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Politics, Power, and Environmental Governance: A Comparative Case Study of
Three Métis Communities in Northwest Saskatchewan

by

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Abstract

Recently northwest Saskatchewan has seen a rapid push towards large-scale development corresponding with a shifting political economy in the province. For the rights-bearing Métis people of northwest Saskatchewan this shift significantly influences provincial environmental governance, which affects the agency of Métis people to participate in natural resource management and decision-making in the region. To examine the agency and power of Métis communities in provincial natural resource management and decision-making, qualitative methods and a comparative case study of three Métis communities were used to analyze and interpret the social spaces that Métis people occupy in provincial environmental governance. The major finding of this study was that Métis people continue to feel powerless in terms of how natural resources are managed and also in terms of land use planning and future development of natural resources in the region. This finding corresponded with evidence from this study that the structure of provincial resource management in northwest Saskatchewan involves a 'double diversion', in which industry players such as large-scale corporations enjoy privileged access to resources in the traditional territory of the rights-bearing Métis.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 2004 the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan, along with a diverse group of academic, public service, and community organizers, embarked on a collaborative research project aimed at building the overall capacity of Métis communities to participate meaningfully in the regional economy. One major concern expressed by Métis people in the study region early on was their ability to influence natural resource management, policy, and decision-making in northwest Saskatchewan (CURA 2006). This is perhaps not surprising given that large-scale development projects have in the past shaped the political economy of the region, which affects resource allocations, land use planning, and other management-related processes in the traditional territory of the rights-bearing Métis of northwest Saskatchewan. This thesis is part of a larger research effort called the Otipimsuak Project, a Community/University Research Alliance (CURA) partnership involving the Métis National Council, the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council, the Canadian Wildlife Service Branch of Environment Canada, the University of Alberta, and the University of Saskatchewan. In this thesis I employ qualitative methods and a comparative case study approach to contribute to the Natural Resource Policy Review component of the Otipimsuak Project. What follows is a sociological analysis of the field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan taken from the perspective of Métis people living in the communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche (see Appendix 1).

Background of Study

"As early as 1763," writes Jean Teillet (2004), "the Métis were beginning to take action to defend their livelihood" (p.13). However, with the symbolic defeat of Louis Riel and the Métis in 1885, Teillet explains:

> from that time until the 1960s the Métis lived quietly in the margins of society between Indian and Canadian cultures. From being the "masters of the prairies" and the "diplomats and culture brokers" of emerging Canadian society, the Métis who lived in the southern and central Prairie Provinces soon became marginalized, poverty-stricken and known as the "road allowance people". (Teillet 2004, p. 13-14)

Since their cultural origins with the fur trade and the establishment of permanent Métis settlements such as Île à la Crosse in 1776 (Mcdougall 2006), Métis people traditionally occupying northwest Saskatchewan have experienced significant stages of change in the political economy of the region. Historically, the mixed economy of Métis communities supported traditional livelihoods, subsistence activities (e.g., use of forests for hunting, fishing, medicinal and food plant use, etc.) and small-scale entrepreneurship (e.g., commercial fishing/processing and small sawmill operations) (Quiring 2004, Tobias and Kay 1994, Jarvenpa and Brumbach 1985, Valentine 1954). Jarvenpa and Brumbach (1985), for instance, describe the economy of the Métis traditionally in the Upper Churchill fur trade system as an integration of "wage labour with subsistence hunting and fishing, reflecting two traditions of skills learned from their Euro-Canadian and Cree progenitors" (p. 323).

While the Métis have long been exposed to global trade through fur and fish markets, there is now a strong shift in the study region towards a wage-labour economy for large corporations (forestry, energy, mining), which continues to replace the traditionally mixed economy in these unique Aboriginal communities. Politically, the early history of the Métis in the region was strongly affected by governance structures associated with the fur trade and the church (Quiring 2004). However, beginning with the aggressive northern policies of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) provincial government in the 1940s, northwest Saskatchewan has come to be formally governed through overlapping socio-political boundaries (including Northern Administration District, Northern Fur Region, and other administrative divisions) and plans for modernisation of the region (through community settlements, road and communication systems, and resource development projects). These political and economic shifts are important to consider in the context of the Métis and their participation in the contemporary regional economy because these social forces in many ways determine the conditions of environmental governance in the area.

Recently northwest Saskatchewan has seen a strong push towards large-scale development, particularly in support of oil sands development and other mineral-related projects. This was evident during the period of my research (2007-2008) in the accelerated provincial sale of mineral and oil and gas leases throughout the province of Saskatchewan. From a Métis perspective, such features present significant changes to the structure of

environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan given that these forces change the social contexts in which policies are formed and how decisions are made regarding land uses and resource management. Consequently, this situation also affects the agency or actions of Métis leaders and community members to participate in the management and governance of natural resources in northwest Saskatchewan.

In the case of the rights-bearing Métis of northwest Saskatchewan, rapid development of forest resources over the past 20 years (including commercial forestry, uranium mining, and more recently oil sands exploration and other mineral-related exploration) has greatly affected the cultural relationships that contemporary Métis communities have with their local environment. Despite the changes experienced by the Métis so far in the study region by such developments, Métis communities continue to participate in a traditional mixed economy (CURA 2006). However, as the political economy in northwest Saskatchewan continues to shift further towards large-scale development (as indicated by the record sales of leases for exploration), Métis communities inevitably face the challenge of addressing the perceived opportunities of this economic development and accompanying opportunities for employment along with the undesirable outcomes that the Métis have historically experienced in this region (including loss of cultural traditions, local environmental damage). This raises the important issue of how much influence Métis people really have in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan.

Although the issues and outcomes of large-scale development in Canada have been much the same for both First Nations and Métis communities in remote northern areas, the legal and political status of Métis people in Canada sets them apart in terms of how Métis leaders and community members participate in natural resource management and decision making provincially and federally. Teillet (2004), for example, points out that, "All governments have consistently denied jurisdiction for Métis who live south of the 60th parallel" (p. 49). In terms of the duty to consult, Teillet explains that,

> With respect to the Métis, the Crown and project proponents have the same
> consultation obligations that they have to all other Aboriginal peoples. (1)
> They must take steps to inform the Métis about pending actions. And (2)
> they must inform themselves about the Métis in order to understand how the
> project might affect the Métis collective. With respect to how consultation
> obligations are to be fulfilled, there are two main issues. First, with whom is

there an obligation to consult – who represents the Métis *qua* Métis? Second, is a Métis collective synonymous with a physical community? [ ] As with consultation implemented with Indians, consultation with Métis must begin with their elected representatives. This is, admittedly, a more complicated task for Métis than for Indians because Métis do not live in discrete physical communities equivalent to reserves. Métis people in any given region are rarely synonymous with a physical town, village or city. This is because the Crown did not relocate Métis into geographically distinct areas as it did when it relocated Indians onto reserves. The Métis continue to live, as most Aboriginal people lived prior to the creation of reserves, scattered throughout their traditional territory. Some live on reserves, some live adjacent to reserves, some live in the bush, some live in cities, towns or villages. Statistics show that the Métis have always been a highly mobile people and it is interesting to note that this characteristic has not changed. Indeed the latest census data shows that the Métis continue to move more than average Canadians. Under these circumstances, consultation with Métis collectives is complicated but not an insurmountable task. (Teillet 2004, p. 64)

In Saskatchewan the only significant 'Métis-specific' legislation that exists is *The Métis Act*, which was proclaimed and came into effect on 28 January 2002. This legislation is intended to formally recognise Métis people and their culture in the province. In the context of environmental governance, development, and natural resource management, the act "provides a mechanism for the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan to engage in a bilateral process of negotiations about capacity building, land and resources, governance and harvesting" (Teillet 2004, p. 70). In addition to this, in 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan produced a concise informational document describing the approach "to be used by all Government of Saskatchewan departments" in the context of the duty to consult with First Nations and Métis people in the province. In it the Government of Saskatchewan recognizes that, "consultation must take place before any legislation, policy, program or other activity that could adversely affect Treaty or Aboriginal rights is developed or put in place" (Government of Saskatchewan 2006, p. 2).

Yet despite key institutional arrangements that appear to be in place to facilitate Métis participation in natural resource issues, the system of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan has largely failed to recognise and address Métis concerns about development and natural resource management in the area and how these social realities impact their way of life.

Theoretical Framework

My theoretical approach in this study begins with the concept of environmental governance and from this central idea I draw from structure and agency theory, place-making theory, and relational views of power to examine the social spaces that Métis people occupy in provincially-based resource management, policy and decision making. In this combined theoretical approach I seek to gain a better understanding of the relationship between Métis agency, the structures of regional environmental governance, and the social forces playing out in the contemporary political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. Within this complex relationship I take the position that to understand the Métis as part of the system of environmental governance, it is important to conceptualise about the connection between Métis perceptions of, and experiences with, natural resources and the environment, the social structures of resource management, and the dominant political and economic influences in the region.

In the social sciences, research on environmental governance addresses the complexities of natural resource management and the ways in which combinations of "governing bodies" confront "environmental dilemmas" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 471). The insights of research on environmental governance can therefore facilitate a better understanding of, for example, how the political economy of a particular region influences the social contexts and outcomes in environment-society conflicts. Within this body of research, environmental governance gives particular attention to relationships among the state, industry, and society in environmental policy and natural resource management. As such, I frame contemporary environmental governance in this study by focusing attention on recent industry-related and provincial government-related 'forces' in northwest Saskatchewan. I also follow the 'flow of action' of these forces to consider how they play out in the Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche. In addition, I examine Métis community members' experiences with natural resource management and local land use conflicts in my target communities.

Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to provide a sociological analysis of Métis agency and power in relation to regional environmental governance and "the policies that control natural resource use in the study region" (CURA 2006), which contributes to the goals of the

Natural Resource Policy Review component of the Otipimsuak Project. The objectives in this study are: (1) to describe and explore contemporary Métis community members' perceptions of, and experiences with, natural resource management, policy and decision making in northwest Saskatchewan; (2) to follow key social forces within the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan that are influencing Métis relationships with natural resources in the area; and (3) to analyze and interpret the field of environmental governance from the perspective of the Métis by addressing the relationship between Métis agency, provincial resource management and development at the regional level, and the influence of the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. These objectives are part of my broader research objective to examine the social spaces that Métis people occupy in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan.

Significance and Contributions
Why examine the 'social spaces' that Métis people occupy in regional environmental governance? First I would like to discuss the theoretical and conceptual significance of this approach and how it relates to the purpose and objectives of my study. Fundamentally, my research attempts to conceptualize environmental governance as a particular social field that is connected to a larger social space we can refer to as the region of northwest Saskatchewan. Importantly, Pierre Bourdieu states that,

> sociology presents itself as a social topology. Thus, the social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within the social universe in question…Agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions within that space. (Bourdieu 1985, p. 723-24)

Bourdieu's perspective of the social world as a social space of relationships explores the relational connections between social actors, social structures, and the power relations that are particular to a given area. As I discuss in detail in chapter three, Bourdieu's sociology examines the nature of social spaces through the concepts of habitus, field, capital, and symbolic power. In this way Bourdieu's 'relational science' provides social explanations derived from multiple levels, highlighting, for example, the make-up and distribution of actors in a given social context, the connections between actors' dispositions and the objective structures that define and shape social realities, and the symbolic effects and power

relations that function in culture. Therefore, by focusing on the social spaces of the Métis and the field of environmental governance in this study, my conceptual frame underscores the important relational connections between Métis agency, the social structures of natural resource management, and the politics and power dimensions attributed to northwest Saskatchewan's shifting political economy.

Admittedly this is an ambitious research topic requiring a sophisticated level of analysis; however, it is necessary to meaningfully address the research goals of the Otipimsuak Project. Thus, one significant feature of this study is my combined scope, which consists of examining different social positions and different viewpoints within Métis communities, focusing on three community case studies and their experiences with natural resource management, and exploring three attributes currently shaping environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. Regarding my theoretical approach at the community level, I draw particularly from Bourdieu and Molotch *et al* (2000) to interpret the social contexts of my target communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche.

With regard to Bourdieu, I apply his concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' to examine the range of opinions and attitudes in Métis communities, as well as the durable social structures and forces in the communities. Habitus is a concept that represents the durable characteristics unique to particular individuals or groups. A person's habitus is shaped by life experiences, socialisation, and exposure to particular social and physical contexts. In my study the actors I focus on at the community level consist of traditional land users (including commercial fishermen, trappers, subsistence gatherers), business leaders and local entrepreneurs, local people employed in large-scale projects such as mining or commercial forestry, municipal leaders, community leaders affiliated with the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, community elders, and also young adults. Each of these identified groups experience a different habitus as an outcome of their experiences and social practices, such as: level of interaction with natural resources, perceptions of environmental concerns, future outlooks for the community, attachment to traditional and cultural values, and so forth. Given that a traditional land user spends considerably more time on the land and participates in activities tied to his livelihood, his habitus (e.g., his 'place' in the community and how he perceives the day-to-day circumstances in the community) is qualitatively different than, for example, that of the mayor or a miner or a business owner in that same community, because

of where they are and what it is they do in the physical and social environment. The significance of studying Métis communities in this way is that it recognizes that in Aboriginal community settings the stakes of resource management can often result in community divisions, conflict, and political tensions (Slowely 2008, Craik 2004). In my study I explore the different perspectives within Métis communities and how these differences are perhaps tied to local conflicts surrounding natural resource management.

Habitus is an important concept when it is further combined with an understanding of Bourdieu's idea of fields. In my study this concept is applied in two ways. First, I consider each community - Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche – as a particular sub-field that is connected to the field of environmental governance and also to the larger social space in this study, the regional economy. Secondly, I apply the idea of fields to the overall space of relationships between industry, government and Métis communities in provincial natural resource management, which can be referred to as the field of environmental governance. Conceptually, fields are the settings where social actors with varying habituses come into contact with each other; a field is also characterised by the composition of structures that are found in that particular setting. In Jenkins' (2002) words, "A field, therefore, is a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants" (p. 85). However, there is also the important notion that the field is a space of social struggle (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007), which focuses attention on Bourdieu's idea that individuals and groups compete (using their agency) to define the structure of the 'social context' or field in question (Jenkins 2002). The more capable a certain group is in defining the field, the better are their chances to secure their individual and social goals. Another significant aspect of this research is that I apply this conceptual understanding, the power to dominate the social field, both at the community level (e.g., Pinehouse's field, Buffalo Narrows' field, La Loche's field) and at the regional level (e.g., the field of environmental governance) in the context of provincial resource management, development and decision making.

In Molotch *et al's* (2000) work I find the idea of 'lash-up', a concept derived from structure and agency theory and actor network theory, also relevant to my theoretical orientation and research strategy, which I apply to the social dimensions of Métis communities. In particular, this concept facilitates in keeping us aware of the durable

structures and external forces specific to each community and how these social forces act to produce, maintain and reform the character and tradition of social spaces. I recognise that although the Métis communities of northwest Saskatchewan share an historical, cultural, and contemporary context, they are also distinct from one another. This is so because each community and its corresponding social field (i.e., the community) is the outcome of interactions between different structures and social actors that exist within each community, including their physical location (e.g., proximity to large-scale development, distance from each other, centres of power). Comparing the three Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche and their experiences with natural resource management therefore provides three cases in which to observe environmental governance in motion at the community level.

Another significant aspect of this research is how I frame regional environmental governance by focusing on three emergent features connected to the contemporary political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. Specifically, I follow the "flow of action" (Nuijten 2005, Wolf 1990) corresponding with three important 'forces' playing out in northwest Saskatchewan that are directly affecting Métis communities and their participation in environmental governance. First, as commercial forestry and traditional forest-based opportunities decline, large-scale development in northwest Saskatchewan in the form of oil sands, uranium and other mineral exploration activity will initiate further discussions of land use planning in the area. In particular, I follow the action surrounding oil sands exploration north of La Loche and the impact of Oilsands Quest Inc.'s (a Calgary-based corporation) activity on Métis people in the region. Second, the provincially-led Integrated Forest Land Use Plan (IFLUP) has emerged as a significant provincially-based process in the structure of environmental governance in Saskatchewan. Under the jurisdiction of the provincial agency of Saskatchewan Environment, IFLUPs are intended to inclusively "integrate environmental, social and economic values, resolve all conflict, build common land use objectives, ensure openness and inclusiveness, as well as adapt to global, national and local needs and preferences" (Saskatchewan Environment 2006). In my research I follow the action around two IFLUP processes in the study region. Third, the rapid pace of large-scale development affects the social relationships and cohesion of communities, especially in regards to land use conflicts (including those associated with commercial forestry and trapping, tourism-based

angling and commercial fishing), and long-term visions that community members have for their communities. Métis leaders and various community stakeholders including, in particular, fishermen, trappers, and economic development leaders face many difficult decisions as they respond to existing and proposed development pressures, and they face the added challenge of dealing with potential community divisions influenced by conflicting viewpoints and attitudes towards natural resource management.

In this research I designed my study to draw from a range of places and perspectives, qualitatively comparing the Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche, with the objective of gaining a better understanding of how Métis people participate in natural resource management and decision-making in the region. I hope this study will therefore contribute a greater understanding and awareness of the social spaces that Métis people occupy in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. This knowledge will help to demonstrate inequalities in provincial environmental governance and hopefully encourage an awareness of the less apparent social forces at work in provincial resource management and decision-making. Another significant contribution I hope to make with this research is to provide a contemporary examination of Métis peoples' environmental attitudes, concerns and experiences with natural resources. In addition, this study follows key social forces and events playing out in northwest Saskatchewan, which, I argue, may provide empirical evidence of contexts relevant to the Métis in the region. Moreover, as I pointed out in the theoretical points of significance above, the purpose of my research is to contribute to scholarship that bridges an understanding between agency, structure, and power. I believe this research can be made useful to the concerns of Métis people, especially in regards to addressing their power and influence over development and management of natural resources in northwest Saskatchewan.

Limitations
Timeframe restrictions and availability of resources limited my second summer of more focused fieldwork to spending 10 days in each of my target communities to collect data. In that space of time I had to build rapport with my three community liaison, identify community members to interview, and observe the communities in action in recent natural resource management-related contexts. Given the scope of my research topic and the objectives of this study, it is likely that my findings would be enriched by longer stays in the

communities that lends itself to a more ethnographic style of writing and approach, such as participant observation.

Cultural differences also limited aspects of this research. One challenge of conducting research in any community of which one is not a member, such as a Aboriginal or Métis community, is the process of orienting oneself to foreign situations in which one is the 'outsider'. Although being an outsider does have its advantages, there are disadvantages of working in this way in a research capacity. The potential to misinterpret social situations because of cultural differences is seemingly unavoidable. Language differences also limited my social interactions in the community, such as with those I spoke to and interviewed for this study, even though I did not require a translator for any of my interviews. This was particularly the case when I attempted to speak with, and interview, elders in the community. The main challenge with this group in my study was not simply the obvious language difference, but also the technical or sociological language I used in my interviews, such as terms like 'agency' or 'environmental governance'. Fortunately my community liaisons helped to locate elders that I could communicate with easily and as I proceeded with my fieldwork I found ways to articulate my research questions and topic more clearly for Métis elders and other community members.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. In this first chapter I presented the research problem, my theoretical approach, the purpose and objectives, the significant contributions I hope to make with this study, and the challenges I faced. In Chapter Two I provide a brief description of the study region and my three community cases, including a background discussion of some of the regional and institutional features in northwest Saskatchewan to familiarize the reader to the area. Chapter Three contains the literature reviewed for this study, which explores such concepts as environmental governance, lash-ups, habitus, field, capital, and power. In Chapter Four I present my methodology and describe in detail my research design and strategy. In Chapter Five I discuss the major themes and findings of this study. In Chapter Six I summarise the research and findings and discuss my interpretations of the results. In the final chapter I provide an overall summary of this study and its most significant contributions to our understanding of Métis people and natural resource management in northwest Saskatchewan.

Chapter 2: Background

Introduction

This study is part of a Community/University Research Alliance (CURA) project called "Otipimsuak – the Free People: Métis Land and Society in Northwest Saskatchewan." Contributing to the Natural Resource Policy Review component of the Otipimsuak project, my research examines the agency and power relations of three Métis communities in relation to the structure of provincial resource management and the social forces emergent in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. In my study I draw from such perspectives as structure and agency theory, place-making theory, and 'relational' conceptions of power to analyze and interpret the social spaces that Métis people occupy in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan.

