative data analysis should be much more than a reduction of data to a series of thematic groupings with no further analysis (Mazzei, 2014). There are several theories of qualitative data analysis that allow for post-qualitative inquiry, such as assemblage, thick description, and diffractive analysis.

Assemblage

Assemblage theorizes that both reading and writing can encourage strong relationships between the reader and textual material (Augustine, 2014). Writing

memos and notes about interviews allows the researcher to begin to analyze the qualitative data through the repetitive action of writing, as well as processing and connecting to theoretical knowledge. Writing enables one to become familiar with the material using a different perspective, and to apply different theories to the data to understand it better. Writing about the linguistic and material settings of interviews sheds light to possible connections among the theories and experiences of participants (Augustine, 2014). Using writing as a tool allows the researcher to repeat ideas that are already forming, and to “ask questions and work through new associations” (Augustine, 2014, p. 750). By becoming familiar with different concepts and theories through reading, the researcher begins to connect to these theories as they come up in research, and writing further clarifies these theoretical connections.

Thick Description

Thick description aims to create a rich, contextualized description of a research subject to increase verisimilitude and transferability of research findings (Creswell, 2012; Freeman, 2014; Merriam, 2009). Holliday (2007) argues that thick description can be used to provide a good analysis of a research subject, not by being solely exhaustive, but by examining the different facets of culture or social matrix associated with the research subject. In order to do this effectively, this information has to be clarified and interpreted by the researcher to ensure a deeper meaning. Employing hermeneutics, the interpretation that occurs by the researcher

when what is said is not immediately intelligible, allows the researcher to apply deeper meaning to conversation (Gadamer, 1977, p. 98).

Diffractive Analysis

Diffractive analysis is defined as “reading insights through one another” (Barad, 2007, p. 25). Diffraction differs from reflection, which mirrors sameness (such as coding). Diffractive analysis instead finds patterns of differences, and is often done after coding, as a complimentary, and deeper analysis (Mazzei, 2014). In diffractive analysis, the study material is read with theoretical concepts, eventually making the data and theory intelligible to each other (Mazzei, 2014). While coding layers themes onto data, diffractive analysis uses theories to thread the data and theories through each other, “resulting in multiplicity, ambiguity, and incoherent subjectivity” (Mazzei, 2014, p.743). The analysis that results from utilizing diffraction considers the “entanglement of bodies, texts, relationships, data, language, and theory” (Mazzei, 2014, p. 745).

Applied Methods

A review of existing literature about FLCN was done to gain background knowledge and to understand the historical context of the community, as well as FLCN’s relationship with hydroelectric development through the years. In addition to reviewing literature about FLCN, several theoretical papers were read to contribute to the post-qualitative analysis.

A content analysis of the Fox Lake Cree Nation youth presentation at the 2013 Keeyask Clean Environment Commission (CEC) hearings was done to determine themes in the data.

First, the researcher attended the hearings on December 10, 2013, when the FLCN youth were making their presentation to the CEC. The transcripts were made publically available after transcription was completed, and were obtained directly through the Clean Environment Commission website. A deeper understanding of the presentation was gained by being present for the presentation at the hearings as well. The transcripts were coded using an inductive coding style, which aims to glean codes directly from the data. The coding structure used identified themes in the testimony made by the youth during the hearings (see figure 2).

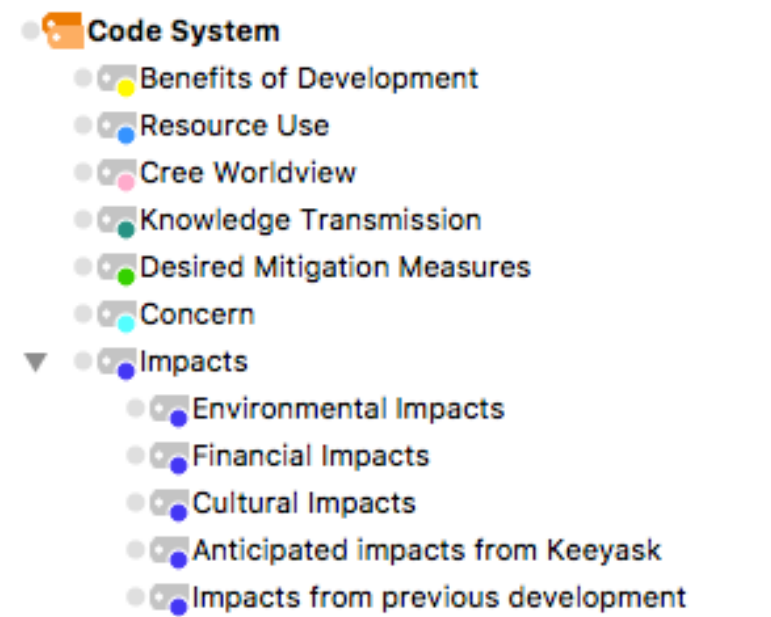


Figure 3: Code system used to analyze the CEC transcripts.

The full presentation made by the FLCN youth was coded to identify the frequency of the themes, and to determine the experiences perspectives of youth affected by hydroelectric development. Content analysis of the transcript prior to coding provided the necessary insight to determine themes and subsequently, codes to use.

Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDA) was used for theory building and construction, and to identify the segments of text that each code applied to. MAXQDA12 was the software that was used to code the transcript. Once coding was completed, all the text from each code was gathered together to identify patterns and similarities.

After coding was completed, the post-qualitative inquiry began, to determine differences in the data and to provide a more rigorous and deeper understanding of the material. To complete both the diffractive analysis and assemblage, many theories were studied to determine whether the material was reflective of existing theoretical knowledge, and how the CEC transcript material could be beneficial to the theories as well. Examples of theories examined are grounded theory, Cree Medicine Wheel theory, *Mino Pimatisowin*, moral economy, and environmental determinism. As a part of the assemblage and diffraction process, notes were taken on each theory as the material was read to increase understanding and to begin the process of integrating the CEC transcript material with the theoretical knowledge for further analysis. In addition to reading and writing, descriptions of the CEC hearings began to take shape, as a result of employing hermeneutics. The relationships that had been built previously with community members gave the researcher a deeper understanding of the community context in which the CEC

material was situated. Applying this greater context allowed the researcher to gain a deeper understanding and analysis of the CEC material.

Results

Completion of content analysis, coding, assemblage, thick description, and diffractive analysis resulted in new perspectives and understanding of the experiences of youth in Fox Lake Cree Nation.

Table 2: Frequency of codes for each theme.

Code System	80
Benefits of Development	2
Resource Use	11
Cree Worldview	6
Knowledge Transmission	13
Desired Mitigation Measures	10
Concern	1
Impacts	12
Environmental Impacts	8
Financial Impacts	5
Cultural Impacts	6
Anticipated Impacts from Keeyask	3
Impacts from Previous Development	3

How do Fox Lake Cree Nation youth experience the impacts of hydroelectric development in their traditional territory?

Coding revealed several themes regarding youth experiences with impacts. In addition to the general theme of impacts, youth also discussed environmental, financial, cultural, previous impacts, and anticipated impacts specifically throughout the hearing. Youth also spoke about their concerns and desired mitigation measures. Resource use and Cree worldview were important themes throughout the discussion, relating to all areas of research. Both resource use and Cree worldview are themes that are found throughout the hearing, and relate to all three study objectives because they are part of an overarching worldview.

Fox Lake Cree Nation youth were struck by the environmental damages caused by hydroelectric development projects, stating, “we too visibly see the destruction of the land daily, the waste and debris left behind on the waters from the flooded lands” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). The impacts anticipated and experienced from this damage include cultural impacts, impacts on access to resources, environmental impacts, and financial impacts.

Impacts to the aquatic environment were spoken about often by the FLCN youth during the presentation. They noted that they “have to travel further inland to catch healthier fish” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). When asked whether there were brook trout in the Kettle River (located near Gillam), the FLCN youth responded, “no. I actually -- well, there is a few left in Limestone River but it is very rare to catch them there now” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5607). The FLCN youth noted that the water quality had decreased with each

hydroelectric development, and “we see too the dark and murky waters. No longer is there... an abundance of healthy fish for healthier living” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603).

At the presentation, the youth described the great distances they had to go to have access to healthy fish and to practice their rights to sustenance hunting and fishing. “And there is a picture with all of us and our brook trout, which we have to travel far to get now” one youth remarked (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5606). The FLCN youth went on to describe the lengths that they had to go to fish for healthy brook trout due to hydroelectric development:

“We have to take a train ride that's about six or seven hours, then you have to get out on the river, on the bridge on the river, Weir River, and you have to canoe about, I don't know, it took us four or five days to get to the trout grounds.”

(Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5607)

The youth emphasized that the need to travel further is typical for many types of resource use, “We also had to use different modes of transportation to get to where we were hunting, fishing or trapping” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5601). In addition to hunting, fishing, and trapping, gathering activities have been deeply affected by development in the Fox Lake Cree Nation traditional territory. “The same with our traditional medicines and berries that grew wild closer to home, we have to travel further for those” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604). The need to travel to access resources puts a great financial burden on the community, and is difficult to do with the time constraints youth have attending school. In the past, resources were available around the community, and community members were able to walk to their traps, or to pick berries. With the increased

development, this is much more difficult. The issue of access affects knowledge transmission as well, because Elders may not be able to make these long-distance trips. The youth described the importance of the Youth Wilderness Program, providing the funds to be able to access these resources with Elders and resource users to teach them, “it provided us, for some of us, for the reintroduction of our cultural and traditional activities of the Fox Lake Cree” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5601).

Hydroelectric development has influenced culture as well. The constantly changing landscape has proved a challenge in maintaining culturally important activities, such as the annual Goose Camp. The FLCN Goose Camp is held every May, when the geese migrate. Elders, children, youth, and community members gather to participate in crafting workshops, hunting education, and spiritual ceremonies. Goose Camp is a place for Elders to teach children and youth about hunting geese, from building blinds, to hunting, to cleaning the geese and cooking them. Leatherworking, beading, storytelling, and ceremony are also enjoyed throughout the week. Goose Camp is very culturally important for Fox Lake, because it provides a continuity throughout changes, and a chance to connect and learn. The FLCN Goose Camp is built near the mouth of the Limestone River, where it flows into the Nelson River. This has been an important place for FLCN members for many, many years predating hydroelectric development. Unfortunately, the location became the site of a rock quarry, created for the Limestone dam, located in the vicinity.