In this chapter I describe some of the distinguishing features of Métis communities in northwest Saskatchewan and provide the reader with a brief overview of Métis involvement in provincial resource management and the regional political economy of the study region. In the final section I introduce the three Métis communities selected for this comparative case study.

A Brief Introduction to the Study Site(s)

The study area of the Otipimsuak Project encompasses the northwest region of Saskatchewan, which is the traditional and historical homeland to 20 Métis communities in the area (see map, Appendix 1).[1] Northwest Saskatchewan features both boreal plains and boreal shield ecozones and the region contains a rich abundance of natural resources in its forests, rivers and watersheds, including minerals such as uranium and oil deposits. Historically northwest Saskatchewan remained closed off from significant large-scale development pressures. However, by the 1970s Saskatchewan's uranium industry began to grow in earnest with the Cluff Lake and Key Lake Uranium mining projects. By the 1990s, commercial forestry activity increased (see Beckley and Korber 1996). The study area

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[1] The Northwest Saskatchewan Métis communities include Bear Creek, Beauval, Black Point, Buffalo Narrows, Canoe River, Cole Bay, Descharme, Dore Lake, Garson, Green Lake, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Jans Bay, La Loche, Michel Village, Patuanak, Pinehouse, Sapawgamak, Sled Lake, St. George's Hill, and Turnor Lake (CURA 2006).

currently contains two significant forest tenures, the Mistik Forest Management Area, and the Northwest Communities Wood Products Ltd., hereafter (NCWP), a Métis-based forest company representing seven community stakeholders which holds a Timber Supply License (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a).

In the province, Saskatchewan Environment oversees the development of commercial forest resources through 20-year Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) with large-scale operations and Term Supply Licences (TSL) for smaller independent forest companies. Saskatchewan Environment is also responsible for developing Integrated Forest Land Use Plans (IFLUPs) in the province, as well as enforcing environmental regulations and granting approvals for resource development projects and related activities. Two IFLUP processes were identified within the study region during my research, the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP (which covers the majority of Pinehouse's N-11 Fur Block) and the proposed Clearwater River IFLUP (with an initial area of interest that spans La Loche's N-19 Fur Block).

The Métis and the Political Economy of Northwest Saskatchewan
One important topic that scholars and authors have written about concerning Métis people in Canada is the significant changes that northern Métis communities experienced as provincial government policies began to replace the less formal governance structures in northern Canadian regions. Hanrahan (2000), for example, found in her study of the Labrador Métis that, "in their speech many Métis, including some younger people, themselves divide time into a before and after with the mid-century introduction of government policies and programs at the center of the dividing line" (p. 243). Northwest Saskatchewan shares a similar historical time frame regarding provincial administration of, and authority over, natural resource development and management of provincial Crown lands, which began around the 1940s. In regards to this shift in northwest Saskatchewan, McNab (1995) points out that,

> The government initiated and extended to the north social assistance, health care and education, as well as conservation and wildlife programs, including trapping zones and licensing. Such programs had a tremendous impact on the northern people, but actually did little to enhance their quality of life. (p. 135)

In terms of Métis agency and capacity during this political shift in northern governance, Goulet (1997) states that, "until the 1970s, the institutions of northern life were largely directed by non-residents and non-indigenous people. Government, religion, education, commerce – all were controlled by legislatures, churches, companies and administrators in headquarters elsewhere" (p. 1).

These commentaries demonstrate how provincial governance and northern economic development has challenged Métis agency and participation in the regional political economy of northern Saskatchewan. This also points to Weinstein's (2007) larger discussion of the political history of provincial Métis organisations and the role of the Métis National Council in asserting self-governance and Aboriginal autonomy over traditional lands. Goulet's (1997) comparison of past government policies, to use Saskatchewan's uranium industry as an example, with current policies shows that the provincial government and industries in the region progressively included northern Aboriginal people through such measures as northern employment quotas, training opportunities, funding, and advisory roles. Although northern Métis people have experienced increased capacity and opportunities in the industrial resource sectors of. mining and commercial forestry, the issue of exercising Métis autonomy over natural resource development continues to be addressed in terms of advisory roles in the province.

During the initial period of provincial control over northern Saskatchewan, beginning around the 1940s, government policies and visions clashed with the Métis living in the area. For instance, as far back as 1954, social anthropologist V. F. Valentine identified a genuine lack of understanding between the northern Métis of Saskatchewan and the provincial government:

> At present much confusion and misunderstanding exists between the Métis and the administration. The Métis feel that they are being robbed of their natural heritage and that the new programmes are rapidly bringing about the disintegration of their society… The administration cannot understand why the well-meant schemes are not being accepted and are even sabotaged at times; it seems to them that the harder they try to do something the worse the situation becomes. (Valentine 1954, p. 95)

In the shadow of this misunderstanding, Saskatchewan's Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) provincial government generally followed two approaches to address the

well-being of northern Métis people: (1) promoting the development of northern economies, and (2) devolving local power to northern Métis settlements.

Valentine's conclusion above came at a time when northern Métis communities were responding to the cumulative effects of assimilation into a municipality/town community model, government administration of traditional forest livelihoods, and implementation of resource management-based institutions in the 1940s. During this period the CCF provincial government began administering "programmes [ ] involving the conservation of wildlife and the distribution of land" (ibid, p. 91) associated with the Saskatchewan Fur Marketing Service and the Fur Block Conservation System. These programs reflected the previous Liberal government's strategy of promoting northern Aboriginal peoples' socio-economic well-being through conservation and economic development in the region. Valentine's discussion of the effects of these 'well-meant schemes' on the Métis reveals how wildlife regulation was not the only motivation behind the Fur Block tenure system: "…the Block Conservation System is meant to regulate, by means of a defined area surrounding a particular settlement, the conservation of fur-bearing animals, and at the same time to put an end to their nomadic life by conforming them to a settlement" (1954, p. 93). Quiring's account of this period of social conflict and change experienced by Métis people offers another view:

> Traditionally, Aboriginal families spent prolonged periods, several months at a time, living on remote trap lines. This obviously could not continue if the CCF wanted to assimilate Aboriginals in settlements…[The CCF] looked on trapping as a male activity and condoned men's absences from the settlement as long as women and children remained there. Instead of allowing trappers to trap wherever they wanted, which would have resulted in severe overcrowding on traplines near villages, the CCF assigned trapping areas to groups of men. Some trappers received areas near the village, allowing them to frequently return to their homes and families. But many traplines lay farther away, forcing those who wanted to trap to spend prolonged periods of time away from their homes. Often the pull of families and village life meant that little trapping took place. It also meant that families trapped much less frequently together. (Quiring 2004, p. 100)

It is particularly important to stress the way in which northern Métis people were administered by provincial governance as opposed to the Federal Reservation system applied to the region's First Nations under the Indian Act. With the arrival of formal provincial

governance in the region, the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan suddenly became entrenched into a space of regulated assimilation into Euro-Canadian social structures with no guarantees or rights to land tenure. At the time, the capacity of Métis people to adapt to such changes was constrained by their meagre involvement in the regional political economy. Provincial government discourse pertaining to Aboriginal people, northern economic diversification, and resource management at the time factors in significantly:

> The CCF divided northern resources into two groups: those it thought Aboriginals should participate in harvesting and those it considered beyond the scope of Aboriginals' abilities to extract. It largely reserved trapping, fishing, and subsistence farming for Aboriginals, while thinking non-Aboriginals should handle mining, forestry, and tourism. (Quiring 2004, p. 99)

Bourgeault's (1992) critique describes the rise of state authority and Keynesian social policies in the 1950s and 60s as systematically incorporating Métis people into the wage labour economy as "underemployed and unemployed wage labour" where "they were formally proletarianized without becoming consistently active proletariats" (p. 172). The partitioning of the traditional Métis homeland into management units and administrative boundaries carved into the region socio-economic and political structures that have carried over into contemporary resource management institutions and activities.[2]

The devolution of responsibilities and autonomy to northern Métis communities can concretely be seen in the formation of local municipal government during the 1970s. Wourinen (1981) has documented that, "The power balance started to shift toward local control in 1965 when Buffalo Narrows got a Local Community Authority, (L.C.A.)" where "Prior to 1974, the L.C.A. relied on Department of Natural Resources grants for most of their revenue, with some more or less voluntary tax contributions" (p. 29). Increased local autonomy in the LCA was devolved with the creation of the regionally elected Northern Municipal Council in 1974 and the passing of the Northern Municipalities Act in 1983 (Goulet 1997). Although these processes ceded significant powers to Métis northerners, legitimate powers were retained by provincial authorities and private tenure holders in the designated Fur Blocks – a feature that has been maintained to the present time. Thus, as

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[2] For example, Mistik Management's Forest Management Agreement (FMA), located in the study region, uses the Fur Blocks in its co-management relations with communities in the FMA, including the organisation of contracts to community members involved in the forest industry.

Métis communities gained more control in municipal decision-making, the Saskatchewan government officials' notion of Métis self-governance and control over traditional lands remained absent. Notwithstanding this contentious Aboriginal/State relations political situation, Métis municipal leaders and affiliated institutions have been significantly incorporated into larger provincial institutions such as the Northern Development Board Corporation, the North West Saskatchewan Municipalities Association, and the Northern Labour Market Committee which share overlapping mandates in the areas of regional economic development, employment and training opportunities, partnering with industry, and attracting business investment in the region.

Politically, the Métis organised and mobilised their interests with the establishment of the Saskatchewan Métis Society in 1937, which was intended to "procure federal compensation for extinguishment of the Métis share of Aboriginal title to the country in the form of assistance for the Métis to establish themselves in agriculture and industry" (Weinstein 2007, p. 26). In 1967 this organisation joined with the Métis Association of Saskatchewan (a north-based entity) to form the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, which over the years transformed into the present Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS).

The mandate of the current MNS is "to pursue the rights of the Métis within Saskatchewan and to work towards development of the social, cultural, economic, civil, political and legal rights of the Métis" (MNS n.d.). Since their inclusion as one of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada in s. 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982, the MNS have been successful in asserting Aboriginal harvesting rights in the province following the Supreme Court of Canada's rulings in the *Delgamuuk*, *Sparrow*, and *Powley* cases. Although issues concerning Aboriginal title, Métis land claims, and jurisdiction for the Métis remain unresolved, the result of court challenges and their distinction as an Aboriginal people has meant that consultation and fiduciary responsibilities have become a significant part of the process of managing and developing natural resources in Métis traditional lands. This political relationship is a significant structure that I proceed to investigate in this study, particularly regarding the role of Saskatchewan Environment to engage and involve Métis communities in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan.

It is important to distinguish the political context of the Métis in northwest Saskatchewan from First Nations, as it differs significantly from the First Nations patriation process with regard to treaties, the reservation system, annuities, etc. Weinstein (2007) traces the political history and struggles of the Métis in Canada in asserting two fundamental political goals: Aboriginal title to traditional lands (e.g., the historical Métis homeland) and self-government. Although the Métis are recognised in the constitution as a distinct Aboriginal people, they exist without recognized rights to a traditional land base nor do they possess the political apparatus to self-govern such an area, unlike the First Nations for which a nation-to-nation structure legally defines their relationship with the Government of Canada. However, recognition of Métis title to traditional lands and self-government mechanisms are changing.

Weinstein describes the evolution of Métis political activism as a 'quiet revolution' and this can be seen partially in the recent developments concerning the assertion of Métis rights to land and self-government. In 1996 the *R. v. Morin and Daigneault* court decision established the constitutional right of the Métis in northwest Saskatchewan to harvest for subsistence, which corresponded with Saskatchewan Environment adopting a policy to allow Métis people in the Northern Administration District to harvest without a provincial licence (Weinstein 2007). In May 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan produced a document addressing consultation with Aboriginal people which states that, "the Government must act with honour and integrity in its dealings with First Nations and Métis people," and that "consultation must take place before any legislation, policy, program, or other activity that could adversely affect Treaty or Aboriginal rights is developed or put in place" (Government of Saskatchewan 2006, p. 2). Still, in terms of an Aboriginal right to historically occupied land, the rights-bearing Métis of northwest Saskatchewan continue to be 'landless,' a situation which is being challenged by the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan through legal processes (e.g., a land claim and lawsuit was launched in 1994). This political situation has contributed in shaping the particularity within Métis communities in terms of local governance of community affairs and in terms of resource tenures involving Métis communities.

At the community level, Métis communities in northwest Saskatchewan continue today to have two distinct forms of political representation. As I mentioned above, it was

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during the mid 1960s that provincial authorities devolved municipal responsibilities to Métis settlements, giving rise to local municipal government referred to as a community's Local Community Authority (LCA). It is much like any municipal government structure with an elected mayor and council which is responsible for local taxation, community services such as sewage and garbage treatment, etc. In addition to this, with few exceptions, each community has a Métis Local (led by an elected president) which is affiliated with the Northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council and the province-wide Métis Nation – Saskatchewan (MNS). This local political leadership is therefore tied to the mandate of the MNS to work towards development of the social, cultural, economic, civil, political and legal rights of the Métis in Saskatchewan. Thus, the communities I studied could be better recognised as an Aboriginal municipality rather than a First Nation reserve. Métis communities must also be distinguished from First Nations contexts in terms of jurisdictional authority corresponding to local natural resources.

The majority of Métis settlements in the study region are designated as being within a given land area called a Fur Block, which were established in the 1940s under the Fur Block Conservation System. Again, under this system of land tenure provincial authorities retain decision-making powers and Métis people have only an advisory role. Interestingly, in today's context, Métis communities generally recognise their Fur Block as their local 'traditional territory' or jurisdiction. This has created a somewhat ambiguous local political situation given that the LCA of a particular Métis community has jurisdiction only within its municipal boundary. On the other hand, the Métis Local, in my understanding, attends more to the Fur Block as a whole, especially in the contexts of such various local institutions as Fur Block Associations, Commercial Fishermen Co-operatives, Trappers Associations, and even representation within Mistik's co-management boards (all of which may or may not be present within a given community). Thus, although Métis communities have gained significant control in municipal decision-making, the notion of Métis self-governance and control over traditional land remains absent in the study region.

Natural Resource Development in the Northern Saskatchewan: Then and Now
In *Saskatchewan, The Roots of Discontent and Protest* (2004), author John Warnock describes Saskatchewan as 'have-not' province in contrast to Alberta's status as one of the 'have' provinces – an outcome attributed with the development of rich natural resources and

conservative political ideologies. He identifies northern Saskatchewan historically as a
resource extraction hinterland, which ties into his discussion of the "long tradition of
describing Canadian development within a framework of metropolitan domination of
hinterland areas" (p. 104). Citing Roach (2002), Warnock makes the argument that
Saskatchewan's economic dependence on, and domination by, natural resource extraction,
and the political implications of such a structure – particularly with respect to regionalism,
regional disparity, and the centralisation of legitimacy and power in metropolitan centres.
Commenting on the more recent human dimensions of resource extraction in northern
Saskatchewan, Warnock writes,

> The population that remains in Saskatchewan is becoming polarized between
> an older generation of people with a European background approaching
> retirement and a younger, less educated, Aboriginal population which has
> been largely excluded from many areas of employment. The resource
> extraction industries have been fully developed, but unemployment and
> poverty remain very serious problems in the province's North. (2004, p. 101)

Northern Saskatchewan's resource extraction 'hinterland' has primarily consisted of
industrial forestry, large-scale mining, and more recently the exploration of oil sands within
the northern portion of the study site.

Forestry

The political economy of forestry has come a long way in the province, especially if we
observe the industry in terms of the state, industry, and society relationship. With the signing
of the *Saskatchewan Natural Resources Transfer Agreement* in 1930, provincial authorities began to
address the state of northern provincial forests as a result of forest loss due to wildfire and
high-grade cutting by private firms in the region (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a,
Warnock 2004). Although the growth of the forest sector reflected the policies of the
political party in power, provincial governments shared a common interest with private
enterprises to develop a commercial forestry industry and to provide economic incentives to
attract foreign and domestic capital (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a). Formal governance
of provincial forests began in 1931 with the establishment of *The Forest Act*.

In 1945 the provincial government established the Saskatchewan Forest Products
Company, overseen by the Saskatchewan Timber Board and Saskatchewan Wood

Enterprises, with the mandate of promoting the "maximum utilization of the province's forest resources for the benefit of all the people of Saskatchewan" (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a, p. 18). Under this political and management framework, previous control and marketing of forest resources by private interests were replaced by provincial authority over harvesting, the implementation of timber conservation , and state coordination of the timber industry (Saskatchewan Northern Affairs 2002). It was not until 1965 that large-scale forestry appeared in the province with negotiations involving U.S.-based forest company Parsons and Whittmore and the later construction of a pulp and paper mill in Prince Albert (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a, Warnock 2004) which involved a guaranteed supply of wood and payment of stumpage fees to the provincial Crown.

Since the establishment of commercial forestry under provincial regulation, government agencies such as Saskatchewan Environment have responded to increasing pressures of the industry on the environment and the socio-economic well-being of northern Aboriginal people through policies of sustainable resource management and consultation processes. In 1999 *The Forest Act* was replaced by *The Forest Resources Management Act and Regulations* as the model "for how forests are to be managed in Saskatchewan, going into the 21st century" (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a, p. 19). Saskatchewan Environment's Forest Service Branch carries out the legal and management objectives under this provincial framework. In accordance with this structure, Saskatchewan Environment oversees the development of commercial forest resources through 20-year Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) with large-scale operations and Term Supply Licences (TSLs) for smaller independent forest companies.

Commercial forestry and associated harvesting tenures cover the majority of the study site and supplies large timber processing plants in the surrounding southern communities of Meadow Lake and La Ronge.[3] Currently, the largest tenure holders directly within the study site include the Mistik FMA (1,926,367 ha) and the Northwest Communities Wood Products Ltd. TSL (778,263 ha) with the Weyerhaeuser Prince Alberta FMA and

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[3] Weyerhaeuser closed its Prince Albert Pulp Mill in 2006. In the context of this recent closure, a recent governmental report has stated: "In the short term, the pulp and paper sector of the forest industry is undergoing market and industry transformation. The impact of this on the provincial forest industry is a significant risk faced by the Department in terms of impact on the economy" (Saskatchewan Environment n.d.).

Kitsaki-Zelensky TSL bordering the study region west of the Métis northern villages of Beauval and Pinehouse (Saskatchewan Environment 2007a). By the 1990s planning, management, reforestation, and consultation with local communities were required for government approval of FMAs and it was during this time that Métis communities became increasingly involved in forestry-based decision-making through Mistik Management's co-management process (see Beckley and Korber 1996). Presently, Mistik Management Ltd. has nine advisory/co-management boards functioning in the FMA with three located in the Métis communities of Buffalo Narrows, Île à la Crosse, and Beauval. These co-management boards offer local communities the opportunity to express concerns over a range of issues related to impacts of commercial forestry on local forest users. For example, a brief summary of issues that have been expressed by Métis co-management boards in the FMA raised concern about the sustainability of the surrounding forests, impacts to trapping areas and compensation for affected parties, lack of employment access in respective Fur Blocks, and a lack of presence on behalf of Saskatchewan Environment at such meetings (Mistik 2005). Insofar as Métis communities are able to voice concerns within the co-management framework, the advisory role of these boards contrasts with the greater agency of Métis communities in commercial forestry ventures, such as the recently formed Northwest Communities Wood Products Ltd (NCWP).

Representing one of only a handful of Crown-land tenures in Canada held by a Métis organisation (Forest Home n.d.), NCWP is a shared Métis-owned venture involving the seven communities of Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, Green Lake, Île à la Crosse, La Loche, Patuanak, and Pinehouse. This commercial forest venture began when Saskatchewan Environment, Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development, and the Office of Northern Affairs signed a letter of intent with NCWP in 1999 to negotiate a FMA in the region (Saskatchewan Environment 2000). Since that time, NWCP has been allocated a TSL and began operations in 2002 under the direction of the company's Board of Directors represented by the seven participant communities. Through their representatives, these seven communities can exercise significant decision-making regarding the management of forest resources located in the TSL. Interestingly, this process of negotiating for commercial forestry tenure initiated the introduction of Saskatchewan Environment's more recent

management tools, the Integrated Forest Land Use Management Plan (IFLUP), within the study region (ibid).

Subject to the terms of *The Forest Resources Management Act and Regulations*, Saskatchewan Environment is mandated to develop an IFLUP for management units within Provincial Forests. This process is an ecosystem-based planning process that considers all components of the planning area (i.e. land, people, forests, wildlife, conservation) through an analysis of how the components are related, and attempts to blend scientific and local/traditional knowledge (Saskatchewan Environment 2007b). Following Saskatchewan Environment's model of identifying all stakeholder interests and forest-based values through public involvement and consensus decision-making (Saskatchewan Environment 2000), the IFLUP process is intended to: provide a summary of information about the resources in the area, identify key issues related to resource management, recommend actions and guidelines to resolve resource-based conflicts, direct land use and resource management, and guide the implementation of the plan (Saskatchewan Environment 2007b). It is important to clarify that the above information on Saskatchewan's IFLUP process comes from Saskatchewan Government sources and that I do not take these documents at face value. Two IFLUPs can be identified within the study region, the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP (which covers a majority of Pinehouse's N-11 Fur Block) and the recently proposed Clearwater River IFLUP (with an initial area of interest that spans La Loche's N-19 Fur Block). It is Saskatchewan Environment's goal to 'raise the bar' with each successive IFLUP; the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP "represents the first time that Saskatchewan Environment has formalized a process where a community-based Traditional Use Study has been an integral component of the planning process" (Saskatchewan Environment 2003, p. 4). In my research I was interested in seeing how this process was perceived by Pinehouse residents and whether any discussions about the Clearwater IFLUP were apparent in La Loche.

Mining
As Saskatchewan's forest industry continues to be affected by global markets and vulnerability to a host of economic constraints, the mining industry in northern Saskatchewan continues to be a significant economic activity in the North. To a large extent, the industry can been seen as the largest sector in terms of providing economic opportunities (e.g., employment, contract bids, funding and training programs) for northern

Métis communities. The progression of the mining industry, much like the forestry industry, has undergone significant restructuring in order to meet the socio-economic needs of northern Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan. Goulet's (1997) summary of the participation of northern Aboriginal people in the uranium industry provides an overview of the stages of change within the mining sector.

In his opening remarks, Goulet (1997) describes the socio-economic crises of declining traditional economies (trapping, commercial fishing) and "welfare dependency" experienced by northern Aboriginal groups and how this issue has been increasingly addressed through the development of uranium resources. Goulet explains the development of the industry in three distinct phases: Phase 1 – Uranium City, Phase 2 – Cluff Lake and Key Lake, Phase 3 – The 1990s. The first phase, beginning in the 1950s, involved a classic case of a boom and bust industry in which the province established a remote townsite near Lake Athabasca for the sole purpose of supporting the needs of the mining industry. Goulet's comment on this project illustrates the key lessons learned from this experience:

> The community and workforce employed at the mines was made up entirely of people outside the north and, to a large extent, of people from outside Saskatchewan and even Canada [ ] On reflection one must conclude that the initial stage of uranium development in northern Saskatchewan resulted in little social or economic benefit for the people of Saskatchewan, particularly the people of the north. This is particularly true when the legacy of this boom and bust development is considered – an abandoned community and two mining and milling operations which have yet to be fully decommissioned. (Goulet 1997, p. 5)

The second phase of uranium development occurred around the late 1970s, which Goulet characterises this period using the exemplars of the Cluff Lake and Key Lake mines. In this time period government agencies were formed specifically to address northern issues and development of the North. Under the direction of such agencies as the Saskatchewan Department of the Environment, uranium mining proposals were received through formal public inquiries prior to approval. One outcome of this process was an aspirations that "social and environmental priorities" (p. 5) were shared by the mining interests. With this commitment to the North and its residents, 'surface leases' were implemented with stringent

conditions concerning northern hiring quotas and contract bidding preferences.[4] Another significant feature was the government's decision to instead promote the "week-in, week-out" work schedule and identify impact communities to be prioritised within proposed mining commitments. One shortfall, however, during this time was the oversight of northern Aboriginals' education and training capacities to fill the mining sectors' northern employment quotas, which were set at a minimum of 50 per cent.

Goulet's discussion of the third phase of uranium development sees a continuation of the goals and objectives of the previous phase with the proposed expansion of the industry in the 1990s. In 1991 the industry went through a "joint federal – provincial environmental assessment review process to address proposed new uranium developments in northern Saskatchewan" (p. 7). Continuing the commitments to environmental protection and socio-economic benefits for northerners, this era also addressed the need for stringent health and safety protection for workers and a commitment to devolve powers and increase decision-making opportunities for northern communities (which involved the establishment of The Northern Review Board, Northern Health Districts, and strengthening municipal government). In addition, the province was still concerned about the extent of benefits flowing into northern communities and their unique needs. In this context three areas of capacity building were implemented: the Multi-Party Training Plan (to address training and employment opportunities for northerners), the Northern Development Fund (to provide funding for local business development), Environmental Quality Committees (to initiate community-based monitoring of the uranium industry and its impacts on northern livelihoods). Interestingly, a significant factor leading to these initiatives was the province's concern about the employment rates in northern communities where, by 1991, "almost 60% of northern residents were under the age of 25…and unemployment levels in northern communities ranged from 25% to in excess of 33%" (p. 7). In looking to the future of the uranium industry at that time, Goulet concludes that "The uranium mining industry offers one of the few economic opportunities available to northerners and allows them a choice between a traditional lifestyle and the wage-based economy" (p. 12).

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[4] In 1983 the 'surface lease' structure was replaced by Human Resource Development Agreements where similar employment and opportunities were committed, including the identifying of impact communities.

In terms of the future of large-scale development in northwest Saskatchewan, a recent release from the Department of Energy and Resources predicts a favourable investment climate, which will attract a host of mining projects for the region (see Energy and Resources n.d.). Saskatchewan Environment's 2007/2008 Performance Plan, for example, reported that:

> Investment in mineral exploration has increased nine-fold since 2001. Saskatchewan's exploration expenditures have risen from just under $23 million in 2003, to an estimated record $208 million in 2006. Last year was also a new record for number of active mineral dispositions with more than 12 million hectares under disposition. This has increased demand on the Department for processing invoices, approvals and inspections. Increased development of the north and associated road development and ongoing human activity will increase environmental compliance and enforcement issues, as well as increase demand on the Departments' wildfire fighting services. (Saskatchewan Environment n.d., p.19)

The exploration of oil sands north of La Loche is attracting similar attention in terms of expanding economic opportunities in northwest Saskatchewan.

Oil Sands Exploration in Northwest Saskatchewan

The recent exploration of oil sands headed by Oilsands Quest Inc. portends significant impacts for Métis communities in the northwest of the province. Exploration of oil sands in the study region was initiated by Oilsands Quest Inc. and the company's exploration drilling program commenced on 3 November 2006 (Oilsands Quest Inc 2009). Oilsands Quest Inc. acquired exploration permits totalling 205,613 ha and exploration licences covering 44,483 ha, which are located north of the Métis community of La Loche (ibid). Since the beginning of exploratory drilling, Oilsands Quest Inc. has been involved with the northern village of La Loche. The company has held public forums for community members to learn more about the project and they have also provided opportunities to hear local concerns regarding economic opportunities and environmental impacts. Oilsands Quest's exploration activity has fuelled observed conflict with the Clearwater River Dene First Nation (CRDFN) (on lands lying adjacent to La Loche), which resulted in a roadblock in 2007 set up by the band to address the current process of negotiations with identified 'impact' communities. During the period of my fieldwork (summer of 2007), the community of La Loche and the

CRDFN were in the process of negotiating an Impact and Benefit Agreement (IBA) with the company.

Taking Stock

The relationship between Métis communities, Saskatchewan Environment, and industry has rapidly changed in terms of sharing the responsibility of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. Certainly, the rapid pace of resource development in the region, the issues surrounding Métis rights and the legal duty to consult with Aboriginal peoples, and the socio-economic and cultural conditions of Métis communities challenge all stakeholders and actors to find a balanced environmental governance structure. In identifying future "risks" associated with mandated responsibilities, Saskatchewan Environment confirms that "There is greater uncertainty arising from the recent Supreme Court decision confirming Métis Aboriginal rights for subsistence fishing and hunting. The extent of, and conditions on this right are not clear at this time" (Saskatchewan Environment n.d.). In my comparative case study I was cognizant of this legal and political feature and followed local perceptions of Saskatchewan Environment's capacity in consulting with Métis community members in a range of resource management contexts (i.e. commercial fishing quotas, IFLUPs, exploratory leases). I will finally turn this discussion over to a description of the communities that I targeted in this comparative case study – Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche.

The Comparative Cases: Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche

The 2006 Canada Census has identified 48,115 Métis people residing in the province of Saskatchewan. According to 2001 Census Aboriginal Profile data, there was approximately 6000 Métis living in the communities in the study site. In total there are 20 communities identified within the CURA Otipimsuak Project and of those I selected Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche as relevant case for comparison in my study of Métis communities and their involvement in regional environmental governance.

Pinehouse

In 1786 the Hudson's Bay Company established a post near 'Snake Lake' and by 1939 Cree Métis moved into the area and formed a 'scattered village' (Quiring 2004, p. 51). The community of Pinehouse is located on Pinehouse Lake (55°31'N, 106°34'W) in the Churchill

River system. The landscape is characteristic of the boreal forest ecosystem with upland areas covered by jackpine (*Pinus banksiana*) and dominated by black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Tsuga canadensis*) in low lying areas in which the community straddles the geological features of the rocky shield in the north and the sandy tills in the south (ibid). Cree is the first language spoken in the community and this northern village supports a mixed economy of subsistence and cash-based livelihoods. Generally, resource harvesting pursuits provide a significant addition to the local economy, especially from the local fishery, and "other sources of cash are government transfer payments and remuneration of the sale of labour" with "few permanent jobs in town [ ] in the service sector" (p. 208). The construction of an all-weather road in 1978 formally linked the community with the south, which opened the region to "mining and pulp companies, tourist outfitters, outside hunters, anglers, and wild rice (*Zizania aquatica*) farmers" (p. 207). The Pinehouse Co-op meets a majority of the needs of this northern village and small businesses are mostly non-existent in the community. The Key Lake Uranium Mine and other northern mines in the region have been a significant recent source of employment. Since 1999, Pinehouse has been a major stakeholder and participant in the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP and a stakeholder in the NCWP. Demographically, Pinehouse supports a population of 1,076 with 61.4 per cent of the population under the age of 25 and 3.3 per cent who are 65 years and older.[5] The average earnings in 2000 were $16, 673 with 34.6 per cent of earnings coming from government transfers and an unemployment rate of 36.4 per cent.[6]

Buffalo Narrows

By 1931 the Métis community of Buffalo Narrows featured a church and a school, and in 1943 the addition of Len Waite's fish plant presented 'a major economic opportunity' locally (Quiring 2004, p. 50). Buffalo Narrows (55°15'N, 108°29'W) is situated on the Churchill River between Peter Pond Lake and Churchill Lake approximately 540 km north of Saskatoon along highway 155. Buffalo Narrows' boreal landscape is dominated by two large lakes that surround the community. Buffalo Narrows has been less isolated historically from the south and as a result the community's socio-economic milieu contrasts with that of Pinehouse and La Loche. The community supports an array of local services and

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[5] 2006 Census, Statistics Canada, Pinehouse (northern village).
[6] 2001 Census Aboriginal Profiles, Statistics Canada, Pinehouse (northern village).

entrepreneurship and has therefore been more closely tied to resource development activities such as forestry and mining. In 1961 the Buffalo Narrows Sawmill Cooperative was incorporated (Quiring 2004) and since then the community has supported local forestry-based ventures. The community can be seen as a 'hub' in the northwest region where locals have access to a post-secondary training facility and other agencies "as a regional government centre with full or part time offices including Social Services, Highways, Justice, Environment and Resource Management, Sask Power, Sask Tel, Municipal Government, Northern Affairs Economic Development, and Human Resource Development Canada" (Keewatin Career Development Corporation 2007a). Buffalo Narrows, a mixed Cree and English speaking community, has a population of 1,081 where 47.2 per cent of the population is under the age of 25 and 7.9 per cent is 65 years and older.[7] The average earnings in the community in 2000 was $19,477, 25.4 per cent of which came from government transfers with an unemployment rate of 23.2 per cent.[8]

La Loche

The community of La Loche finds its beginnings with the establishment of a general store, a school, a hospital, and a convent in the early 1940s, which attracted Métis families that "formerly lived dispersed over a large area" (Quiring 2004, p. 49). The Dene-speaking Métis community of La Loche (56°29'N, 109°26'W) is located approximately 644 km north of Saskatoon along highway 155. An all-weather road was constructed in 1962 linking the community with the regional centre of Buffalo Narrows and the south of the province. La Loche is the most populated northern community in the northwest region and Métis people and members from the Clearwater River Dene Nation (CRDN) live in the community. In terms of infrastructure, government services such as housing, roads, electricity, sewer and water have greatly intensified since 1972 when the Department of Northern Saskatchewan was formed (Keewatin Career Development Corporation 2007b). Despite the maintenance of traditional forest-based livelihoods, industrial development activities such as oil sands in Fort McMurray (accessed by the Garson Lake winter road) and the Cluff Lake Uranium Mine north of the community have locally influenced employment opportunities. As mentioned earlier, significant oil sands exploration and other mineral

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[7] 2006 Census, Statistics Canada, Buffalo Narrows (northern village).
[8] 2001 Census Aboriginal Profiles, Statistics Canada, Buffalo Narrows (northern village).

interests north of La Loche continue to be a focus in local discussions of socio-economic opportunities and challenges for the community. There are currently 2,346 people residing in La Loche and 56.6 per cent of the population is under the age of 25 with 3.2 per cent 65 years and older.[9] The average earnings in La Loche in 2000 was $17,570 where 52.4 per cent of earnings came from government transfers and an unemployment rate of 51 per cent.[10]

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[9] 2006 Census, Statistics Canada, La Loche (northern village).
[10] 2001 Census Aboriginal Profiles, Statistics Canada, La Loche (northern village).

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction

This study fundamentally examines the *agency* and *power* of Aboriginal rights-bearing Métis communities in relation with the contemporary *structure* of northwest Saskatchewan's shifting political economy, and how agency, power and structure are mutually reinforcing. My position is that to understand the Métis as part of the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan, it is therefore important to think conceptually about the relationships between Métis agency, the structures of the regional political economy, and the power relations that exist in this social context. This literature review examines these concepts in the Métis context and additionally discusses other relevant work in natural resource/environmental sociology, particularly Freudenburg's (2005) notion of 'privileged access' and 'privileged accounts.'

The chapter begins with a discussion of two key articles that initiated my particular approach for this study (i.e., what kinds of questions need to be asked and how should I attempt to provide answers). First, I introduce the concept of environmental governance, reviewed by Davidson and Frickel (2004), and connect this work with Molotch *et al's* (2000) insights about agency and structure, which combined acted as a roadmap for my inquiry. Second, I review the limited research concerning the Métis and natural resource management. I use Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital, including his ideas on 'social space,' to further conceptualise contemporary environmental governance. Lastly, I review the concept of power in more 'relational' terms.

Environmental Governance, Structure and Agency, and Power

I approached the principle objectives of the Otipimsuak Project with the impression that it was necessary contextually to situate the Métis within the contemporary political economy of northwest Saskatchewan, and also to examine recent industry-based and government-based 'forces' in the region associated with natural resource management. These early research interests eventually led me to combining the ideas of environmental governance, structure and agency theory, and concepts of power. In particular, two journal articles pointed me towards my proposed conceptual and theoretical orientation for this study.

Davidson and Frickel (2004) define environmental governance as "attempts by governing bodies or combinations thereof to alleviate recognized environmental dilemmas" (p. 471). Researchers studying environmental governance are interested in describing and analysing the social relationships prevalent in society-environment interactions (e.g., natural resource extraction), such as the role of the state in relation to industry-based interests and other key interested parties. Davidson and Frickel discuss six perspectives that have contributed to the major conceptual developments in environmental governance research: pluralism, agency capture, ecological Marxism, ecological modernization, social constructionism, and global environmentalism. My conceptual understanding of environmental governance for this study emphasises six fundamental ideas taken from among the perspectives reviewed.

Pluralism examines the problem of how governing bodies "aggregate competing interests in the environmental realm" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 473). This perspective contributes the first two features of my conceptual understanding of environmental governance. Where the state possesses authority in policy and decision-making within a given society-environment interaction, such as provincial forest management, which usually involves the state choosing among a range of interests, stakeholders, or social groups to include in policy formulation and appropriate implementation. Second, pluralism draws awareness to the fundamental feature that social groups 'compete' in the system of environmental governance, which quite often occurs on an unequal playing field "where resources, and the government itself, is accessible to those with sufficient organizational skills" (p. 473). Wilds (1990), for instance, observed how the plurality of interests surrounding environmental issues evoked conflicting goals for the state and other institutions responsible for making policies.

Agency capture, the second perspective, adds to the already apparent themes of power, agency, and durable structures (e.g., state authority) represented in the pluralist study of environmental governance, but contrasts with pluralism by emphasizing the disproportionate influence of particular stakeholders in policy formulation and/or implementation. Agency capture refers to the "the tendency for resource agencies to become dominated by a constituency of resource users" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 474) and to situations in which "agency agendas become driven by industry constituents" (p. 474).

Freudenburg and Gramling (1994), for instance, discuss how the process of 'bureaucratic slippage' acts to subtly compromise initial policies into often ineffectual outcomes via multiple stages of policy interpretation that tend to favour industry interests. Despite a main criticism of agency capture research that it "tends to leave the macro-structural features of state-capital relationships underexplored" (p. 474), from this perspective views the state and other social groups/interests as "mutually constitutive" (p. 475). Thus, to add to my conceptual understanding of environmental governance, agency capture research reveals, third, that social relations can become structurally durable features in a given system of environmental governance, particularly in state-industry interactions. Fourth, the agency capture perspective explores the social connections and relational features of social groups and actors in systems of environmental governance.

Ecological Marxism and ecological modernisation perspectives examine environmental governance in a "more comprehensive or macro-theoretical manner" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 475). An important shared feature of these two perspectives is that the role of the state is problematised in relation to macro-social forces such as environmental degradation and economic expansion (ecological Marxism, such as that exhibited in Schnaiberg's (1980) classic thesis or institutional transformation and environmental improvement (ecological modernisation) with the contributions of Spaargaren and Mol (1992) and others. Conceptually, these perspectives lead me to consider the role of the state in relation to macro-structural features in a given system of environmental governance. The global environmental perspective also contributes a macro-level understanding of environmental governance "specifically on external or supranational pressures on nation-states" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 479).

The final contributing perspective, social constructionism, allows us to examine the way language and symbols delimit dimensions of environmental governance and "the processes of environmental claims making – how social and political understandings of nature and environmental problems are crafted, contested, and legitimated" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 477). Social constructionists examine the 'symbolic politics' of environmental governance systems such as how environmental issues are framed by 'powerful' social actors (Krogman 1996). Another strand of this research applies cultural theory and discourse analysis to examine the theme of power more as "enmeshing with and

constitutive of political and social structures" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 478). The social constructionist approach therefore informs the concept of environmental governance with a consideration of the various power relations not overtly observed from the other perspectives.

To summarise these main ideas about environmental governance in relation to my thesis, the pluralist perspective uncovers the state as a key actor with a particular type of power in relation to social groups who 'compete' to further their own interests. This approach assumes that various social groups compete for influence to secure their interests in the space of environmental governance. Agency capture occurs when a durable structural relationship between the state and industry-related (or other) interests exists, where one stakeholder, whether industry or interest group, is able to consistently obtain their desired outcomes from a government agency. While these two perspectives influence my analysis, I also try to situate the work with reference to a broader political economy, which is somewhat informed by the ecological Marxism and ecological modernisation perspectives, with my attention to macro-level structures (e.g., capitalism, large-scale resource development) and state responses. Last, the social constructionism perspective raises important questions about the types of discourses between social groups that reveal the relations of power in environmental governance, as well as the symbolic processes that legitimate dominant views and discourage or displace subordinate concerns.