Youth are anticipating changes to their Goose Camp when development begins for the Conawapa Generating Station (currently on hold). “We understand

that our current goose camp location will once again become a rock quarry in preparation for future development downstream. Manitoba Hydro is proposing this, but our community members and leaders are carefully considering their proposal” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5602). FLCN youth “prefer they leave our goose camp area alone” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5602). Understanding that hydroelectric development may affect Goose Camp, the youth state, “but if they need it, we hope they can get another camp built like it, because it is a good goose hunting area for all members from both Gillam and Bird” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5602). FLCN respect and appreciate the knowledge transmission occurring at Goose Camp each year and are looking toward the future to protect it.

Access to resources is important for culture because of the holistic view that FLCN youth have toward the environment and themselves. When accessing the land with their Elders, FLCN youth are also learning core values, spirituality, and connection to the land. “And this is the last picture of us just relaxing by the fire getting told ghost stories. And that's looking out Conawapa right now, and what we have left” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5606). The youth expressed the need to hear their Elders’ stories, and learn the lessons that are taught on the land. FLCN youth listen intently when Elders speak because, “generations before us witnessed the unspoiled beauty of Fox Lake, but we haven’t” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). They are trying to learn how to best take care of the land they are inheriting, despite the development that is occurring on it. FLCN youth noted that, “there has been a lot of damage already” (Clean Environment

Commission, 2013a, p. 5604). They feel a personal responsibility to protect the land from degradation and ask this important question:

“How are we going to be keepers of our Aski if there is only destruction left behind from the dams?”

(Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603)

The FLCN youth forge forward courageously, attempting to grasp the enormity of the damages already caused by previous development, as well as those anticipated from future development. FLCN youth note that Keeyask and other future developments will cause “what we believe are probable changes that all future development projects will make to the land, animals, and the environment” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5602). They describe their holistic world view that “we do not separate from one dam to the other,” noting the cumulative “effects to the land, waters and our traditional ways of life” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). FLCN youth are undaunted by the task ahead of them and state, “it is important to prepare and do what it takes to restore and help the land and water recover” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604).

What are the perspectives of youth on the benefits of hydroelectric development, if any?

Fox Lake Cree Nation youth have a unique community perspective because they are considering their own futures in the context of their changing landscape. They have lived with an altered landscape their entire lives, because hydroelectric development started in the 1950s (Manitoba Hydro, 2010), with the Kelsey dam. The youth in FLCN are considering some of the benefits of development alongside the potential impacts. In the presentation, FLCN youth discussed both potential benefits and desired mitigation measures if development should move forward.

Fox Lake youth expressed that “as we move forward as Cree Nation Partners of the Keeyask project with Manitoba Hydro, and with proper training, we will see benefits in jobs and contracts, not only for us individually, but also with the Fox Lake Cree Nation” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p.5604). The youth expressed that they “will require more job training programs, possibly to begin in our schools” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605).

“As we see more workers coming into the community of Gillam, we can be creative and kick start business ventures for ourselves” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604). The goal of becoming an entrepreneur is more attainable during development because of the larger population and the increasing needs of that population. FLCN youth recognize this opportunity and are look for ways to harness it.

It is important to note that while FLCN youth are looking to the future for business development and opportunities, they will express that it “is important to

prepare and do what it takes to restore and help the land and water recover” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604). Business opportunities are viewed through the lens of the Cree worldview, where the land is not only valued, but viewed as a part of the people. Therefore the youth “want improved alternative and concrete plans to our agreements to decrease the damage to the land and the environment” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604). They also request that “land and water is not so adversely affected” when Keeyask Generating Station is built (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5604).

Lastly, FLCN youth see the potential for future development as an opportunity to fund “future adverse effect programs such as youth monitoring programs, and possibly other goose camps” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605). Funding these programs encourages resource use and knowledge transmission among youth, and they enjoy having access to these vital programs.

How is important knowledge transmitted to FLCN youth about development?

Knowledge transmission was talked about by the FLCN youth thirteen times during their presentation at the CEC hearings for Keeyask. The transmission of knowledge from elders and community members to children and youth is an important part of Cree culture. One of the youth said, “a couple of us were already taken out onto the land by our grandfathers and parents, which is usually a customary practice by our people” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5601). Of the thirteen times the

youth spoke of knowledge transmission, 12 of those times were about the environment and/or resource use. This illustrates the importance of resource use and knowledge transmission in Cree worldview.

The youth discussed how knowledge was being transmitted, by who, and where. There was a strong emphasis on hands-on learning from older, more experienced members of the Fox Lake Cree Nation community, and a deep respect for the knowledge that Elders had to offer (see figure 4). The youth began their presentation by acknowledging those that taught them, “I do, however, want to give thanks here today to all our mentors who provided us with their hunting, trapping and fishing expertise, along with countless other skills. There are many to thank” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5599-5600).



Figure 4: FLCN youth learning from an Elder in their outdoor classroom.