Thus, environmental governance as a social space can be thought of in terms of arrangements of social actors, structures, power relations, and the resulting relationships formed between agency (i.e., social action) and structure (i.e., the constituted world we live in). However, the difficulty in working with this conceptualisation, as Molotch *et al* (2000) point out, is that "places comprise an ensemble of forces that somehow must be examined together…we still need a conceptual framework to analyze just how all this combining occurs" (p. 792). How, then, do the various actors, structures, and social relations 'come together' to shape a particular social system such as regional environmental governance?

Molotch *et al* (2000) approach a similar problem by posing two 'meta-problems': (1) how do the various features of a particular social world combine? (2) how does continuity (and change) play out in the social world? Molotch et al. draw from the ideas of 'lash-up' and

'structuration theory' (i.e., structure and agency theory) to explain how places (e.g., social contexts) achieve their particular 'character' and 'tradition.' Their work is best described in the following passage:

> Working with ideas borrowed from newer ways of understanding structure and agency, we have attempted to show how "place" happens and to offer ways of making the process of place structuration, otherwise vague and opaque, more accessible for study. (Molotch et al. 2000, p. 819)

Lash-up, a concept derived from actor network theory, refers simply to the connections and associations between humans and non-humans, but with awareness that "all durabilities – any thing or object – exist by virtue of the continuous actions that acknowledge, mobilize and hence secure them" (Molotch n.d., p. 39). In other words, "things exist in the world," explain Molotch *et al* (2000), "through the "success" of connections among various forces and across material and ideational realms" (p. 793). In this view, non-human objects, such as the environmental feature of a lake or ocean also become 'participants' in shaping the social world. As Bruno Latour argues, "[non-human objects] might authorize, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid, and so on" (Latour 2005, p. 72). So, for example, the 'character' of a place such as a 'logging town' is the result of a lash-up of "local phenomena as diverse as artefacts and politics, nature and organizations, economy and sentiment" (Molotch n.d., p. 38).

Molotch *et al* (2000) address the second problem, which concerns social continuity and social change, by synthesising the idea of lash-up with structure and agency theory. Structure and agency theory conceptualises the social world fundamentally as a relationship between human action or agency on the one hand, and the durable structures that enable or constrain social groups and actors on the other. Although many social theorists debate the emphasis on agency (e.g., fearing individualism) or structure (e.g., fearing determinism), Molotch *et al* highlight, rather, the notion that individuals act upon prior structures, which in doing so might reinforce existing structures or present new structures in a given space and time. For Molotch *et al*,

> Drawing upon what has come before entails continuity; the fact that at different times, what has come before is always different entails some change. The resulting configuration, at any moment or place, is thus not pre-determined, but is formed in a path-dependent way as each actor, with more

or less resources at his or her command, shapes a new social structure by
drawing upon the simultaneously enabling and constraining hand of the old.
(Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 793)

We can therefore observe this 'structuration' process, argue Molotch *et al*, by focusing on the 'tradition' of a given place. Since 'character' entails the mode of lash-up at a given moment, 'tradition,' then, expresses how that character "moves across time" (p. 793).

Molotch *et al's* (2000) conceptual understanding of how lash-ups and the process of structuration shape the social world lends itself well in the empirical study of social contexts. The strength and advantage in applying this conceptualisation is that 'character' and 'tradition' can stand in respectively for the ideas of 'lash-up' and 'structuration'. As Molotch *et al* point out,

People's sense of character and tradition make up the local "structure of
feeling" (Williams 1973:131, passim) that itself enters, in ways we will show,
as part of the lash-up and structuration process. We think character and
tradition can be *observed*. (Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 793-4)

It is therefore worthwhile to briefly discuss some of the interesting aspects of Molotch et al.'s research strategy and methodology.

Molotch *et al* (2000) compared two US cities with common attributes, geography and historical experience, to examine how these two places responded to the 'outside forces' of oil development and freeway expansion. Focusing on how these two forces played out in each city, the researchers asserted that they were able to "trace how certain plausible paths were or were not taken" (Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 794). In their comparison, external events are viewed as having equal potential to impact the two cities of similar background; it is in their different responses to these external forces that we can observe, argue Molotch *et al*, "a "possible world" counter-factual" (p. 794) by examining the outcomes in the two cities.

Methodologically, Molotch *et al* applied one strategy of researching other institutional realms such as 'community voluntary associations' with the understanding that these social spaces act as 'linking devices' for two reasons: (1) "because their variety and social makeup "cover" so many substantive areas" (p. 794) (2) "they harbour "memory traces" through which something like a social structure can transpose itself from one time or institutional realm to the next" (p. 794). Such places or 'associations' also offer spaces in which the

physical and non-human connections become available for observation. This is what Molotch *et al* refer to as the 'physical trace material' of place, such as the constructed environment and manipulations of nature, development projects, and public infrastructure, down to the smallest details such as graffiti and storefront displays. Interestingly, Molotch *et al* conceptualise the natural environment "as something that also both influences and takes on different reality depending on how, as a continuous matter, it lashes up with the other aspects of the local milieu" (p. 795).

In their final reflections, Molotch *et al* claim that observing character and tradition requires the researcher to keep the agenda open. Rather than focus on the political versus the economic versus the ideational etc., Molotch *et al* remind us that "History occurs across *all* the realms, all the time, with no time out…they form a dynamic and coherent ensemble" (p. 816). Molotch *et al* also recommends researchers "spot the crucial links" (p. 817) that appear to be shaping history. Since in their study Molotch *et al* demonstrate how the character and tradition of two not-so-different cities shaped different responses to external events such as oil development, they advocate the perspective of "leaving open the issue" (p. 817) of how locals view the social world's pressures and forces.

Molotch *et al* also share insights about the concept of power in the context of lash-ups and structuration. In particular, they address the question of what this means for individuals and groups acting upon the enabling and constraining structures in a given space. Power, in this sense, is about the 'durability' of structures, which themselves are the result of 'accumulating conjunctures' (e.g., different modes of lash-up). Their conceptualisation places equal attention upon the agency of actors who draw upon the existing character and tradition of place. As Molotch *et al* (2000) point out, actors and groups with limited resources are therefore constrained by "the weight of accumulating conjunctures, and the routines they imply" (p. 817). Power, in this context, is not simply about having the ability to act upon the social world; it is about how actors relate to each other, to the existing social structures, and to the external forces that constitute a given place.

The developments in environmental governance research, combined with the ideas of lash-up and structuration, appear quite relevant to the study of Métis agency and northwest Saskatchewan's rapidly shifting political economy. I use a synthesised conceptual

framework to observe the social world in terms of agency and structure, and the relationships that exist between these two concepts. The model remains sensitive to other significant variables such as time and history and so, the durability of structures, the influence of the physical environment, and also to the ways that character and tradition shape the social world. Finally, it is one approach by which I might attempt to simultaneously understand agency, structure and power.

But what does this conceptual framework imply about the notion of power? As discussed above, environmental governance is a social space made up of a complex arrangement of actors with varying degrees of agency, and a collection of durable and mutable structures that enable or constrain social action. Yet, importantly, these social spaces also contain histories, as exemplified in Molotch et al.'s focus on character and tradition. Hence, the environmental governance of a setting such as northwest Saskatchewan can also be understood in terms of the lash-ups and processes of structuration that have transpired over time. My concern is that it appears the concept of power should take on more of a 'relational' connotation, such as in Labour's understanding:

> it's so important to maintain that power, like society, is the final result of a process and not a reservoir, a stock, or a capital that will automatically provide an explanation. Power and domination have to be produced, made up, composed. Asymmetries exist, yes, but where do they come from and what are they made out of? (Latour 2005, p. 64)

Power, in this conceptualisation, concerns the relationships between the many arrangements that make up the social world, as opposed to such traditional views as the 'possession' or 'exercise' of power. I explore this perspective on power in more detail at the end of this chapter. At the present, these combined ideas about agency and structure, character and tradition, and power remain in the foreground as I review the limited body of work concerning Métis people and natural resource management in the study region.

The Métis of Northwest Saskatchewan and Regional Environmental Governance
In Canada scholarship on contemporary Aboriginal issues and the environment (i.e., co-management, cultural resilience, etc.) draws mostly from First Nations cases and experiences. Although much of this research is transferable and articulates the Métis perspective, such as Aboriginal struggles with natural resource policies or clashes with large-scale development,

very few studies have focused more recently on the Métis. That being said, although I do not draw specifically on such scholars as Maria Campbell, John E. Foster, Heather Devine, Olive Dickason, and Mike Evans, I am aware of their work and the contributions they have made in this area of research. I would also like to point out that given my focus is on contemporary Métis experiences and provincial resource management structures (beginning around the 1940s), I have decidedly omitted a rich collection of historical studies and literature on Métis people and natural resources (i.e., such as Hudson's Bay Company trade histories).

One important study about the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan and the contemporary shift towards provincial natural resource management comes from Valentine (1954). Valentine examined the early impact of Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) policies and programmes related to "the distribution of land and the conservation of wildlife" (p. 90) on the Métis.[11] He explains that by 1944 such factors as the depletion of wildlife resources, a decrease in the overseas market demand for fur, and a growing population of non-Indigenous northerners contributed to a socio-economic context "which made outside help mandatory" (Valentine 1954, p. 90). Valentine's study offers valuable insights about the Métis and the origins of a formally-administered system of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan.

One significant insight he makes concerns the way in which the Métis were perceived by the dominant Euro-Canadian administrators and policymakers who were taking responsibility over northern Saskatchewan. The "new attitude" (p. 90) held by the CCF government represented a shift in northern Saskatchewan that aimed to combine the development (and regulation) of natural resources in concert with improving the social and economic conditions in northern Métis communities. Valentine's discussion, however, conveys that this shift was also intended as a form of social control grounded in Euro-Canadian values: "It was hoped by these means not only to raise the living standard of the Métis but at the same time to wean them from their nomadic hunting and collecting existence" (p. 90). An example of this included the provincial government's effort to "instruct the Métis in the elements of agriculture" (p. 94) of which Valentine commented

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[11] Recall that the CCF government came to power in 1944, an era in which provincial authorities genuinely started "to bother with the northern half of the province of Saskatchewan" (Quiring 2004, p. x).

that, "So far this has not been particularly successful" (p. 94). Interestingly, Quiring (2004) points out that the socialist northern agricultural policies largely 'reserved' for Aboriginals would not have been 'tolerated' by southern farmers. For example, the CCF envisioned a socialist model of Aboriginal farming in which government "retained ownership of and control over farmland" (p. 148).

Another insight of Valentine is his recognition that these new government policies and 'well meant' intentions brought forth a "rapid transition" (p. 94) in the structure of northwest Saskatchewan's political economy. Consequently, for the Métis communities of Portage La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Ile a la Crosse, and Beauval (the communities studied by Valentine), this rapid shift displaced the traditional social features that tethered the Métis to northern Saskatchewan's prior way of life. Foremost, the compulsory introduction of provincial regulation and exclusive marketing of furs restricted the Métis from accessing credit from private traders that was essential for an entire season of trapping. It was also at this time that the barter economy and credit system shifted towards the modern-day 'cash economy.' Yet, at the same time, partially due to the mandate of the 'Block Conservation System,' in which "the fur in each block can be taken only by the Métis [ ] who have the necessary residence requirements" (p. 93), the Métis had to abandon their nomadic lifestyle and were assimilated into permanent settlements.

Valentine's work is also important because it offers a glimpse of the early conditions in these permanent settlements and the unintended consequences of assimilating Métis culture within the 'modern' Euro-Canadian way of life. A decline in the availability of credit meant that the Métis had to learn how to function in the cash-based economy, and according to Valentine this was a difficult challenge to overcome. The combination of having to wait long periods for government fur payments, the lure of "drinking and gambling parties" (p. 92), and not being accustomed to having cash on hand often resulted in a worse situation for the Métis: "although the fur crop has increased since the Service came into existence and more dollars have been paid to the Métis, the amount of money paid to them as relief has nearly doubled" (p. 92-93). Moreover, Valentine observed an absence of local wage-labour opportunities (with the exception of commercial fishing) and competition for furs among local trappers in each 'fur block' as being detrimental in the new cash economy and modern settled lifestyle. Valentine also noticed "a growing number of

men becoming migrant labourers" (p. 94), and that 'forced' dependence on store goods presented a situation in which "it has become difficult to obtain an adequate living" (p. 94).

In his conclusion, Valentine poses two important questions: "(1) What are we, as administrators, really doing when we define other people's problems? and (2) What are we, as administrators, really trying to do when we say we are trying to help people? (p. 95).

During the 1970s Robert Jarvenpa began studying the Chipewyan, Cree, and Métis people of the Upper Churchill River drainage located in the northwest region of Saskatchewan. In 1977 he conducted field research in the area to obtain "basic information on contemporary economic and social interactions" (Jarvenpa 1982, p. 284) in and among First Nations and Métis communities. Jarvenpa explains that during the 1940s an "economic shift" (p. 286) toward an "embryonic commercial fishing industry" (p. 286) was replacing the once dominant fur trading economy. Jarvenpa's work, like Valentine's as discussed above, notes the conditions of the Métis at a time when the political economy of the region was experiencing significant signs of change:

> At that time, and shortly thereafter, federal and provincial governments
> began injecting new social welfare, conservation, health and education
> programs paving the way for dependency of the Chipewyan and Cree upon
> an elite class of transient government administrators. The infusion of
> government services and bureaucratic controls has continued unabated to the
> present day. House construction, community development projects, and
> other forms of economic assistance have disrupted, but not entirely replaced
> the traditional bush economy in smaller communities. (Jarvenpa 1982, p. 286)

At the time of the research, Jarvenpa pointed out that northern Saskatchewan was experiencing 'accelerated' economic development with the large-scale development of uranium deposits. Jarvenpa identified Buffalo Narrows as both a "hub" (p. 289) for business and support industries of the new northern economy, and a "convenient location" (p. 289) for various provincial government agencies. By then Buffalo Narrows was beginning to attract northerners from smaller Aboriginal communities seeking employment "in house construction, in the social welfare office, and in other sectors of the economy" (p. 289). Jarvenpa described Pinehouse similarly but as working on a smaller scale. The community had several "visible EuroCanadian institutions" (p. 289) such as a church and a co-operative store, but services of R.C.M.P. officers, medical workers and other government officials

were only offered through periodic visitations. Jarvenpa noticed that because of the location of Pinehouse in relation to the "developing uranium mines" (p. 289), the community was perhaps strategically located to develop the kind of support economy functioning in Buffalo Narrows.

Interestingly, Jarvenpa briefly highlighted the importance of the local commercial fishing industry in these communities and the kinds of interactions it demanded from skilled fishermen:

> These fishing bosses, representing the start of a small entrepreneurial class, have been able to amass enough capital to accumulate two or more complete fishing outfits (gill nets, skiffs, outboard motors), are able to communicate successfully with bush pilots, fish dealers, and conservation officers, and are acquiring the rudiments of money management skills. (Jarvenpa 1982, p. 291)

And, he goes on further to state:

> The most successful fishing bosses, however, are Métis Cree men from Buffalo Narrows and Pinehouse Lake who have managed large fleets of hired hands along the Churchill River and as far northward as Cree Lake for many years. (Jarvenpa 1982, p. 291)

Poelzer and Poelzer's (1986) research examined the lives and personal experiences of 83 Métis women from northern Saskatchewan. Their qualitative study consisted of 96 unstructured interviews with Métis women and a year of field work in seven northern communities. Their methodology allowed Poelzer and Poelzer to "unearth the range of needs, attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the respondents" (p. xvi) and to emphasise the "the ideas and insights from the lives of the Métis women" (p. xvi). Another aim of their research was to contextualise the conditions of the Métis. Poelzer and Poelzer recognised the "inevitable tension" within Métis society after more than 40 years of 'modernisation' in northern Saskatchewan. They described the shifts occurring in the north in terms of "the momentous cultural and economic changes taking place in their home territory" (p. xvi). Moreover, Poelzer and Poelzer were interested in exploring the Métis in the context of northern resource development and its impact on Métis communities.

Poelzer and Poelzer's study contains a list of detailed findings that are presented in a number of major themes. One theme contains insights about the condition of Métis culture

and the notion of change. Respondents pointed out such changes as the move towards a cash economy, the transition away from living-off-the-land, and decreased involvement in traditional occupations such as trapping. Métis women reportedly felt that cultural values such as how to live in the bush, sharing and generosity, and a strong sense of community were becoming less important in their communities. Métis women were also described as feeling that it was difficult to maintain and transmit traditional cultural values and attitudes.

Another theme that emerged from Poelzer and Poelzer's interviews are Métis women's perceptions of resource-industry development. Respondents voiced concerns over the pace of large-scale development and the "severe consequences for the environment" (p. 11). They also perceived development in light of the negative impacts experienced by the people and communities in the north. Many held the belief that development policies were 'self-serving' and that the profits from northern development schemes were being 'squeezed away' from northerners. Interestingly, respondents commented on the tension that development creates for Métis people. Although the Métis are now able to access 'good wages' or welfare assistance, this has created a situation which is forcing the money-based economy in the north. And, as money becomes more necessary for survival, the women indicated that they were less able to pursue traditional occupations or to live off the land.

Poelzer and Poelzer's findings also touch on the idea of social development within the community. Métis women said it was necessary that community members become more aware of their current situation and begin to develop an "understanding and articulation of why it is such" (p. 11).) Respondents perceived such things as a lack of leadership, a lack of community interest and initiative, local power struggles, and limited information-sharing experiences as deterring the social capital in their communities. They also felt it was difficult to continue with development projects introduced by 'outsiders' and that a perceived sense of individualism was stifling co-operation within the communities. However, Métis women also perceived themselves as 'agents' in the improvement of their communities through education, awareness, and community-based involvement in decision-making.

In the early 1980s Terry Tobias was invited by the northern Métis community of Pinehouse to "measure and demonstrate the community's dependence on surrounding provincial crown land" (Tobias 1993, p. 90). Tobias worked collaboratively with community

leaders and residents documenting the village's total harvest of bush resources (i.e., fish, mammals, berries, fuelwood) taken from its traditional land base (Fur Block N-11) over a one-year period (1983-1984). The main goal of this research was to dispel the 'stereotypical profile' of the northern village economy as being overly dependent on transfer payments and under-developed in its wage sector. According to Tobias (1993), this historically unchallenged view downplays the role of the informal bush economy in northern Métis communities and further 'alienates' Métis people from their traditional land base. Tobias published two important analyses based on the Pinehouse bush harvest study which highlight a number of key points about northern Métis communities and provincial resource management.

In one of those studies Tobias and Kay (1994) concluded that during the 1980s the income-in-kind sector "played a crucial role in the Pinehouse economy" (p. 220). In fact, the Pinehouse bush harvest, comprised of income-in-kind (i.e., harvest of resources for direct consumption by locals) and from commodities (e.g., fish, fur and wild rice payments), contributed over one third (35.1%) of all dollars to the total village economy. The income-in-kind sector (e.g., bush meats, fuelwood, berries, etc.) alone contributed $559,614 (1984 replacement value) or 17.3% to Pinehouse's total gross income. In comparison, the wage sector (the top employer being Key Lake Mining Corporation followed by Northern Lights School Division and the Northern Village of Pinehouse) contributed $1,008,791 or 31.1% to the local economy, and federal and provincial transfer payments accounted for $1,092,498 or 33.7% of Pinehouse's total gross income. Tobias and Kay's results also demonstrated the significance of fish to the Pinehouse economy:

> Commercial and domestic fishing constitute a lynch pin of the local
> economy. Fish account for 45% of the $451,307 in bush meats, or 36% of all
> income-in-kind. Fish payments account for 86% of the commodities sector,
> with fur at 8% and wild rice at 6%. Village income from commercial fishing
> is far larger than from any single employer or transfer program, representing
> 45% of the transfer payment total and 49% of the entire wage package. For
> many households fish accounted from domestic nets is the critical resource.
> (Tobias and Kay 1994, p. 219)

Tobias and Kay found these results to be consistent with other studies (e.g., Shindelka 1978, Wolfe *et al* 1984) that discuss the importance of fish as a 'reliable,' 'persistent,' and 'secure' resource in many northern Aboriginal economies. Given these findings, Tobias and Kay

point out the problem that resource management policies based on 'outsider' assumptions, poor information and 'stereotypical profiles' can often limit Métis access to forest resources, which jeopardises the significance of the bush harvest in northern Métis communities.

Tobias (1993) examines this issue in greater detail by comparing 'outsider' planning documents with the findings from the "community-initiated and community-controlled" (p. 95) Pinehouse 1983-84 bush harvest study. Interestingly, Tobias lists key factors shaping the northwest region during the early 1980s, such as a "newly elected government…seen to be strongly predisposed to restricting the access of residents to their traditional land bases" (p. 90), a continuation of large-scale development projects through the 1970s, further modernisation of northern Saskatchewan, and a provincially-guided "ideology of frontier expansion" (p. 94). At the time, Pinehouse community leaders and residents held strong opinions towards their traditional land base and the increased potential for "exploitation by mining and pulp companies, tourist outfitters, outside hunters and anglers" (p. 90), whether actualised or not. Tobias was therefore interested in the planning process and the extent to which socio-economic assessments conducted 'on behalf' of communities such as Pinehouse adequately recognized the significance of the local bush economy.

Tobias claims that conventional economic analyses distort contemporary northern village economies because they tend to draw attention away from the informal bush economy and the contributions of subsistence activities in these communities. According to Tobias, this happens because too often community profiles are based on the availability of records from government and private sources (i.e., employers) that "consistently recognize wages as legitimate income, and wage earners as employed, while totally ignoring the value of wild meat and regarding the full-time harvester of meat as unemployed" (p. 91). These assumptions contribute to other derogatory images of northern Aboriginal communities, such as lifestyles of poverty, a fading traditional way of life, or of "passively languishing in the hinterland because they have no viable economic base" (p. 91).

Tobias claims this discourse of development and environmental governance can be traced to government documents from the 1960s. For instance, Tobias reviewed two government-based socio-economic surveys, *Trapping and Fishing in the Economy of Northern Saskatchewan* (Buckley 1962) and *The Indians and Métis of Northern Saskatchewan: A Report on*

Economic and Social Development (Buckley et al. 1963), that "casually dismissed" (p. 91) the income-in-kind sector, while emphasising a lack in cash-based income and alluded to 'extreme poverty' in northern Aboriginal communities. Such assumptions contained in these types of documents are influential in the planning process, claims Tobias. In the context of development proposals, these documents can have a significant bearing on the outcome of land use decisions. Tobias observed that in the case of the Churchill River Diversion Project in the 1970s, Aboriginal communities that were able to provide 'alternative perspectives' via community-initiated research could also influence resource decisions:

> The Churchill River Board of Inquiry demonstrates that the existence of a reliable data base concerning the income-in-kind sector can have a bearing on planning decisions. On the other hand, in the absence of such data, community well-being can be seriously compromised as was the case with South Indian Lake…These are reminders that Pinehouse, like all small northern communities, remains vulnerable to the consequences of poor planning decisions because of inadequate baseline information. (Tobias 1993, p. 92)

A lack of realistic data concerning the income-in-kind sector also has consequences in terms of provincial resource policies. With the opening up of Pinehouse's traditional land base around 1978, a number of planning processes were initiated by outside interests, which involved assessments of Pinehouse's socio-economic conditions. Tobias' review of four documents corresponding with these proposals showed that in all four cases "consultants seriously overlooked the village's formal economy" (p. 93) and carried the message that "apart from the highly visible and oversized transfer payment sector and the small inadequate wage sector, Pinehouse has no economy" (p. 94). In one of these studies, the authors concluded that mega-projects were imminent and inevitable in terms of encroaching on Pinehouse's land base, and that they would bring much needed income and employment opportunities for locals. In other words, states Tobias, the report inferred that "the traditional economy is dead" (p. 94).

In another example, Tobias questions the provincial government's *Proposed Saskatchewan Fisheries Policy – Action Plan* (based on findings from a cost-benefit analysis conducted by consultants) that grossly misjudged Pinehouse's dependence on the local fishery, which Pinehouse community members strongly objected to. Consequently, it was also at this time, explains Tobias, that a new government policy paper concerning fisheries

articulated "the province will 'promote a shift of the game fish harvest from commercial to the sport fishery' and it would 'restrict the number of participants' in the commercial fishery" (p. 98). This last example, Tobias concludes, is just one of many formal assessments in which devaluing the significance of local forest resources in contemporary Métis communities contributes to misinformed resource policies and land use planning decisions, which further alienates Métis people from their land base.

Last, Beckley and Korber (1996) examined the controversy surrounding northwest Saskatchewan's commercial forest industry and the arrival of co-management, which involved the participation of Métis communities in the region. The article provides a brief description of forestry activity in northwest Saskatchewan beginning in the 1980s and into the early 1990s. During this time a number of factors including the election of the provincial Progressive Conservative government, advances in technology, and improvements in market conditions contributed to the establishment of the NorSask Forest Management Licence Agreement (FMLA) controlled by NorSask Forest Products Ltd. and Millar Western. Eleven Métis communities resided within the FMLA that occupied 3.3 million ha of forest in northwest Saskatchewan. In 1990 Mistik Management Ltd. was formed by NorSask and Millar Western to administer the 20-year forest management plan in co-operation and consultation with local communities in the FMLA. Beckley and Korber state that "community involvement in forest planning was an explicit goal of this non-profit company, and it was through the creation of Mistik that a local vision of co-management began to take shape" (p. 6).

However, one of the main factors that led to forestry-related co-management was the political activity and forms of social protest initiated by local Aboriginal communities in the region. The Métis were included in this conflict in several ways. The Northwest Mayors Association, predominantly made up of mayors from Métis communities, expressed concerns about pollution from pulp production, they actively participated in specifying 'Environmental Impact Statement' guidelines, and they raised equity issues regarding the transfer of forestry-related benefits to the Métis communities in the northwest. Beckley and Korber also point out that the Métis Society "expressed a desire to see compensation paid for traplines and other traditional areas that might be affected by tree harvesting" (p. 7) and "lobbied for direct cash payments to communities for the right to log in their vicinity" (p. 7).

Mistik responded mostly by offering public hearings where grievances could be voiced, yet many issues remained unresolved and in May 1992 the Métis communities of Jans Bay and Cole Bay joined the Canoe Lake First Nation in blockading Highway 903.

Beckley and Korber claim that a number of factors contributed to the end of the blockade (lasting approximately 18 months), and by February 1993 memoranda of intent to develop co-management boards had been signed in the Métis communities of St. George's Hill and Michel. In these early steps of setting up co-management in northwest Saskatchewan, Beckley and Korber discuss how the three key stakeholders – Mistik, provincial government, and Métis and First Nations communities – envisioned co-management for the region.

Mistik intended to have co-management boards set up in each fur conservation block in the region with representation from community stakeholders residing in each block. The co-management boards would play an advisory role in terms of providing input on "cutting plans, the size and location of cutblocks, and the method and regulation of harvests and reforestation" (p. 9). Mistik's role in this process "would be limited to timber issues, and water, soil, and habitat issues relating to timber harvesting and reforestation" (p. 10) and areas of concern regarding "traditional uses, clear cutting, buffer strips, site preparation methods, reforestation, other forest uses and users, local decision making, employment and education, and economic development issues" (p. 10).

The provincial government's involvement in the co-management process was through the Department of Natural Resources' Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) agency. SERM "had been very involved" (p. 10) in outlining the general principles and framework which was adopted into Mistik's vision of co-management. SERM was strongly committed to the concept of co-management but provincial resource managers felt that they should play an impartial role to allow community and industry stakeholders to guide the process along. SERM's vision translated formally into the co-management process by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with NorSask Forest Products Ltd. that established general guidelines and protocols in which "ultimate responsibility for stewardship of the resources is retained by the province" (p. 10). Both industry and government representatives would attend local co-management meetings

however neither party would 'vote' on issues. Also, SERM made changes within its own decision making structure and granted regional managers the ability to 'ratify' decisions made by the co-management boards.

Beckley and Korber observed a range of perspectives in local Aboriginal communities concerning the structure and role of co-management. Discussions with local co-management partners exposed a set of general concerns in relation to industry and government visions and roles. One observation was that Aboriginal community members perceived co-management as a process and therefore it represented a starting point that would evolve with the needs of the communities over time. Implicit in this was the desire for the co-management boards to become institutions with decision making authority rather than maintaining its advisory status. Similarly, Aboriginal participants also expressed concern that without 'legal backing' and 'legislated decision-making authority' co-management boards would remain limited as to what they can achieve for Métis and First Nations communities. For example, the chairperson of Beauval's co-management board viewed the proposed structure of co-management "as a process of co-optation rather than one of co-operation" (p. 11). Aboriginal participants' concerns regarding the co-management process also extended beyond the mandate of both Mistik and SERM. For instance, it was expressed that this process was perhaps a first step towards Aboriginal self-government. Also, Aboriginal participants viewed the co-management process as a forum for challenging the 'non-negotiable' structure and conditions of the FMLA, which they perceived was too restrictive for Aboriginal communities.

Beckley and Korber conclude with a number of significant points and future challenges concerning the early development of co-management in northwest Saskatchewan. In terms of the types of forest management functions associated with co-management and the NorSask FMLA (i.e., long-term planning, harvesting allocation decisions, implementation, policy decision-making, etc.), Beckley and Korber conclude that the majority of forest management responsibilities belong to both industry and the provincial government. Although it was too early to predict if the advisory status of the co-management boards would greatly influence forest management in the FMLA, Beckley and Korber state that "Real decision-making power continues to reside with the province or with industry" (p. 14). Other challenges that exist for co-management to evolve into a successful

partnership include finding both a 'definition' and institutional structure of co-management that all stakeholders can agree on, and addressing factors that lie outside of the co-management process that may act as a barrier to its development in the region. In this case, the authors point to the hierarchical structure of SERM as a source of contention in terms of providing localised policy and decision making opportunities, and SERM's limited 'legal authority' in addressing the full range of issues concerning ecosystem management that were voiced by community members of the local co-management boards.

Having reviewed the limited empirical studies on the Métis and natural resource management in the northwest region of Saskatchewan, I turn the discussion over to the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu to point to the role of social space and governance in decision making.

Pierre Bourdieu, Social Space and Environmental Governance
Pierre Bourdieu's social theory has steadily diffused into mainstream American sociology and as Sallaz and Zavisca (2007) point out, "researchers have aggressively applied his concepts to new empirical domains" (p. 2.19). In the subdiscipline of environmental sociology, Bourdieu's ideas and concepts are appearing more frequently, particularly in conceptualising complex socio-ecological problems (i.e., Haluza-DeLay 2008, Kasper 2009). Bourdieu referred to his ideas such as habitus, field, and capital as 'thinking tools' (Jenkins 2002) and that researchers should 'do something' with them and apply them practically (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007). In this section I summarise Bourdieu's sociology and main concepts and put these ideas to practical use in the context of studying environmental governance. I would like to point out that in exploring Bourdieu's ideas and concepts I draw significantly from a range of scholars who have written about Bourdieu, which includes a heavy reliance on Swartz's reading of Bourdieu's understanding power (1997, 2008).

As a starting point, Bourdieu's sociology is concerned with the idea of practice or the things that social actors do in everyday life. At first glance this definition seems quite simple, but it is the way in which Bourdieu conceptualises the intersection of actors (and their agency) and social structures with an understanding of cultural (re)production and power that his theory attends to the complexity of the social world. Although it derives from an understanding of the agency of actors (Miller 2003), Bourdieu's notion of practice is as much

a theory about structure as it is about agency. Bourdieu provides a conceptual way of thinking relationally about 'social spaces' by combining objectivist/subjectivist and structure/agency theoretical and empirical perspectives.

Jenkins (2002) describes three main features of Bourdieu's meaning of practice. First, practices are located in both time and space, thus they are shaped and occur from "moment to moment" (p.69). Second, practice is the outcome of 'practical logic' as opposed to consciously orchestrated agency or action. To understand practical logic, Bourdieu applies the metaphor of a game to depict the social world. Over time social actors develop 'a feel for the game.' There are, however, two distinctions about practical logic. Similar to the idea of a 'second-nature,' actors are a part of the social world and so they acquire a doxic association to the 'game.' In other words, social actors perceive the world as 'the way things are.' Practical logic also implies that as the social world plays out over space and time, actors continually improvise in their social interactions, which is shaped by the dialectic between the habitus and the field. Practical logic and the unfolding of the social world are therefore both 'fluid' and 'indeterminate.' Last, Bourdieu's practice acknowledges that social actors strategise in the spaces of social interaction to attain their goals and relational positions. As Jenkins explains:

> In the first place, [Bourdieu] is attempting adequately to communicate the mixture of freedom *and* constraint which characterises social interaction. In the second, he presents practice as the product of processes which are neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious, rooted in an ongoing process of learning which begins in childhood, and through which actors know – without knowing – the right thing to do. (Jenkins 2002, p. 72)

Bourdieu's theory of practice is illuminated by the relationship between the concepts of habitus, field, and capital.

Habitus "is something *non-natural*, a set of *acquired* characteristics which are the product of social conditions" (Bourdieu 2005, p. 45). Elsewhere, Bourdieu (1989) describes the habitus in terms of the mental structures through which actors perceive and understand the world, and that the habitus is "essentially the product of the internalization of the structures of that world" (p. 18). Just as actors form a practical sense or logic based on their social surroundings, these experiences also structure their habitus, which is "an embodied

sense of the world and one's place within it" (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007, p. 2.5). Habitus "is not only shaped by but also simultaneously helps shape its world" (Kasper 2009, p. 317). Habitus can therefore be understood as the durable characteristics unique to particular individuals and groups (i.e., lifestyle choices, ways of doing things, habits, etc.), which are shaped by life experiences, social interaction, and exposures to socio-physical contexts. In connecting this concept to practice, Swartz (1997) explains that habitus is "practical rather than discursive, prereflective rather than conscious, embodied as well as cognitive, durable though adaptive, reproductive though generative and inventive, and the product of particular social conditions though transposable to others" (p. 101). Adams (2006) explains also that "agency and autonomy are embodied in the concept of habitus" (p. 515). Agency, however, and the dispositions of the habitus are dependent upon by the 'objective structures' of the field, which organises and stratifies social actors in the social world (Schinkel 2007).

Bourdieu's concept of the field contains two fundamental meanings; it is a social space that imposes forces upon actors; it is a place of struggles between social groups and actors (Bourdieu 1998). Swartz (1997) explains that the field "defines the structure of the social setting in which habitus operates" (p. 117). Similarly, Jenkins (2002) defines a field as "a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the nature of which defines the situation for their occupants" (p. 85). At the same time, fields are the 'arenas' of struggle and conflict (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007) as social groups and actors compete to further their interests and purposes. Importantly, the more capable a certain group is in defining the structure of the field (i.e., legitimation), the better are their chances to secure their individual and social goals within that field. Bourdieu considered this to be "the most effective form of power" (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007, p. 2.4) which he calls symbolic power (discussed in more detail in the section that follows).

The relationship between the habitus and the field is also connected with the resources or 'capital' in a particular field. This capital exists in the form of economic capital (i.e., money, property), cultural capital (i.e., educational qualifications, skills, knowledge), social capital (i.e., networks of relationships), and symbolic capital (i.e., legitimation or world-making abilities). The positions occupied by groups and individuals in the field are associated with the volume of capital that social actors possess. Since the different forms of capital or resources are struggled over and distributed unevenly in the field, social groups and actors

also become structured or 'distributed' as a result of the make-up of their total capital relative to each other. Thus, the potential effects of how the various forms of capital are acquired and used in the social world also defines what is at 'stake' in the field, such as land, lifestyles, power, or prestige (Jenkins 2002). In this conceptual framework, the various forms of capital function in the field as "resources that provide different forms of power" (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007, p. 2.3), but also that, as Painter (2000) explains, "The power of different forms of capital varies according to the nature of the field" (p. 245).

Distinguishing fields from Bourdieu's usage of the term 'social space,' Swartz (1997) notes that both concepts "often interweave...without clear distinction" (p. 132). Still, Bourdieu appears to emphasise the role of the make-up of capital operating in fields and, importantly, how these 'resources' are legitimated in their corresponding fields. Similarly, the notion of social space also draws from the cumulative understanding of habitus, field, and capital, but here Bourdieu wishes to emphasise the *positions* of social groups and actors relative to each other in social contexts. Bourdieu's classic example of social space and the stratification of social groups appears in his work *Distinction* (1984) in which he examines the relative positions of social classes in the social space of French society. For Bourdieu (1985), social space can be seen as a 'social topology':

> Thus, the social world can be represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within the social universe in question, i.e., capable of conferring strength, power within that universe, on the holder. Agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions within that space. (Bourdieu 1985, p. 723-24)

In this sense, the important point is that social spaces comprise spaces of relationships that exist as "real as geographical space" (Bourdieu 1985, p. 725). Therefore, the 'distances' and differences between social groups and actors can be observed by focusing on the things that set actors apart, which Bourdieu claims are fundamentally nested in economic and cultural differences. And, as I will discuss in the next section, economic and cultural factors underpin how fields operate and also contribute largely to Bourdieu's theories on power, which includes discussions of symbolic power, legitimation and 'world-making,' and his 'field of power' framework.

Thinking Relationally About Power

Pierre Bourdieu, however, is not alone in treating power relationally. In this section I review how he and others view power by simultaneously drawing upon the social structures and forms of agency within social contexts. My interest in approaching power from this perspective stems from a decided emphasis on the links of structure and/or agency with definitions of power. In this section I review John Law's 'power/effects' approach, Raik et al.'s 'realist' perspective, and Bourdieu's take on power to gain an understanding of the relational conditions that contribute to the workings of power. Given that natural resource management is entangled in social complexity (Raik *et al* 2008), I argue this more comprehensive conceptualisation of power is required – one that considers both structure and agency dialectically, or, in other words, relationally.

The 'Realist' Approach

For Raik, Wilson, and Decker (2008) the problem with studying power in the field of natural resource management is that these social contexts persist "within complex and dynamic social, historical, cultural, and political conditions" (p. 730). Raik *et al* therefore propose a 'realist' view of power to study the social contours of the field of natural resource management and governance. They present this conceptualisation using Lukes' (2005) three dimensional view of power to demonstrate the merits of the realist approach against other prevailing notions of power. To do so, Raik *et al* categorise Lukes' three dimensions of power framework in terms of agency and structure. Drawing from examples from natural resource contexts, they outline some of the implications of the agent-centered, structural, and realist approaches to understand the workings of power.

Raik *et al* point out that both the first and second dimensions of power focus on the agency of individuals or groups – the agent-centered view. The authors argue that the first dimension of power equates to 'power as coercion,' which is the most common way of understanding power in the field of natural resource sociology:

> Most discussions of power in the field of natural resources are limited to a simplistic understanding of power as something that some individuals and entities have and others do not. This view focuses on coercion and is often limited to descriptions of one person's power over another. Power as

coercion is often referred to as the "first dimension" of power[12] (Lukes 2005). (Raik *et al* 2008, p. 731)

Thus, power as coercion is observable and entails the study of how some actors or groups prevail in decision making, which in most cases results in "negative social impacts as people [are] forced to behave in a manner contrary to their wishes" (p. 731). Raik *et al* point out that one implication of power as coercion in natural resource management settings is the extent to which authority in decision making held by resource managers may result in conflicts over resource access, rights, and ownership for local people of a given area.