(Clean Environment Commission, 2013b)

In a landscape that is consistently changing with hydroelectric development, youth are learning about these changes from their Elders, “Our elders from the community shared with us many stories of how beautiful the lands and waters were before the beginning of the first dam, Kettle, in our immediate area” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). The images and stories of past life are spoken about with such detail and vividness that youth are feeling a sense of loss over the landscape, despite being born into the altered landscape. “Because our helpers pass on information to us from the different community presentations here, we too visibly see the destruction of the land daily, the waste and debris left behind on the waters from the flooded lands” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603).

The youth emphasized learning about resource use from their Elders, saying, “we learned to fish, hunt and trap animals” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5601). The FLCN youth spoke about learning from their Elders directly, on the land. The youth spoke about learning by doing, and the knowledge transmission that they spoke about involved experiences on the land. “We were learning to prepare our moose harvest... during our hunting trip to Deer Island” one youth said, indicating the on the land knowledge transmission that is so important (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p.5602).

Knowledge transmission in FLCN is constantly evolving to keep up with the changing landscape as well as changing opportunities. Elders continue to teach traditional skills, and one youth indicated that an Elder “was teaching us how to make a fish hook” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5606). In addition to

teaching traditional skills on the land, Elders are looking forward to the opportunities for youth in the area. One Elder worked on scientific aquatic studies throughout previous development, and had begun to train the youth to take on similar jobs. The youth alluded to this training when saying, “and that was [an] Elder ... showing us how to index our trout” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605-5606). Elders have begun to transmit their scientific knowledge, as a part of the traditional knowledge that they are sharing with youth (see figure 5). This combination of scientific and historical traditional knowledge presents a very powerful knowledge-base for youth to learn from. Sharing this knowledge also allows Elders to ensure that FLCN youth are the most qualified environmental experts about their traditional territory.



Figure 5: Youth learning how to index fish.

(Clean Environment Commission, 2013b)

There is a strong emphasis on safety during on-the-land knowledge transmission. Elders recognize the dangers of the environment, as well as the effects of development, and teach the youth to mitigate these dangers. The youth indicated that “we were learning how to throw a lifeline in preparation to go on our Weir River canoe trip” (see figure 6) (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605). Elders ensure that the youth are adequately prepared before going out onto the land to ensure their safety, teaching the youth about rapid water, changing water levels, safe boat driving, and bear safety. These lessons are invaluable to youth learning how to navigate the landscape on their own.



Figure 6: FLCN youth learning how to throw a lifeline in case of emergency.

(Clean Environment Commission, 2013b)

In addition to traditional knowledge transmission, the youth spoke about funding programs that facilitate this transmission. FLCN youth expressed need for “funds for future adverse effects programs such as youth monitoring programs, and possibly other goose camps” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605). The Youth Wilderness Program was spoken about throughout the presentation by the youth because it provided a lot of value and opportunity for youth to connect with local Elders to learn. The youth expressed that they would like the Youth Wilderness Program “to build the course right into the curriculum in our schools... for us and other youth interested to keep on learning” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605).

The FLCN youth also recognized the need for more formal education opportunities in their local area. “We will require more job training programs, possibly to begin in our schools. Some of these, to list a few, can be welding or carpentry, construction programs” (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5605). Currently, the only training programs offered in Gillam beyond high school are offered by employers, and students have to travel to Thompson, The Pas, Winnipeg, or elsewhere to attain post-secondary education and training. The FLCN youth expressed the desire to have training and opportunities available to them on their traditional lands, which would facilitate the continuation of the knowledge transmission they are receiving from their Elders.

Discussion

In this discussion, vernacular region, environmental determinism, environmental possibilism, positivism, empiricism, and humanism are explored in relation to the presentation given by FLCN youth at the Keeyask Project Clean Environment Commission hearing. In this post-qualitative inquiry, it is important to delve deeper into the issues presented by the youth, and to explore their theoretical applications by using assemblage, thick description, and diffractive analysis.

Vernacular Region

A vernacular region is a social construct rather than a specific area delineated by official borders. Fox Lake Cree Nation community members operate under a type of vernacular region, their traditional territory. The concept of regional identity is important, and consists of two components, identity of a region and regional consciousness (Paasi, 2009). The formation of regional identities comes from a constant development of the collective sense of place. Shared history and tradition in an area contribute to the sense of distinction from other groups in an area, forming regional consciousness (Vukosav & Fuerst-Bjelis, 2015). Vernacular regions can be research qualitatively, exploring perceptions and experiences, and also quantitatively, by identifying and analyzing visible elements of the region (Vukosav & Fuerst-Bjelis, 2015).

Vernacular region is an important concept for Fox Lake Cree Nation, regarding traditional territory. This perceptual region cannot be denoted by physical borders, or administrative boundaries. This is in part why there is such difficulty in determining

borders, such as Resource Management Areas. FLCN's traditional territory is an actively evolving region, with extensive historical use that cannot be constrained by artificial boundaries. Community members derive a sense of identity from this traditional territory, and every person's experience of the area is different. Youth in FLCN identify as "keepers of the land" (Clean Environment Commission, 2013a, p. 5603). This shared identity of keepers of the land throughout the generations by FLCN members contributes to the vernacular region of FLCN's traditional territory.