Lukes' second dimension of power[13] is also considered by Raik *et al* to be agent-centered, which they refer to as 'power as constraint.' In this view, the focus is about the ability to constrain the agency or possible actions of other groups or individuals. It is supported by the idea of a 'mobilization of bias' in which certain issues are 'organized' into politics and decision making, whereas other issues are 'organized out.' (Schattschneider 1960, Molotch 1970). As Raik *et al* explain:

> Power is not merely a matter of control over active decision making. Power is also exercised to ensure inaction on issues. Bias can be organized by those in power to exclude issues from the agenda. Analysis of power therefore requires examining both decision making and *non-decision making…*This view recognizes that some institutional procedures systematically organize bias to skew the process to benefit the interests of one group over another. (Raik *et al* 2008, p. 733)

In the context of natural resource management, the authors describe a case in which public discourse concerning deer management was effectively limited by the "interests and position of the deer manager" (p. 733). Such cases, argue Raik *et al*, draw attention to instances where strategies of persuasion can sway opinions, which may end up in negative consequences for those affected by management or policy decisions. Freudenburg and Alario (2007), for example, discuss how 'diversionary reframing,' drawing attention away from one's own legitimacy, is used by political actors to misdirect and to make disappear from view "the

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[12] Lukes (2005) states that the first dimension of power engenders "a focus on *behaviour* in the making of *decisions* on *issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as express policy preferences, revealed by political participation" (p. 19).
[13] Lukes explains that the second dimension of power "allows for consideration of the ways in which *decisions* are prevented from being taken on *potential issues* over which there is an observable *conflict* of (subjective) *interests*, seen as embodied in express policy preferences and sub-political grievances (p. 25).

legitimacy of an unequal distribution of benefits that works mainly to the advantage of a privileged few" (p. 160). Raik *et al*, however, raise the point that these agent-centered views are limited in their approach to understanding "the dynamic and pervasive nature of power" (p. 734). In particular, they argue that "[the agent-centered view] focuses solely on the agent and ignores the effects of structured social relations on power dynamics" (p. 734).

Raik *et al* regard Lukes' third dimension of power[14] as the "social-structural processes that shape human relations and interests" (p. 734) – the structural view, which they refer to as 'power as consent production.' Raik *et al* explain that structural power derives from forces that act "above and external" (p. 734) to individual agency; these forces, such as gender or class position, "operate unacknowledged to influence people and their behaviour" (p. 734). This understanding of power, which others have defined as 'preference shaping' (Freudenburg and Alario 2007) or 'quiescence' (Gaventa 1982), is predicated on two important ideas, (1) that dominant groups or individuals can influence the objective interests of the dominated and (2) that these power relations are the outcome of social-structural processes. For Swartz (2007), the third dimension equates with power as domination:

> The effects of power are not exhausted by decision making and agenda construction but could operate at a deeper more invisible level. Influenced in particular by Gramsci's notion of "hegemony," Lukes argued that the third dimension of power consists of deeply rooted forms of political socialization where actors unwillingly follow the dictates of power even against their best interests. Power as domination – the third dimension – asks "how do the powerful secure the compliance (willing or unwilling) of those they dominate?" (Swartz 2007, p. 104)

Similarly, Raik *et al* consider power in the third dimension as the "social-structural production of consent and norms" (p. 735) where the 'status quo' is maintained principally through social practices and rituals. According to this view of power, individual preferences are shaped by social structural practices, which maintain or make durable "current systems of power" (p. 735).

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[14] For Lukes, the third dimension of power "allows for consideration of the many ways in which *potential issues* are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions. This moreover can occur in the absence of actual, observable conflict, which may have been successfully averted…What one may have here is a *latent conflict*, which consists in a contradiction between the interests of those exercising power and the *real interests* of those they exclude" (Lukes 2005, p. 28).

Raik et al. contend that this understanding of power can be seen in natural resource management, particularly in terms of the structure of social stratifications of given social contexts. For example, the authors cite studies that describe how participatory approaches to resource management (such as encouraging local participation) can often reproduce or aggravate pre-existing social inequalities, such as between state officials, NGOs, and local resource users. Consequently, the implication of third dimension power effects in natural resource management is that, "Externally motivated social structures may result in institutionalizing power asymmetries" (p. 735). In a similar way, Freudenburg (2005) argues that the realm of natural resource management is socially structured to such an extent that those who enjoy 'privileged access' to natural resources (including multinational corporations) often remain unchallenged. These inequalities can become taken-for-granted or 'embedded' into everyday practices and thus "it is inherently difficult to see what it is that we fail to see" (p. 105). Freudenburg makes the claim to examine the assumptions or taken for granted perceptions "that tend not to be recognised as such" (p. 105), and moreover,

> If so, then one key challenge for sociology may be to render more visible the assumptions that are now taken for granted or that have previously been overlooked…In the case of valued resources…there are ample reasons to "believe," and then to start "seeing," that privileged patterns of access may well actually exist – suggesting in turn the potential value of asking whether those patterns are made possible in part by privileged, taken-for-granted accounts. (Freudenburg 2005, p. 105)

However, as much as the structural view or production of consent examines the hidden workings of power, Raik *et al* remain critical of solely focusing on its structural dimensions.

The realist view of power proposed by Raik *et al* is an attempt to reconcile the limits of the agent-centered and structural views. The realist approach is grounded in the combined idea that (1) social structures 'constrain' *and* 'enable' agency and (2) that agency contributes in producing social structures or reproducing existing structures. As Raik *et al* explain

> The realist view is based on identifying enduring structural preconditions that shape contingent human interaction. This view provides a relationship between individual agency and social structure from which to understand the workings of power and conduct analyses. (Raik *et al* 2008, p. 736)

Thus, Raik *et al's* realist view is similar to Molotch *et al.'s* notion of structuration (e.g., continuity and change), and also Bourdieu's theory of practice. Power relations embedded

within existing social structures impose upon actors, just as actors exercise power that produces and reproduces social structures. Raik *et al.'s* realist view proposes that "Power is thus the capacity to act within preconditioned, structured social relations" (p. 736). This approach, argues Raik *et al*, is rarely seen in natural resource scholarship. However, the significance of applying a realist perspective is that it "goes beyond the agency/structure dualism present in other forms of power [ ] both the social structure and the agent emerge as units of analysis that interact and depend upon one another" (p. 736).

Power/Effects and the Materiality of Power

John Law (1991) also draws upon the dialectic between agency and structure to understand the concept of power, but in addition his relational view also considers how heterogeneous elements, both living and non-living, contribute to the social relations or networks that manifest power. The key question, according to Law, "has to do with *how it is that relations are stabilised for long enough to generate the effects and so the conditions of power*" (p. 172). Law is not necessarily concerned with distinguishing power by what we can or cannot see, or by way of agent-centered views versus structural views. Nor is he concerned with providing a definitive definition of what power is or is not. His main concern is simply that we give some thought to power's relational character:

> My argument is that all these notions are viable, and that power to and power over may indeed (under certain circumstances) be stored and used in a discretionary and calculative manner. But it is also that these forms or uses of power should in addition be treated as relational products – that to store power, or to have a discretion in its development, is to enjoy (or suffer from) the effects of a stable network of relations. (Law 1991, p.165-166)

Thus, Law makes the point that no matter how power is conceived, such as a capacity to act or as a resource waiting to be exercised, it is tied to what he terms 'power/effects,' which he refers to as the "stable network of relations" (p. 166) or contexts from which power(s) emerge. It is from this understanding of power that Law looks to eliding the agency/structure dualism as well as Actor Network Theory to support his theoretical claim.

Law's discussion draws upon what he considers to be four common themes in the sociology of power: 'power to,' 'power over,' 'power storage,' and 'power discretion.' To begin with, Law is skeptical of Lukes' (1974) earlier claim that the notion of 'power to' in the

tradition of Parsons, Arendt, Foucault, and others (power is productive and enables) draws attention away from the fact that power is exercised over people; Lukes argued in the first edition of *Power: A Radical View* that the central definition of power concerned 'power over' (i.e. power is conflict-based and constrains). In this instance, Law cautions that we should not confine ourselves to singular definitions of power, which in the case above concerns power as a relation versus power as a capacity:

> I can see no reason for supposing that concern with 'power to' should necessarily *exclude* concern with 'power over'. Rather [ ] it seems to me that relations and capacities go together – that the two are indissolubly linked. Indeed it seems to me that the ways in which they relate together represent a crucial research site in sociology. (Law 1991, p. 168)

In effect, Law is interested in examining the agency aspect of power from varying vantage points as he states, "This, however, raises a further question – the issue as to whether or not agents are able to store up 'power to' or 'power over" (p. 168), and also that "the notion of storage, capacity or potential may be taken to imply something further – the idea that potential 'power to' or 'power over' may be held back to be switched on and off and directed by the agent to which it is credited" (p. 170).

To tackle these deeper questions, Law first looks to Foucault who says that power is an 'achievement' or 'end product,' and similarly to Latour who presents power as an effect of strategies as opposed to 'givens' or assumptions about the unequal distribution of power in society (e.g., the power of large corporations). However, as Law points out, this conception makes it "difficult to talk about the distribution of power, something we do routinely in both social theory and daily life" (p. 169). So, on the one hand, it is important to acknowledge and explore the conditions of power contexts rather than assuming a blind acceptance of its prevalence - a tautological error as Latour puts it. Yet, the problem with this, Law argues, is that,

> It makes it difficult, for instance, to refer to the way in which the discipline inscribed on the body of the soldier has different consequences for the soldier himself on the one hand, and the general who commands the army on the other. (Law 1991, p. 169)

At this point, Law parts company with Foucault by suggesting that agents are able to store 'power to' and 'power over' because such cases are also an effect or product of

"precariously structured relations" (p. 170). Law therefore does not see a problem in treating power as a condition, a capacity, as something capable of being stored, and additionally an effect.

In addressing the latter question, the notion of 'power discretion' or the capacity 'not to act,' Law takes up Barnes' (1988) distinction between agents as 'authorities' and agents as 'powers.' According to Law, Barnes' idea concerns sourced power such that in the case of agents who are identified as 'powers,' compulsion to act or exercise power comes from within; 'authorities' act because compulsion comes from outside of the agent. This conceptual thinking sets up the opportunity to make judgements of more 'powerful' agents given that 'powers' importantly possess "the potential to chose between lines of action" (Law 1991, p. 171). 'Authorities,' on the other hand, merely "switch routines on and off without having discretion" (p. 171). Once again, Law sees this to be an important distinction as we 'routinely' perceive agents with varying degrees of power, such as between policymakers and functionaries. However, the challenge presented in this view, Law explains, is that one must avoid making 'overall' decisions about the discretionary power of actors. Law's reason is that,

> agents are typically treated and experienced as powers from some points of view, whereas they look like authorities from others. Accordingly, the distinction (or continuum) is best treated as a *relational* matter. (Law 1991, p. 171)

The main point that Law makes in his examination of the four common themes of power is that they are all contingent upon "a set of precarious relational and transformational effects" (p. 172). This is why Law is interested in the relationship between the conditions of power, or more specifically the strategies that induce durable or stabilised effects through which power is formed. Based on this view, Law suggests that power to and power over are relational and consequently a given actor's ability to store or deploy – even the distribution of power – "is a function of the network of relations…in which that actor is implicated" (p. 172). Thus, according to Law's relational thinking on power, he extends the following four suggestions. First, actors can be conceptualised as 'a set of relations' which has the effect of characterising, storing, and in cases offers discretion in terms of power to and power over situations. On this point, Law writes "In tying agency to power and relations

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in this way I am seeking to elide the agency/structure dualism" (p. 173). Second, Law contends that the relations that constitute actors in a given social context are "in some measure *strategically organised*" (p. 173). Third, coinciding with the second point, such strategies are in most cases "*discursively impure*, drawing on a series of different organising principles, strategies, logics or practices" (p. 173). And lastly, like the concept of lash up discussed and applied by Molotch et al., Law maintains the relations that generate power effects or the conditions in which power is embedded are "heterogeneous, partly social, partly technical, partly textual, and partly to do with naturally occurring events, objects and processes – and most usually combine elements of all of these" (p. 173). In Law's words,

> I am saying that an agent is a structured set of relations with a series of
> (power) effects; I am saying that those relations are embodied in a series of
> different materials; and I am also saying that, as a matter of empirical fact we
> are likely to find that they are in some measure strategically (or multi-
> strategically) organised. (Law 1991, p. 173)

Thus, Law appears to stress the underlying significance of how arrangements of social relations and networks simultaneously shape and affect the workings of power.

Bourdieu and Power: Capital, Fields, and Legitimation

Pierre Bourdieu offers another perspective that deserves greater attention in terms of understanding the relational dimensions of power. The relevance of Bourdieu's work to the topic of thinking relationally about power can be seen, for example, in his article *Social Space and Symbolic Power* (Bourdieu 1989). In it, Bourdieu outlines a main feature of his sociology, which is a consideration of both the objective structures that shape the social world and the subjective realities held by social agents. Rather than treat this 'artificial opposition' between structures and representations separately, Bourdieu explains that he draws from both 'moments,' which he claims are in a dialectical relationship. Bourdieu therefore breaks from a 'substantialist' mode of thinking and alternatively argues for a 'relational' mode of thinking. This aspect of Bourdieu's epistemology and method is important because it has considerable bearing on how Bourdieu theorizes and understands power in society.

Swartz (1997) explains that relational thinking is central to Bourdieu's vision of sociology as a science, which, unlike the substantialist view, treats agents and groups in relation with their social and historical contexts. Bourdieu's relational approach places an

emphasis on systems of relations that are differentially and hierarchically ordered. Thus, it is not surprising to find Bourdieu's assumptions about the character of social life to be conflict-oriented:

> The relations he constructs are invariably competitive rather than cooperative, unconscious rather than conscious, and hierarchical rather than egalitarian. The recurring image of social life one finds in Bourdieu's work is one of competitive distinction, domination, and misperception…he is also inviting [social scientists] to share his conflict view of the social world. (Swartz 1997, p. 63)

Given these ontological assumptions, Swartz (2008) explains that power, particularly domination, is a core feature in Bourdieu's work and this theme appears in the full range of Bourdieu's conceptualisation of power. Thus, issues of conflict and relations of power pervade Bourdieu's sociology and as Swartz points out, the concept of power is treated by Bourdieu in three distinctive and overlapping ways: as valued resources in the form of capital, in the context of spheres of struggle (i.e., fields), and in terms of legitimation and symbolic power.

Bourdieu's understanding of power is partially focused on the resources or different types of capital that social groups and actors draw from in various fields of social life. The basis of Bourdieu's concept of power as capital, first off, is that capital is fundamental to "all forms of power" (Swartz 1997, p. 73), be it material, cultural, social, or symbolic. One of the key points with this thinking is that social agents draw upon a variety of resources or capital "in order to maintain and enhance their positions in the social order" (p. 73). Moreover, Swartz explains that Bourdieu conceptualises capital as power especially when these resources function as 'social relations of power.' This occurs when resources "become objects of struggle as valued resources" (p. 74). Thus, another important distinction is that given the unequal distribution of, and access to, such valued resources as economic, cultural, or symbolic capital, this partly explains the contexts of power among struggling groups and actors. Although Bourdieu generally speaks of four types of capital (i.e. economic, cultural, social, symbolic), his work implies the existence of an array of capitals such as political, statist, academic, and so forth. Bourdieu's view of power as capital (in its various forms) is therefore intended to suggest that culture can become a power resource (Swartz 1997) and to

extend the analysis of power "to more subtle expressions beyond that of material advantage and physical coercion" (Swartz 2008, p. 4).

When capital or resources operate as forms of power they exist relationally in fields (Swartz 2008). Recall that Bourdieu's concept of field refers to the structural settings that social actors find themselves in and to the spaces in which agents struggle against each other over capital and legitimacy within particular social arenas. In the context of power and capital, Swartz points out that

> Field struggle, for Bourdieu, has two distinct dimensions: struggle over the distribution of capitals (i.e. struggle to accumulate the more valued forms of capital or to convert one form into another more valued form) and struggle over the very definition of the most legitimate form of capital for a particular field. (Swartz 2008, p. 4)

An example that illustrates this can be seen in Nadasdy's (2003) work that describes how in the field of resource co-management, First Nations people's traditional knowledge and state resource manager's scientific knowledge compete for legitimacy, which defines policies and decision-making over the management of resources. Tobias' analysis of the Pinehouse bush economy, devalued by outsider consultation processes, can also be viewed within this context.

Related to the idea of social struggle within fields, Bourdieu also theorizes about the existence of a 'field of power,' which acts as the 'dominant' or 'preeminent' field in modern societies (Jenkins 2002). Swartz (2008) explains Bourdieu's notion of the field of power as "that arena of struggle among the different power fields (particularly the economic field and the cultural field) for the right to dominate throughout the social order" (p. 5). Similar to the idea of struggle among different actors over resources and legitimacy within a specific field, Bourdieu proposes that the dominant actors and groups of various fields also compete against each other to define the macro social world. In this sense, the outcome of social conflict within the field of power is the source of the hierarchical power relations that structure all other fields (Swartz 1997, Jenkins 2002). Within the field of power, Bourdieu maintains that the distribution of economic capital and cultural capital are the basis of the power struggle in society:

Indeed, according to Bourdieu (1989c: 373-85), two major competing
principles of social hierarchy – what Bourdieu calls a "chiasmatic structure" –
shape the struggle for power in modern industrial societies: the distribution
of economic capital (wealth, income, and property), which Bourdieu calls the
"dominant principle of hierarchy," and the distribution of cultural capital
(knowledge, culture, and educational credentials), which Bourdieu calls the
"second principle of hierarchy." This fundamental opposition between
cultural capital and economic capital delineates Bourdieu's field of power.
(Swartz 1997, p. 136-37)

Jenkins (2002) suggests that the field of power can be thought of in terms of politics, and
given that the field of power or politics impinges on weaker fields, it is therefore important
to consider and to understand the relationship of a particular field in question to the field of
power (politics).

Another important consideration of the field of power is the social position of the
state. Bourdieu sees the state

as the holder of a sort of metacapital granting power over other species of
capital and over their holders…which enables the state to exercise power
over the different fields and over the different particular species of capital
(and thereby the relations of force between their respective holders).
(Bourdieu 1998, p. 41-42)

In other words, the state regulates the struggle within the field of power and the
classification struggle among social groups by "consecrating" and "rendering official"
legitimate forms of capital and power (Swartz 2008). Bourdieu, moreover, recognises that the
state exists relationally with social spaces through political capital and the political field,
which is "the arena of struggle to capture positions of power…for control of the state
apparatus" (Swartz 2008, p. 5-6). According to this conceptual thinking, Bourdieu claims

It follows that the construction of the state proceeds apace with the
construction of the field of power, defined as the space of play within which
the holders of capital (of different species) struggle in particular for power
over the state, that is, over the statist capital granting power over the
different species of capital and over their reproduction. (Bourdieu 1998,
p. 42)

A third major way in which Bourdieu studies power is through examination of the
symbolic dimensions of social life and the processes of legitimating power in society (Swartz
2008). In this context, Bourdieu is attempting to answer the question of "how do stratified

social systems of hierarchy and domination persist and reproduce intergenerationally without powerful resistance and without the conscious recognition of their members?" (p. 6). Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, violence, and capital is an attempt to address the above concern, and at its core his theory suggests that "symbolic meanings and classifications are a constitutive force in organizing power relations in stratified social orders" (p. 9). Bourdieu's theory closely resembles Lukes's third dimensional concern with domination, real interests, and covert power grounded, however, in a relational theoretical framework.

Bourdieu's focus on symbolic power emerges from a concern about the relationship between symbolic representations and social structures and his conceptualisation of symbolic systems, which function in three distinct ways: (1) cognition as a means of apprehending the world, (2) communication and social integration as instruments of knowledge that channels structural meaning in the shared world, and (3) social differentiation through social relations of domination (a political function) (Swartz 1997). As Swartz puts it, "Bourdieu thus combines constructionist and structuralist perspectives to offer a theory of symbolic power that tightly couples the cognitive, communicative and political dimensions of all symbolic systems" (p. 83).

To understand the symbolic dimensions of power, particularly the operation and consequences of symbolic power, it is helpful to first look at what Swartz (1997) calls Bourdieu's 'sociology of symbolic forms.' Following French Structuralism, Bourdieu claims that symbolic processes and systems carry with them a fundamental logic of establishing differences and distinctions, which exists in the form of binary oppositions. "*All* symbolic systems," explains Swartz, "follow this fundamental classification logic of dividing and grouping items into opposing classes and hence generating meanings through the binary logic of inclusion and exclusion" (p. 84). And for Bourdieu, the 'ultimate source' of all paired oppositions – "the building blocks of the everyday classifications of social life" (p.85) – connects with dominant/dominated paired oppositions. So, for example, such oppositions as 'heavy/light,' 'high/low,' or 'spiritual/material' correlates in the 'arbitrary' social world to the fundamental structural opposition between domination and subordination, which is of main concern to Bourdieu.