To do a study, researchers need to identify a geographic region, causing the researcher to need to draw a boundary. Sociocultural phenomena rarely fall neatly into static administrative boundaries (Kwan, 2012). When doing studies with Fox Lake Cree Nation, it would be more effective to include all community members, regardless of location, rather than studying a specific geographical area with artificial boundaries. For example, there are community members that reside in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1064 km south of Gillam and FLCN's traditional territory. These community members may live outside of those artificial boundaries, but hold important traditional knowledge about FLCN's vernacular region. Traditional studies would exclude these community members, even though they are still deeply connected to their traditional territory, hold vast knowledge about it, and often still actively use the area for resource use.

In addition to holding vast traditional knowledge, FLCN members residing outside the artificial boundaries of the reserve or traditional territory are deeply affected by the development of this region. Developers don't often consider the impacts on culture and identity in addition to the physical impacts of a project. Consideration of vernacular region is vital to mitigating impacts of development.

Environmental Determinism and Possibilism

Environmental determinism theorizes that the environment controls the course of human action (Lewthwaite, 1966). Environmental possibilism asserts that while the environment may play a role, human action is affected mainly by social constraints (Stadler, 2011).

Environmental determinism would suggest that FLCN community members are influenced solely by their environment, and it is this environment that controls the course of community members' action. To a certain extent, being a sustenance based community, FLCN is influenced by the environment around them. I would suggest however that the environment does not solely control human action. FLCN has had many major changes in environment throughout the thousands of years they have inhabited their traditional territory. The pace of change has accelerated recently with the addition of hydroelectrical development, and FLCN members have been resilient and adaptive. This demonstrates why attributing human action to one factor only is highly problematic.

Environmental possibilism suggests that the FLCN community is influenced by their environment, as well as social conditions in place. While one cannot deny that community members are influenced by both social and environmental conditions, there is the influence of self as well. FLCN community members must adapt to the hydroelectric development that has been continual in their community since the 1950s, and will continue into the foreseeable future. Hydroelectric development also presents changing social conditions, for example, an influx of workers with different cultures, goals and intentions than community members.

Both of these concepts do not explain everything. Neither environmental possibilism or determinism allow for human action to be attributed to self, rather than outside influences. It is possible that in addition to environment and social conditions, human action can be influenced by self, outside of these two spheres. The attribution of all human action to outside forces removes personal responsibility and ability to act outside of these spheres.

Positivism, Empiricism, and Humanism

Empiricism asserts that humans gain understanding and knowledge through experience, and an empiricist approach mandates that facts speak for themselves. Empiricism is a fundamental assumption of positivism, asserting that research is continually verifying and correcting facts. Empiricism rejects any philosophy that claims to be all-encompassing, and in turn, is rejected by many other theories and philosophies.

Positivism is a rigorous philosophy of qualitative study, asserting that qualitative research must be objective, and should be studied the same way as quantitative research. Positivism relies on facts and theory, and is rigorous and formal. Positivist methods are not ideal for research into perspectives and experiences in FLCN. Positivist methods do not allow the researcher to determine key knowledge holders, due to the focus on formality and sample bias. Departures from rigid methods may be necessary to gain powerful insights into experience and perspective of community members. The use of objectivity does not allow a relationship between the researcher and community members. Building this relationship is key to gaining insight into the community's experiences, but is not a part of a positivist methodology.

Humanism was developed in opposition to positivism because it focuses on humans as individuals and emphasizes subjectivity. While positivism asserts that the world exists in an objective reality, humanists believe that it is impossible to separate the human subjectively viewing the world from the world itself. The human perspective itself is an important aspect of study, because humans are perceiving the world, and perspective is inevitable, even in “objective” study. Rather than generalizing, humanist views attempt to be specific and individual, which brings greater understanding. FLCN youth employ this holistic sense of the world, where objectivity does not exist, much like humanism. Perspective and experience are valued and used to gain deeper insight into their world.

Conclusion

Fox Lake youth experience the impacts of hydroelectric development through changes to their social and physical environment. Environmental impacts, financial impacts, cultural impacts, previous impacts, and anticipated impacts were all discussed by Fox Lake youth throughout the hearing. The large number of development projects on FLCN's traditional territory means that youth have plenty of experience with impacts of projects, and they have concerns based on past impacts. Youth are concerned about the potential loss of culture, degradation to the land and water, and the repetition of past impacts.

There are perceived benefits to hydroelectric development for youth in Fox Lake Cree Nation. While impacts to youth were deeply felt and weighed heavily on their minds, the FLCN youth were also anticipating benefits of hydroelectric development as well. The youth were anticipating more training and education opportunities, both through the projects and through the school. An increase in population would bring more opportunities for the youth of FLCN, and they were excited about this possibility. Increased jobs in FLCN's territory would increase the opportunity for youth to thrive in their traditional territory, without having to move to a more populated area. One issue that youth are facing as they move into adulthood, is the lack of job opportunity available in their traditional territory. The FLCN youth are recognizing future hydroelectric development for having the potential to alleviate this issue.

Youth are gaining knowledge about their environment through their community, Elders, the scientific community, and leadership. FLCN youth have a much stronger understanding of hydroelectric development history and the effects on social and physical environment due to knowledge transmission from their Elders. Knowledge transmission is important to FLCN youth because it allows them to look forward with the perspective of the past in mind.

Fox Lake Cree Nation has proven to be a resilient community in the face of ongoing development and a changing landscape. The youth in Fox Lake are looking to the future, seeing both impacts of previous development and foreseeing anticipated development, as well as potential benefits and opportunities. In addition to the impacts that hydroelectric activity has and will continue to have on FLCN traditional territory, there are also potential benefits that youth are looking at. They are carefully considering these potential opportunities to ensure that they align with their core values and will allow community members to continue to practice their culture and live *Mino Pimatisowin*, the good life.

Recommendations

The following research recommendations can be made:

1. *An analysis of predicted water level changes and actual water level changes after each hydroelectric generating station was built on the Nelson River*

Prior to the construction of each hydroelectric development, engineers' estimates for the amount of flooding and the water level changes that will occur are shared with the community. In the past, these estimations have been grossly underestimated. FLCN Elders and community members have expressed concerns over prior developments, but were assured that minimal flooding would occur. During each project, there have been surprises, and the flooding has been different than the estimations. Over time, these estimations have gotten more accurate, but community members are wary of assurances made from models. A comparison of the flooding estimates and the actual flooding for each project would be helpful to illustrate the discrepancy, to build in a more accurate buffer amount to add to supposedly accurate estimates, and to examine the skepticism these differences have created.

2. *A comparison of community members' experiences across hydro-affected communities throughout Manitoba*

Each community in Manitoba is unique, and a variety of factors (such as development, location, environment) influence the wellbeing of the community. Some communities thrive with development and others are culturally destroyed. An

exploration of the factors that contribute to wellbeing in each community may provide a model for future program-building and development in communities throughout Manitoba.

3. *A comparative analysis of youth experiences after future developments, such as Conawapa Generating Station, versus past developments, such as Kettle Generating Station*

As policies regarding hydroelectric development evolve over time, experiences surrounding those developments also evolve. A comparison of the research in this thesis with future developments would identify areas in which experiences have improved or declined, and the factors that contribute to a better or worse experience for youth in Fox Lake Cree Nation.

4. *An analysis of experiences and perspectives of other segments of FLCN's community, such as Elders or resources users*

This thesis focused solely on youth, but Elders and resource users also presented at the Keeyask Clean Environment Commission hearing and had very valuable knowledge to share. An analysis of their presentations would provide a well-rounded view of experiences throughout the community of Fox Lake Cree Nation on hydroelectric development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Authorization – Fox Lake Cree Nation



February 14th, 2017

To whom it May Concern:

This is to acknowledge and grant consent to Ms. Randi Thomas to complete the attached research project titled **"Aski Keskentamowin (Traditional Knowledge) as a Framework for Adaptive Management and Environmental Decision-Making in Fox Lake Cree Nation"**.

Sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Chief of FLCN ↗

[Redacted Signature]

Councillor of FLCN

Appendix 2: Ethics Approval and Renewal



Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Fax +204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

March 11, 2015

TO: Randi Thomas
Principal Investigator [REDACTED]

FROM: Susan Frohlick, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) [REDACTED]

Re: Protocol #J2015:018
"Aski Keskentamowin (Traditional Knowledge) as a Framework for Adaptive
Management and Environmental Decision Making in a Fox Lake Cree Nation"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the **Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). **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, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325) a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project Number: <http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0>)
- 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 Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

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



Research Ethics
and Compliance

Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Email: humanethics@umanitoba.ca

RENEWAL APPROVAL

Date: January 12, 2017

New Expiry: March 9, 2018

TO: **Randi Thomas** (Advisor: Jill Oakes)
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Kevin Russell, Chair**
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: **Protocol #J2015:018 (HS17512)**
"Aski Keskentamowin (Traditional Knowledge) as a Framework for Adaptive Management and Environmental Decision Making in a Fox Lake Cree Nation"

Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) has reviewed and renewed the above research. JFREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Any modification to the research must be submitted to JFREB for approval before implementation.
2. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to JFREB as soon as possible.
3. This renewal is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
4. A Study Closure form must be submitted to JFREB when the research is complete or terminated.

Funded Protocols:

- **Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Renewal Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS.**

Research Ethics and Compliance is a part of the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)
umanitoba.ca/research

Appendix 3: Coded Transcript

Code System	Memo	#
Code System		80
Benefits of Development		2
Resource Use		11
Cree Worldview		6
Knowledge Transmission		13
Desired Mitigation Measures		10
Concern		1
Impacts		12
Environmental Impacts		8
Financial Impacts		5
Cultural Impacts		6
Anticipated impacts from Keeyask		3
Impacts from previous development		3