Leaving aside for the moment the origin or source of symbols in society, Bourdieu draws from Durkheim to stress the connection between social structures and cognitive structures. The key point in this relationship is that social agents, through the process of gaining a practical knowledge of their social realities, internalize the social structures that emerge out of the cognitive dimensions of symbolic systems. Thus, Bourdieu connects symbolic social contexts to the formation of actors' habitus as 'embodied' social structures. Swartz clarifies this point:

> Social structures become internalized into the cognitive structures of individuals and groups who then unwittingly reproduce the social order by classifying the social world with the same categories with which it classifies them. (Swartz 1997, p. 85-86)

Concerning the issue of the source of symbols, Bourdieu rejects the belief that symbolic meanings and their cognitive functions are a mirror of social realities; meanings are not produced intrinsically from signs and symbols, they emerge arbitrarily in connection to a given social phenomena. In other words, from a cognitive basis, the dominant cultural standards of any social space are fundamentally arbitrary, and additionally,

> Bourdieu refers to such standards of any society as the "cultural arbitrary," to signal that all cultural systems are fundamentally human constructions that are historical, that stem from the activities and interests of particular groups, and that legitimate unequal power relations among groups. (Swartz 1997, p. 86)

According to Swartz (1997), Bourdieu stresses that although symbolic systems are fundamentally arbitrary, the social consequences of symbolic forms remain otherwise as they play out in the social world. This is especially the case, claims Bourdieu, in terms of the resulting differentiation and legitimation of inequality and hierarchy among social groups and actors. In this way, Bourdieu connects a structural logic to the social relations embedded within symbolic systems, which distances himself from other structuralist perspectives such as Foucault's work on discourse. Therefore, as Swartz writes, "Bourdieu's theory of symbolic forms is in fact a theory of the *social and political uses* of symbolic systems" (p. 87). The social 'use' points to the ways in which symbolic distinctions determine or predispose the modes of apprehending social and cognitive classifications (via the notion of habitus), which creates "forms of social inclusion and exclusion…at the level of symbols" (p. 87). Connecting this

idea to symbolic power, Swartz explains that the social use of symbols involves "the simultaneous act of making conceptual and social discriminations" (p. 87). There is also a political effect given that these social distinctions are then internalised through the cognitive function of symbols, and thus "the social groupings identified are hierarchically differentiated and therefore legitimated" (p. 87). And so Bourdieu's main point in the above discussion of symbolic forms is that power is not to be found in 'words' or 'symbols.' Rather, as Swartz states, "for Bourdieu, symbolic power resides not in the force of ideas but in their relation to social structure" (p. 87).

Bourdieu's view of symbolic forms is central to his conceptualisation of social relations of domination, which he claims are formed partly by symbolic power or 'legitimating' power. Swartz (2008), for example, points out that for Bourdieu the effective exercise of power requires more than coercive force or material capital; "Power requires justification and belief" (p. 6). Bourdieu maintains that 'domination through legitimation' is "the cement of class relations" (Swartz 1997, p. 89). Thus, perhaps the most important theme in Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power and violence is "the active role played by taken-for-granted assumptions and practices in the constitution and maintenance of power relations" (p. 89). In terms of power and domination, this suggests that,

> legitimate understandings of the social world are imposed by dominant groups and deeply internalized by subordinate groups in the form of practical taken-for-granted understandings. *Symbolic power* is the capacity to impose classifications and meanings as legitimate. Symbolic power takes the form of embodied dispositions – what Bourdieu calls the *habitus* – that generate a "practical sense" for organizing perceptions of and actions in the social world. (Swartz 2008, p. 6)

Bourdieu's connection between symbolic power or 'world-making' (Bourdieu 1989) and habitus claims that subordinate actors assume as legitimate their particular sense of place in the structure of social relations imposed by dominant groups and actors. And, given that, as Swartz explains, "habitus involves an unconscious calculation of what is possible, impossible, and probable for people in their specific locations in the stratified social order" (p. 6), Bourdieu's focus on domination and symbolic power raises important concerns about how power relations are made durable in social spaces. "Social space," argues Bourdieu (1989), "tends to function as a symbolic space"(p. 20), and so dominant groups that have the

capacity to impose legitimate views of the world exercise symbolic violence over subordinate groups and actors. In this logic, symbolic power "legitimizes existing economic and political relations" (Swartz 1997, p. 89) through means of symbolic violence, which allows dominant groups to "impose the means for comprehending and adapting to the social world by representing economic and political power in disguised and taken-for-granted forms" (p. 89). Tied to symbolic power is Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital, which refers to "the social authority to impose symbolic meanings and classifications as legitimate that individuals and groups can accumulate through public recognition of their capital holdings and positions occupied in social hierarchies" (p. 7).

For Bourdieu, a principle challenge from the perspective of subordinate social actors involves an awareness of the taken-for-granted assumptions and practices that are internalized in the exercise of symbolic power. According to Swartz (2008), two key 'properties' of symbolic power are its 'naturalization' and 'misrecognition,' which suggests how through the logic of symbolic forms and the function of the habitus social actors 'adapt practically' to existing social relations of hierarchy. As Swartz explains,

> The dominated misperceive the real origins and interests of symbolic power when they adopt the dominant view of the dominant and of themselves. They therefore accept definitions of social reality that do not correspond to their best interests. Those "misrecognized" definitions go unchallenged as appearing natural and justified. Hence, they represent a form of violence. (Swartz 2008, p. 7)

Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, violence and capital draws attention to the symbolic dimensions of power, how social structures are made durable by acts of making things appear legitimate or taken-for-granted, and how symbolic forms shape and constrain the agency of subordinate actors and groups. It is this particular aspect of Bourdieu's work on symbolic power and legitimacy that perhaps deserves greater attention in the field of environmental sociology. Thus, to facilitate in applying Bourdieu's analysis on power in the context of studying environmental governance, I wish to close this chapter by connecting the above discussion to the field of environmental sociology, drawing specifically from Freudenburg's (2005) work on 'privileged access' and 'privileged accounts' and also Freudenburg and Alario's (2007) discussion of legitimation and the technique of 'diversionary reframing.'

A Closer Look at the Structure of the Field of Environmental Governance

Freudenburg's (2005) work offers one possibility in which to apply Bourdieu's ideas and the other perspectives reviewed in this chapter to the study of environmental governance. In particular, Freudenburg outlines what perhaps might be the 'environmental sociology' version of the theory of how dominant actors make legitimate what is otherwise unchallenged relations of social inequality. Freudenburg's 'socially structured theory of resources and discourses' makes the fundamental claim that most environment-society relationships are characterised by "strikingly unequal patterns of *privileged access* to environmental rights and resources, or disproportionality" (p. 89), which is often legitimated by taken-for-granted assumptions about the conditions of society or 'privileged accounts.' Freudenburg refers to this socially structured phenomenon as a 'double diversion' and he argues that,

> In the case of valued resources….there are ample reasons to "believe," and
> then to start "seeing," that privileged patterns of access may well actually
> exist – suggesting in turn the potential value of asking whether those patterns
> are made possible in part by privileged, taken-for-granted accounts.
> (Freudenburg 2005, p. 105)

The 'double diversion' is in fact a straightforward concept that is similar to the views presented by Bourdieu. Like Bourdieu, Freudenburg recognises how the distribution of 'valued' resources contributes to the shaping of social relations. Equally, both scholars demonstrate a concern for the taken-for-granted assumptions that define a particular social context or set of power relations, and the role that these assumptions play in making these contexts appear as legitimate or 'natural.' For Freudenburg, privileged access refers to "the socially structured and strikingly disproportionate patterns that characterize human access to the biophysical environment, both in terms of benefiting from "goods" (resources and rights) and in terms of avoiding "bads" (wastes and responsibilities)" (Freudenburg 2005, p. 90). Privileged accounts are "the generally unquestioned assumptions or arguments that help to "naturalize" and legitimate the privileged access" (p. 90). Thus, privileged accounts function closely with privileged access to distract or divert attention from the underlying assumptions that legitimises disproportional opportunities in environmental contexts.

The relationship between privileged access and privileged accounts – the double diversion - and the idea of legitimation is an important connection to make. Freudenburg

and Alario (2007) suggest that perhaps the most effective way of making things appear legitimate is to keep things from view, which is most 'efficiently' achieved by "keeping public attention focused on other topics" (p. 147). In other words, actors or groups can produce legitimacy by what the authors call 'diversionary reframing,' or maintaining "the focus on something else" (p. 148). Therefore, drawing from Bourdieu's perspective on symbolic power and legitimation, perhaps part of that 'focus' rests in the everyday cognitive aspects of one's habitus and how symbolic violence tends to render things as 'natural' for groups and actors in subordinate social positions. Moreover, as Freudenburg suggests, it may be the case that in environment-society relationships characterised by domination or 'privileged access,' socially structured 'accounts' – often difficult to see at first glance – are continually reinforcing disproportional access to natural resources. Thus, in relation to my study on the Métis and the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan, Freudenburg's analysis of power and domination provides an opening to apply both Bourdieu's work and other relevant theories such as thinking relationally about power to address my concerns of agency, structure and power.

Conclusion

In this chapter I first introduced the concept and study of environmental governance, which I will use in my study as a meta-framework in which to examine the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan in relation to contemporary natural resource contexts. I connected this work with Molotch *et al.'s* ideas on lash-up and structuration theory because of my interest in examining how the concepts of agency, structure and power are mutually reinforcing and to understand the ways in which actors, structures, and power relations shape the particularity of places. Before going deeper into theoretical discussions of agency, structure and power, I reviewed more contemporary studies on Métis people and natural resources to gain an understanding of the types of issues and concerns that have been raised by others on this topic. I then discussed Bourdieu's sociology and concepts which I emphasise in this study because they offer a theoretical framework in which to treat issues of agency, structure and power. Bourdieu's work facilitates my thinking of environmental governance in terms of a social space comprised of competing actors, valued resources, durable structures, and relations of power. The section concerning the relational dimensions of power raises important issues about the study of power that draw from the dialectic between agency and

structure, and the conditions that allow certain power relations to emerge. Interestingly, within the field of environmental sociology, one of the key power relations in society-environment relationships, as noted by Freudenburg (2005), involves the process of legitimating disproportional access to resources. In the following chapter I discuss, in more depth, the design and methodology used in my study to examine Métis agency and power in relation with the structures of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan.

Chapter 4: Methods Chapter

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the situation of Métis communities in natural resource management practice in northwest Saskatchewan. To do so, I explore the field of regional environmental governance in the study region by focusing attention on the structures of provincial resource management, the influence of the regional political economy, land use issues, and local conflicts as these concern Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche.

I identified the communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche as my cases for comparison based on three broad criteria: geography, place-making features, and connections to the regional political economy. Métis communities in the study region can be defined according to their geographical features, such as proximity to development projects, isolation from urban centres and so forth. Thus, my three sites provided contexts of three particular 'sub-fields' to observe Métis community-level involvement in a range of resource management situations playing out in northwest Saskatchewan. Place-making features are those institutions, physical characteristics, and social networks which combine to give a community its quality or character. Even such characteristics as level of employment or availability of services (e.g., access to hospital) may be important place-making features of a particular community. I recognised also that Métis communities have different connections to the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan, which define their relationships with environmental governance opportunities, challenges, and contexts. The communities in this study were chosen based on key connections with, for example, IFLUP processes and other significant 'forces' that I draw attention to in this study.

In this study I used mixed qualitative methods and a comparative case study design to collect data on Métis community members' experiences related to natural resource management, and to follow the flow of action around key events playing out in their communities. Methodologically, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Métis community members and Saskatchewan Environment representatives, combined with participant and non-participant observation in the communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche, were used to collect the data. Additionally, a review of secondary literature contributed to the contextualization and informed my

research. Using this mixed methodology, I attempted to take into consideration northwest Saskatchewan's changing political economy and physical environment.

Research Approach

My level of analysis is the community, and my approach a comparison of three Métis communities. The data were gathered in two stages. First, a team of four CURA social scientists began with reconnaissance interviews in several Métis communities in 2005, and in 2006, I was one of two graduate students who conducted follow-up interviews to broaden the sample within the study region. In the process of coding these initial 69 interviews and discussing the emergent themes among the team members, I subsequently moved to a framework of using a comparative case study approach for in-depth inquiry in the purposively selected communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche. In this second stage of the study I interviewed Métis people in Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche in the summer of 2007, and in March 2007 another graduate student was hired to conduct interviews with key representatives of Saskatchewan Environment. The initial stages of the data collection process in this research was of an exploratory and descriptive nature, and served to elucidate a background understanding of the key themes, concerns, and perceptions of Métis communities in relation to natural resource management and development in the northwest Saskatchewan region. Given that very little has been recently documented on this topic, the initial need for an exploratory and descriptive strategy allowed me to focus more closely on key elements for comparison in a final set of interviews.

In my fieldwork I assumed the role of 'the local outsider'. Fulfilling this role required being highly visible within the community, developing a rapport with community members through one-on-one interactions (both formally and informally), seeking out opportunities to experience a range of local activities with community members, and also living in the community for a length of time. Additionally, this study relied heavily on qualitative methods. This approach can foster greater learning opportunities between the local outsider and community members given that qualitative methods often encourage study participants to express themselves more openly. Importantly, I cannot underestimate the value of posing the right kinds of meaningful research questions. As one of my study participants expressed to me, "Wow, these are interesting questions. You have to really look at the whole picture." As well, the value of applying the 'local outsider' approach is that the researcher sees firsthand the flow of action at the community level. Finally, I felt that this approach fostered trust, respect, empathy, and understanding with our study participants, which are important

qualities required in promoting partnerships between Aboriginal communities and various 'outsider' groups.

Research Design

The comparative case study approach provided both the framework and the flexibility to design a research method capable of meeting important objectives and methodological recommendations. I will first discuss these objectives, which reiterates the significance of this research, followed by a brief description of how previous studies contributed to this design.

Objectives

One important objective was to observe environmental governance conceptually as a relational phenomenon between the forces operating within the regional political economy, the policies and practices sanctioned by Saskatchewan Environment, and the agency and lived experiences of Métis peoples in the region. Reconnaissance and follow-up interviews with community members in 2005 and 2006, including the opportunity to visit and observe several of the participant Métis communities firsthand in 2006, allowed me to become sensitive to the key or emergent structural features that appeared to be enabling and/or constraining Métis communities and their members at the local level.

I framed environmental governance in this study according to three significant areas of investigation: (1) oil sands exploration and the rapid increase in mineral exploration leases allocated for the region; (2) Saskatchewan Environment and the IFLUP process; and (3)) the contemporary experiences and perceptions of local Métis community members regarding natural resources and local land use conflicts. This conceptual frame of the study region acted as a means to theoretically interpret the relational complexity of this social space. Moreover, this frame of reference conceived the social world and the natural environment as a "conjoint constitution" (Freudenburg *et al* 1995); I was interested in how the location of resource development and natural capital (in this case, differences in land disturbances such as fire and clear-cut logging), the presence/absence of natural resource decision making and planning opportunities (here, co-management boards, Integrated Forest Land Use Plans), and the divergence of socio-economic realities among the northwest Métis communities contributed to the structuring of environmental governance in the study region.

Another significant objective was to contextualise environmental governance as a process of continuity and change, and more specifically, how environmental governance in northwest

Saskatchewan as a social system "occurs in an unending series of adjacent and recursive choicepoint moves" (Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 793) between actors, institutions, structures, and processes operating within this regional social space. I attempted to synthesise a comparative analysis that engendered theoretical abstraction (drawing heavily from Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, and capital and social constructionist perspectives) with real-world situations (by focusing on my framing of environmental governance in relation to Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows as particular cases) as a means of understanding how Métis actors and communities were embedded within the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. The opportunity to draw from the richness of institutions, processes, situations, and issues pertaining to environmental governance in the region presented a challenge in conjoining theory with social practise; however Molotch *et al's* (2000) study of the durability of geographic units and how this affects notions of continuity and change provided a theoretical and conceptual framework. Borrowing from their work, I proceeded to contextualise environmental governance as both a process of 'lash up', where "things exist in the world through the "success" of connections among various forces and across material and ideational realms" (p. 793), and configuration, wherein the social world "at any moment or place, is thus not predetermined, but is formed in a path-dependent way as each actor, with more or fewer resources at his or her command, shapes a new social structure by drawing upon the simultaneously enabling and constraining hand of the old" (p. 793).

Since the study site engendered a focus at the regional and community level, another important objective was to give attention to the particularities and relational dimensions of Métis communities within the northwest Saskatchewan Métis collectivity. I considered the importance of recognising communities as distinct *places* "within which social relationships transpire" (Lobao 1996, p. 78), and encouraged a spatially-sensitive analysis in which comparisons "such as position in the broader political economy" (p. 78) can be sustained. The advantage of designing a comparative case study with an attention to community-level particularity is that it allows the researcher to understand how "place-making" contributes to processes of continuity and change (Lobao 2004), and also encourages a focus "that ties together diverse rural sociological literatures as well as a bundle of social issues facing rural society" (p. 1). Consequently, by focusing upon three specific Métis communities within northwest Saskatchewan, I attempted to build a nuanced understanding of regional environmental governance as a lash up of agents and action, place-making and contingency, and internal and external structures occurring in places characterised by "an unwindable spiral of

material form and interpretive understandings or experiences" (Gieryn 2000, p. 471). Thus, in-depth analysis of Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows as particular 'fields' located within the regional environmental governance space offered three unique cases in which to examine how Métis communities and actors are involved with natural resource management in northwest Saskatchewan, to interpret the enabling and constraining factors affecting Métis communities, and to evaluate existing and emergent processes at work in the region.

Lobao et al. (2007) argue that, "In an era of globalization and regional reconfiguration, it is important to self-consciously situate social processes in spatial contexts" (p. 2). In narrowing the research focus comparatively between Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche, this design made it possible to observe Métis communities and environmental governance across varying scales of spatial differences and social relations. This design encouraged an analytical focus in how each community is embedded within the regional social space, which is circumscribed by the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. Thus, focussing on recent oil sands exploration and existing mining activity, Saskatchewan Environment-based opportunities in natural resource decision making and planning, and the social fields that comprise the target communities provided a strong rationale in understanding the relationship of Métis peoples to environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. The figure below attempts to visually display the research design and perhaps facilitates to communicate the objectives discussed above. I will briefly turn to a discussion of methodologies used in previous studies that complimented my study, and follow with an explanation of how I operationalised this comparative case study design.

Oil Sands
Exploration/Mining
Activity

SE's IFLUPs/Consultation

Environmental Governance

La Loche

Métis Agency/Lived Experiences

Pinehouse

Habitus   Field

Habitus   Field

Buffalo Narrows

Habitus   Field
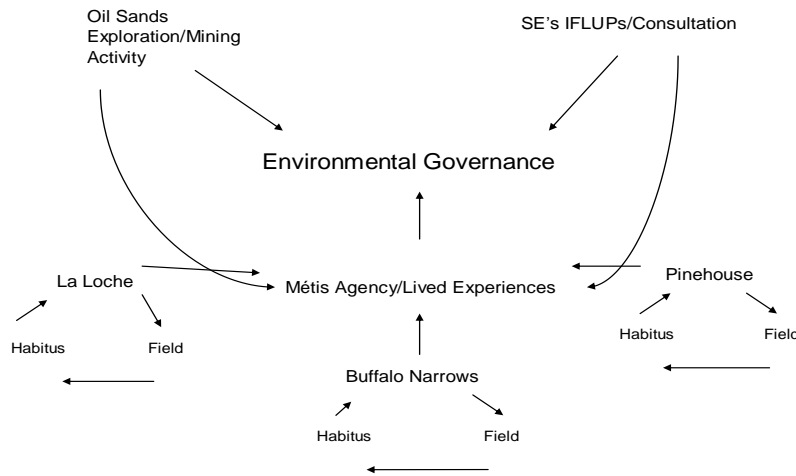
Figure 1: Comparative Case Study Design

Methodological Considerations

I was interested in capturing Métis agency and praxis in a critical time where significant changes are affecting the structuration of environmental governance in the northwest region. Within these shifts I intended to document points of lash up occurring in time, and how Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows and their community members were participating in (the contestation of) environmental continuity and change. I was also interested in applying a social constructivist perspective to understand power and environmental governance focusing on "the processes of environmental claims making" (Davidson and Frickel 2004, p. 477). In this tradition previous studies examined environmental governance framed by symbolic politics and how forms of power shape actors' understanding about issues, the legitimacy of actors in the contested fields of meanings, and the validation of particular knowledge and its implementation in policy settings. Studies adopting the social constructivist perspective generally focused on the political arena as its level of analysis using predominantly case study and discourse analysis methodologies.