1 Tuesday, December 10, 2013
2 Upon commencing at 9:30 a.m.
3 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We will
4 reconvene, please. Good morning.
5 First on our agenda this morning is a
6 group of youth from the Fox Lake First Nation.
7 And I would just like to point out for the record,
8 they are not associated with the CFLGC. So is
9 somebody there going to introduce them? We have
10 to swear you in, so we will have the Commission
11 secretary take care of that.
12 MS. JOHNSON: First I need everybody
13 to state their name.
14 MR. WILKE: Aavory Wikie.
15 MS. WAVEY: Shannise Wavey.
16 MS. MASSAN: Khrystyna Massan.
17 MS. SPENCE: Rita Spence.
18 MR. BEARDY: Abraham Beardy.
19 Avery Wikie: Sworn.
20 Shannise Wavey: Sworn.
21 Christina Massan: Sworn.
22 Rita Spence: Sworn.
23 Abraham Beardy: Sworn.
24 THE CHAIRMAN: Go ahead.
25 MR. WILKE: Before we start this

1 presentation here, I want to take a second to
2 thank my elder, Rita Spence, for going out and
3 buying me this feather before we did the speech,
4 and to Judy Da Silva, who got it blessed for me
5 and gave me this eagle feather to go along with it
6 on the bottom here.

7 Tansi, and good morning to all
8 present, the elders, community members, chief and
9 councillors, and members from the Clean
10 Environment Commission.

11 My name is Avery Wikie and I am a
12 former member of the Fox Lake Cree Nation and a
13 former participant of the Youth Wilderness pilot
14 project which was delivered in our community.

15 I would like to take this opportunity
16 to introduce my fellow participants. Beside me
17 are Shannise Wavey and Christina Massan. At first
18 we had eight youth members but today there are
19 only three of us. We also had an elder and two
20 mentors from the Youth Wilderness Project joining
21 us, but due to other reasons they could not be
22 here.

23 I do, however, want to give thanks
24 here today to all our mentors who provided us with
25 their hunting, trapping and fishing expertise,

Resource Use



1 along with countless other skills. There are many
2 to thank.

3 Here with us today are chaperones,
4 Rita Spence and Abraham Beardy.

5 First, as youth from Fox Lake Cree
6 Nation, we can only express our message, the
7 experiences we received and continue to receive
8 firsthand. Our presentation will have a brief
9 history of us as youth. This is followed by
10 shared accounts passed down to us from our elders
11 and the mentors that we can all relate to as Fox
12 Lake youth.

13 The last segments our presentation
14 will focus on our views and potential adverse
15 effects from the Keeyask project. Also provided
16 is a brief discussion of some of the benefits we
17 will receive as our Cree Nation moves forward with
18 the Partnership of mutual interest, with the major
19 owner, Manitoba Hydro, of the Keeyask project, and
20 the future development projects within our
21 territory.

22 In the final section is our
23 recommendations of the Keeyask project and future
24 development projects arising within our
25 traditional area of Fox Lake Cree Nation.

1 THE CHAIRMAN: Avery, could you slow
 2 down a touch? We are recording everything, and if
 3 you speak too quickly the recorder might fall
 4 behind. And speak fairly closely into the mic,
 5 and that goes for all of you. Thank you.

6 MR. WILKE: The pilot project of the
 7 Youth Wilderness Traditions program delivered from
 8 our first event in February 2009, which I might
 9 add we went out to Angling Lake and Angling River
 10 and stayed in prospector tents in minus 52 for
 11 week. It provided us, for some of us, for the
 12 reintroduction of our cultural and traditional
 13 activities of the Fox Lake Cree. A couple of us
 14 were already taken out onto the land by our
 15 grandfathers and parents, which is usually a
 16 customary practice by our people. We learned to
 17 fish, hunt and trap animals. As you see, Shannise
 18 showing off her profits from the furs she sold.
 19 We also had to use different modes of
 20 transportation to get to where we were hunting,
 21 fishing or trapping. As you see in this slide a
 22 couple of pictures of our canoe trip out along the
 23 Weir River and coming out into the Nelson River.

24 To take you to another area of
 25 learning is our annual goose camp. This camp





1 brings all of the youth in both Gillam and Bird to
 2 hunt geese during the spring.

3 Also shown is a picture taken while we
 4 were learning to prepare our moose harvest. This
 5 is the late John Henderson Jr. with Roman
 6 Henderson during our hunting trip at Deer Island.
 7 If you look in the very top corner, you can see my
 8 boot.

9 We understand that our current goose
 10 camp location will once again become a rock quarry
 11 in preparation for future development downstream.
 12 Manitoba Hydro is proposing this, but our
 13 community members and leaders are carefully
 14 considering their proposal.

15 We prefer they leave our goose camp
 16 area alone. But if they need it, we hope they can
 17 get another camp built like it, because it is a
 18 good goose hunting area for all members from both
 19 Gillam and Bird.

20 As mentioned earlier, we can only
 21 present our experiences and what we believe are
 22 probable changes that all future development
 23 projects will make to the land, animals, and the
 24 environment. We do not see Keeyask project as a
 25 separate project. We see all of the Hydro



1 development projects as one huge project within
 2 our traditional lands. We do not separate from
 3 one dam to the other, as in turn create from
 4 connecting dam to the next the same effects to the
 5 land, waters and our traditional ways of life.
 6 Generations before us witnessed the
 7 unspoiled beauty of Fox Lake, but we haven't. We
 8 have only seen the after effects each dam leaves
 9 behind. Our elders from the community shared with
 10 us many stories of how beautiful the lands and
 11 waters were before the beginning of the first dam,
 12 Kettle, in our immediate area. Because our
 13 helpers pass on information to us from the
 14 different community presentations here, we too
 15 visibly see the destruction of the land daily, the
 16 waste and debris left behind on the waters from
 17 the flooded lands. How are we going to be keepers
 18 of our Aski if there is only destruction left
 19 behind from the dams?
 20 We see too the dark and murky waters.
 21 No longer fish, is there an abundance of healthy
 22 fish for healthier living. We have to travel
 23 further inland to catch healthier fish.
 24 The same with our traditional
 25 medicines and berries that grew wild closer to

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1 home, we have to travel further for those.

2 There has been a lot of damage
3 already, and it is important to prepare and do
4 what it takes to restore and help the land and
5 water recover.

6 As we move forward as Cree Nation
7 Partners of the Keeyask project with Manitoba
8 Hydro, and with proper training, we will see the
9 benefits in jobs and contracts, not only for us
10 individually, but also with the Fox Lake Cree
11 Nation. As we see more workers coming into the
12 community of Gillam, we can be creative and kick
13 start business ventures for ourselves.

14 We understand certain components of
15 the Clean Environment Commission and the huge task
16 and decisions that you have to make. As youth
17 from Fox Lake Cree Nations, we have a few
18 recommendations for our leaders and to Manitoba
19 Hydro.

20 We want improved alternative and
21 concrete plans to our agreements to decrease the
22 damage to the land and the environment. I mean,
23 if Keeyask has to be built, build it so damage to
24 our land and water is not so adversely affected to
25 our people.

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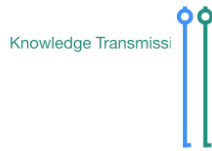
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1 MS. WAVEY: We know our funds for
 2 future adverse effect programs such as youth
 3 monitoring programs, and possibly other goose
 4 camps.
 5 MR. MASSAN: We know that there are
 6 programs such as the Youth Wilderness Program in
 7 other communities, in order for us and other youth
 8 interested to keep on learning to build the course
 9 right into the curriculum in our schools.
 10 MR. WILKE: We will require more job
 11 training programs, possibly to begin in our
 12 schools. Some of these, to list a few, can be
 13 welding or carpentry, construction programs.
 14 This completes our presentation, and
 15 we would like to thank the Clean Environment
 16 Commission panel and to all present here today.
 17 We leave you with a few more pictures taken of our
 18 program. Thank you, and Egosi.
 19 Here, you can see in this picture
 20 here -- in this picture here, this is our canoe
 21 training program. And this, more canoe training
 22 in this one. That's more canoe training. Okay.
 23 This is -- we were learning how to throw a
 24 lifeline in preparation to go on our Weir River
 25 canoe trip. And that was Elder Robert Beardy



1 showing us how to index our trout.

2 And this was our Weir River trip, when

3 we had a canoe race along the trip, which I won by

4 the way. And this is Jimmy Lockhart preparing our

5 supper, which was a trout stuffed with potatoes

6 and onions. And this is, I think Robert was

7 actually teaching us how to, I think he was

8 teaching us how to make a fish hook there by the

9 looks of it. And there is a picture with all of

10 us and our brook trout, which we have to travel

11 far to get now.

12 And this is the last picture of us

13 just relaxing by the fire getting told ghost

14 stories. And that's looking out Conawapa right

15 now, and what we have left.

16 That's our -- I don't know how to end

17 it -- thank you for your time, and I hope you

18 enjoyed the presentation.

19 [Applause]

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Avery, and,

21 Shannise and Christina, and thank you very much


22 for your presentation this morning and for your

23 effort in putting it together. It looks like you

24 have a good youth program in your community.

25 How far do you have to go to get brook

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1 trout nowadays?

2 MR. WILKE: We have to take a train

3 ride that's about six or seven hours, then you

4 have to get out on the river, on the bridge on the

5 river, Weir River, and you have to canoe about, I

6 don't know, it took us four or five days to get to

7 the trout grounds, and then we spent --

8 THE CHAIRMAN: There is none left in

9 the Kettle River?

10 MR. WILKE: No. I actually -- well,

11 there is a few left in Limestone River but it is

12 very rare to catch them there now.

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Again, thank you very

14 much for your work in putting this together and

15 coming here today to present it.

16 MR. WILKE: No problem.

17 [Applause]

18 THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. We will return

19 now to the Concerned Fox Lake Grassroots Citizens.

20 I believe they have a couple of presentations

21 today and then -- couple more presentations, and

22 then we will turn to questioning.

23 Okay. Now I don't believe

24 Dr. Kulchyski has been sworn in; am I correct? I

25 think Dr. McLachlan was sworn in yesterday, yes.

Appendix 4: Additional Reading

Brown, J.S.H. (2007). Rupert's Land, *Nituskeenan*, Our Land: Cree and English Naming and Claiming around the Dirty Sea. In T. Binnema & S. Neylan (Eds.), *New Histories For Old* (pp. 65-82). Toronto: UBC Press.

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