Complimenting this methodological tradition is a conceptualisation of power in natural resource management consisting of relational fields where varying forms of power stratifies the agency of competing actors. Examples of this type of conceptualisation include Nuijten's (2005) "force field approach" to natural resource management, Adger et al.'s (2006) "political economy framework", and Bodin et al.'s (2006) examination of social network structure in resource co-

management arrangements. I would also like to highlight Nuijten's (2005) strategy of following the flow of action and opinion, which involves an in-depth examination of events, conflicts, and groups of people that "give insights into the central issues at stake, and the power struggles and practices which develop around them" (p. 9). A common thread among these studies is the conceptualisation of power in resource management as being both relational and structural in the social world. This conceptual thinking about power, including the method of observing the movement of action and opinion across particular temporal instances, became quite valuable in my study.

Data Collection: Improvised Learning in the Field
When I arrived in each community in a bright orange camper-style van to collect my 2007 interviews and community observations, my initial contact with the communities of Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows aroused reinforcing emotions that I had carried with me from my brief first visits to these Métis settlements in the summer of 2006. My entry into these three fields of social life in the summer of 2007 was shaped by a number of factors, most notably in the initial people that I interacted with, the time of day, and my experience in becoming a "local outsider". I arrived in Pinehouse at dusk and within seconds of parking the van I was swarmed by 20 or so children who had obvious questions of interest about who I was and what I was doing in their community; I felt welcomed in a place that was far removed from my urban experience. Upon arriving in La Loche, on the other hand, I was immediately challenged with logistics about where I was going to park my "house" when my community liaison, hosting a backyard informal gathering with friends, looked at me with puzzlement and said, "I don't remember you"; fortunately I was invited to a "safe place" and while defecating in a bucket (the community member's house had no running water) before bed, I contemplated my insecurities in being here for the next ten days. By the time I arrived in Buffalo Narrows, my final field site, I had experienced much and had come to appreciate the rewards and challenges of becoming a local outsider in the community.

Bourdieu (1998) expresses the importance of "plung[ing] into the particularity of an empirical reality, historically located and dated, but with the objective of constructing it as [ ] an exemplary case in a finite world of possible configurations" (p. 2). I chose to live modestly without the luxury of escaping to the privacy of a hotel room because I wanted to experience each community as an outsider who was visible, open, and accessible to the everyday experiences of social life - something that disappears when the researcher insulates themselves from the public realm. This process allowed me to gain access to a diversity of actors, and to situations and opportunities that affirm Bourdieu's

normative conceptualisation of the role of the researcher and approach to the site of inquiry. Additionally, my brief narrative above attends to the concept of particularity and place-making, or how each community has its own identifying features that comprise a local "structure of feeling" (Williams 1973). I entered the communities of Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows with an interest in absorbing the particularity of each community as a means of understanding these social fields as sites of critical cases. Combining these two sentiments, in my own "plunge" into learning from these cases, my openness in the field and my attention to particularity effectively challenged my initial expectations towards Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows and contributed to my proximity, experience, and empathetic understanding with my subjects.

Sample
The principle method for data collection in this study was semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with Métis community members residing in Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche. Although I participated in numerous informal discussions and visits with individuals, the interviews allowed for probing with specific questions and also acted as an important site for validating, contrasting, and inquiring about the unexpected or emergent flow of opinion and action in each respective community. Although my sample of interviews was small, these interviews were also built on the previously identified themes, concerns, and perceptions of actors generated by previous reconnaissance and follow-up interviews conducted in the summer of 2005 and 2006, combined with my efforts to draw from a range of interactions and situations with Métis and non-Métis community members. I employed a snowball strategy wherein available opportunities, in concert with ongoing experiences in the field, helped to shape interviews that ensued.

In the communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche I relied upon a community liaison for an orientation to the community and solicited their knowledge and experience in coming up with key informants and others who they felt could participate. The value of the snowball sampling strategy is that it encourages the researcher to select cases that are substantially important, it allows the researcher to access specialised individuals, and it fosters in-depth investigation with particular social actors (Neuman 2000). The significance of my constant awareness to particularities within the community (community news bulletins, informal discussions, social practices) was that it allowed for a synthesis of pre-determined questions with observations that captured the flow of opinion and action experienced in each community. Consequently, my role as the researcher demanded a character of improvisation in sampling because it made information available without

expectation of the types of discourses, situations, and opportunities that emerged in my fieldwork. This approach tied well with the semi-structured interview format in which probing can facilitate in filling in the gaps with pertinent information not captured by the interview questions alone (Berg 2001). This approach was also culturally appropriate, as formalized processes are often associated with outside agendas separate from the lived experiences of Métis people.

In determining the number of interviews collected in each community, the strategy of saturation was used to gauge when I reached a point in which themes were being repeated and/or when no new information was being expressed by respondents. Although this was a straightforward process, I did find that each respondent shared their unique, intimate experiences which continued to add or expand my understanding and interpretation of the common themes, discourses, and perceptions articulated within my sample. Moreover, in my day-to-day interactions with community members, fragments of information became accessible, which helped to contextualise further the concepts that I was interrogating. At times, then, I found the saturation method challenging as I plunged deeper into the lifeworld of my subjects. For example, on one occasion in La Loche I was invited by a woman and her friends to have an informal discussion in a quieter part of the "Jungle", a local fixture where bottles of wine are shared and drinking takes place. In these informal discussions community members related to me personal stories, the ups and downs of living in the community, local gossip, and so forth. Thus, insofar as I reached a point of saturation in my community interviews, I felt that I had only begun to scratch the surface of the distinctive realities of my subjects in the ten days spent in each community, as my questions would change over time if I was doing an ethnography. The community interviews do however represent a qualitative intensiveness (Silverman 2001), and through my access to these I made field notes on all my observations.

As mentioned earlier, my interview data also consisted of formal semi-structured discussions with key representatives from Saskatchewan Environment. Government agents were identified by their position within the Saskatchewan Environment agency and in their involvement with Métis communities in resource management, land use planning, and other key interactions. These interviews were conducted by an associate researcher and unfortunately a significant topic during the interview was passed over due to miscommunication and misunderstanding; this is discussed in more detail in the section concerning the limitations in the study. Nonetheless, a valuable amount of information came out of these interviews and provided a basis in which to compare the lived experiences of Métis communities with state responses and opinions.

My experiences varied in their formality from sitting in on a co-management meeting, attending an elder's gathering, observing a ceremonial "breaking of the soil" for a future arena, visiting traditional cabins removed from the municipal boundaries, participating in an interview with the local radio station, invitations to dinner, driving around new land development in Buffalo Narrows with a couple of fiery elders, and hanging out at the local beach. These experiences added richness and depth with the interview data and allowed for a greater understanding of the lived experiences of my subjects. Thus, fieldnotes captured significant fragments of information that facilitated in contextualising the perceptions and behaviour of Métis actors in Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows.

Lastly, I collected relevant documents and secondary sources of literature that related to my research focus. Saskatchewan Environment documents concerning policy guidelines, land use planning summaries, consultation guidelines, as well as state news releases obtained from Government of Saskatchewan websites provided valuable sources of information about state policy and activity related to environmental governance in the northwest region. Other significant information came from industry releases and attempts were made to obtain environmental assessments, copies of public presentations, and other pieces of information. I was fortunate to be able to borrow some key material from community members, including *A History of Buffalo Narrows* (Wuorinen 1981). This combination of community and government interviews, fieldnotes, and secondary sources of information provided data for the study.

Description of Respondents

Thirty semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted during my thirty days of fieldwork, including one follow-up discussion with an individual in Buffalo Narrows. Again, it is important to point out the significance of the sixty nine reconnaissance and follow-up interviews that provided the empirical background in my comparative case study design. Breaking these interviews down by community, eight interviews were collected in Pinehouse, ten interviews were conducted in Buffalo Narrows, and twelve interviews were recorded in La Loche. In my sampling I was conscious of obtaining a diversity of viewpoints from those with various roles and positions within the communities, including a balance of genders and ages. In each community I interviewed municipal leaders, individuals associated with the Métis Local and the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan, traditional land users, individuals working in northern resource developments, individuals with local employment, younger individuals (but over 18 years of age), and elders. Additionally, I interviewed

three non-Métis individuals who had resided in one community for more than five years. The length of the interviews ranged between 12 and a half minutes and two and a half hours, on average taking 30 to 45 minutes. Additionally, the government-based interviews conducted by an associate researcher were reviewed. Eight respondents were interviewed by my associate researcher in March 2007, and these interviews lasted generally 45 minutes to one hour.

My field interactions with Métis and non-Métis actors in the communities were diverse and the information imparted contained reference to community life and place. My interactions with community members in these cases ranged from site-seeing in Pinehouse with children to "jam sessions" with older individuals. My field notes contain an assortment of their expressions, situations, and emotions that described these interactions. I used these observations to gain a deeper understanding of environmental governance within each community, as will become apparent as I contextualize my findings and interpretations.

Procedure: Becoming the Local Outsider

It could be contested by ethnographers or anthropologists of my usage of the term "local" in adopting the research role of an outsider peering in. However, through my conscious choice of living in a camper-van in the middle of each community, in a much broader sense I did become the local outsider. In all three communities I had community members ask me whether I was now going to 'move in' or 'find a job', and to make sure that 'we stay in touch and come for visits'. I spent ten full days working respectively in Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche and in that time I became sensitive to the flow of opinion and action circulating within each community. Community members knew of me by my first name (though some preferred to call me "Bob" because Bryn was too unfamiliar) and I heard and experienced stories in which my actions or placement in the community were transmitted in these social spaces. I had individuals approach me for advice and in a couple of cases individuals likened my research to Terry Tobias's work in Pinehouse in the 1990s. I used this association as a means to access interviewees, formal and informal gatherings, and situations where important ideas and sentiments were expressed. In each community a local community member was hired to orient me to the community and to help generate an initial list of key informants and community members' names for interviews.

During my interviews I followed formal research guidelines and protocol. When approaching individuals to schedule interviews, I initially introduced myself, explained the nature of my own

research, and briefly discussed the type of questions I wanted to ask. Once verbal consent was given, I asked my interviewees to decide on a comfortable and convenient space to conduct the interview. Preceding the actual interview, I discussed the research in more depth; I explained their voluntary capacity in answering my questions; and, the respondents were assured of their anonymity in my subsequent dissemination of findings and interpretations. An information sheet describing the research was provided, and a consent form was signed by participants (see appendices 2 & 3). Interviews were recorded only with consent and, were later downloaded to a laptop for data management and storage.

The Interviews

I conducted interviews in Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows in the summer of 2007. The questions that I asked synthesised the interview structure used in the reconnaissance and follow-up interviews with the concepts, processes, and situations that I intended to explore in this comparative case study design. Questions that were transferred into my 2007 comparative interview guide covered topics ranging from forest-based livelihoods, accessing resources, concerns relating to the integrity of boreal ecosystems, opportunities in decision-making, and threats to the long-term livelihood of the community. The 2007 interview guide was structured according to three main sections: Habitus-related; Field-related; Agency-related (see appendix 4). Although this guideline was quite similar in their topics, in each section I activated probes designed to elicit responses related to my three main referential frames and to interrogate the relational or spatial features of environmental governance. For example, in the Habitus-related section I asked questions that captured the respondent's unique dispositions such as their perceived role in the community and how they related to others in their community. In the Field-related section I focused on how each respondent constitutes their community as a field of social space in which particularities to structures, mobilisations of ideas, and processes were probed. Finally, in the Agency-related section I asked questions concerned with environmental governance and social practice (i.e. involvement in decision-making). Table 1 summarises the design of the interview guide used in this study with examples of questions taken from each of the three sections:

Table 1: 2007 Community Interview Sections and Examples of Questions Asked	
Interview Section	**Examples of Questions Asked**
Habitus-related	Can you tell me about your own livelihood and the ways in which you use the forest and other natural resources?
	Are there key concerns you have about the health of the forest in the area in which you spend most of your time? Do you have any other concerns about the natural environment?
Field-related	Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan are involved in subsistence activities, local business enterprises, and have participated in corporate industrial development, such as forestry and mining. Can you discuss the prevalence of each of these activities in your community?
	Can you describe to me the current interactions between community residents and representatives from Saskatchewan Environment in dealing with natural resource management issues?
Agency-related	How successful do you think Métis communities are in currently influencing how local forests and other natural resources are being managed regionally in NW Saskatchewan?
	Can you think of any significant events in the community's history that has had an effect on how community members participate in natural resource management policy, consultations and decision making processes today?

Government-based interviews with Saskatchewan Environment and were conducted by an associate researcher. Preceding her interview work, CURA researchers and I met with the interviewer to discuss the nature of the research, we provided a context to the types of questions that were being asked, and a brief overview of concepts, structures, and processes was elaborated. In these interviews, questions related to land-use planning, consultation efforts, Métis-state relations, and perceptions of Métis social and cultural practices in the northwest region.

Data Analysis

This section briefly describes the process of data analysis and how I integrated the mixed sample of interviews, field observations, and secondary literature sources into a coherent compendium available for critical analysis, interpretation, and discussion of Métis communities and environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. The initial step involved the transcribing of community-based interviews and government interviews by a paid professional transcriber. Upon receipt of these transcriptions, I proceeded to proof the texts to verify the accuracy and to correct any transcriber misinterpretations. The interview texts were then uploaded onto NVivo software to commence coding of the interviews. In total, 609 pages of transcripts were derived from the 30 community member interviews and eight government interviews.

Coding procedures involved highlighting the interview texts according themes, significant pieces of information, and concepts that resonated with my research focus. Ostensibly this analytical procedure engendered not merely categorising the data into major concepts and subcategories, but

also involved "conceptualizing the data, raising questions, providing provisional answers about the relationships among and within the data, and discovering the data" (Coffey and Atkinson 1996, p. 31). In addition, this coding process was applied to my fieldnotes and also involved an expansion of these observations during the data analysis process. The role of secondary literature sources in relation to the coded data was that these documents provided opportunities to validate and to contextualise the findings with relevant information found outside of the collected data; these sources of information facilitated a more rigorous approach to interpret the results in my discussions. Throughout the data analysis stage in my research, much like my conduct in the field, I was constantly aware of the relationships and emergent concepts within the data, thus strengthening the validity of this study (Silverman 2001).

In the coding of the initial sixty nine community-based interviews, a fellow graduate student (and CURA researcher) and I developed 28 codes in which to explore the content of the interviews. Upon completion of the coding procedures, we found seven themes emerging from our analysis: community politics, cultural and traditional factors, environmental concerns, socio-economic opportunities/constraints, Métis-state relations, balancing resource management, and autonomy in decision-making and local governance. In developing relevant codes that corresponded to my research focus, I retained many of the codes from the initial set and added ones that identified key structures, institutions, issues, and relations of power that were discussed in my interviews in Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche. A key feature of the CURA Otipimsuak Project was the availability of the core team working on the Natural Resource Component to discuss coding procedures, confirm findings, and to share interpretations of the data. Thus, numerous team meetings, CURA researcher meetings, and close discussions with my supervisor facilitated to strengthen the internal validity of the coding procedures via peer examination and participatory or collaborative modes of research – two strategies identified by Merriam (1998) that enhances internal validity in qualitative research.

In completing the coding phase of data analysis in this study, I used the data in my interpretation of the themes, concepts, and issues that cut across my levels of analysis. This entailed examination of environmental governance both within the community level and among the communities of Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows. These interpretations incorporated recent movements in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Environment interviews provided the opportunity to incorporate a comparison of state perceptions

and practices within my discussions of Métis agency and the structuration of environmental governance in the region. Summarily, the data analysis process engendered a rich description of the research problem and moved toward an explanatory interpretation of "finding conceptual and theoretical coherence in the data" (Huberman and Miles 1994, cited in Coffey and Atkinson 1996, p. 47).

Limitations of Methods and Study

Northwest Saskatchewan, in terms of natural resources and development, is a social space experiencing rapid changes. In my attempt to account of the major structures, processes, and agents of change affecting environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan, I focused on what I considered to be key features and perhaps underestimated significant factors and variables. I followed up emerging situations with Saskatchewan Environment representatives and community contacts. I previewed recent secondary literature sources to identify other important factors, institutions, and structures not accounted for in this study. I attempted to account for more recent events in my interpretations and discussions.

Another significant limitation was that I did not conduct the government interviews with representatives from Saskatchewan Environment. Despite the richness of this data set, upon review of the interview texts, it became apparent that a key concept, the Integrated Forest Land Use Plan, was not interrogated more fully. In his examination of the relationship between the investigator and the respondent, Bourdieu (1996) emphasizes the importance of social proximity and familiarity within the interview process. Although the research associate was made aware of the Integrated Forest Land Use Plan in our briefing with her, during the interviews this concept was introduced improperly and thus caused confusion with government respondents. In order to address this limitation, I attempted to contact one of the key respondents via email and re-addressed my question concerning Saskatchewan Environment's Integrated Forest Land Use Plan, and asked other questions related to this consultation process involving Métis communities in northwest Saskatchewan. My follow-ups notwithstanding, the completion of the government interviews was lacking.

In Merriam's (1998) discussion of the limitations of case study research, she points out that "Although rich, thick description and analysis of a phenomenon may be desired…the product may be too lengthy, too detailed, or too involved for busy policymakers and educators to read and to use"

(p. 47). There were many times when I felt that my comparative case study was infused with too many concepts, dimensions, and 'things' for lack of a better term. In addition, my awareness that the research product is intended for a diverse audience (government agencies, academics, and community members) compounds this limitation in the levels of complexity or abstraction that I used in this study. To address the first point, one of my goals was to provide a research product that could begin to make sense of the complex web of relations and situations that shape contemporary environmental governance. In attempting to do so, I found Flyvbjerg's (2001) phronetic model both helpful and constructive. Also, my framing of environmental governance simplified the complexity without compromising attention to the key agents and structures shaping the region's deliberations over natural resource management and development. To the latter point, providing summaries of my research findings and recommendations tailored to each audience will be an effective means of sharing this information broadly, succinctly, and in practical terms.

Biases and Assumptions

Through my undergraduate and graduate training, including previous personal experiences, I have tried to gain some understanding of a few of the challenges that Aboriginal people in Canada face as a result of the historical conditions of nation-building. The nature of my topic, agency/power/environmental governance, necessarily required going into Métis communities and locating sides: who is benefiting and who loses, who is included and excluded, what is most important and what is peripheral. This also entailed asking different Métis actors what is desirable and what should be done. As an individual I have a set values, beliefs, and assumptions that results in potentially identifying with particular actors and their subjectivities. I assume that communities are made up of people with contrasting values, which challenges overall community goals and visions. Without a common understanding, it is difficult to arrive at conflict-free resolutions. In my understanding of the workings of power, following Lukes (2005), I am aware that problematic situations and contexts can remain hidden from view. Thus, in this study I wanted to make sure that the issues of local conflict and community-level clashes are included in my analysis of Métis agency, power, and the field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan.

In addressing my biases, I tended to associate with those individuals who challenged the existing structures and processes that were constraining local and traditional livelihoods. I understand that communities such as Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche could never go back to subsistence-based local economies, nor should they for that matter. I realise the importance of

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mining employment and partnering with large corporations. However, this being my own bias, I do not wish to see the distinctiveness of these Métis communities become eroded by Euro-Canadian metanarratives, values, and institutions. Moreover, with the proposed oil sands in the region, I reflect on the situation in Alberta, and I am deeply concerned that Métis people will have to pay a heavy price (environmentally and culturally) in order to see the benefits of this development improve the "quality" of their lives.

To distil my overall research goal, I wanted to present Métis people with information that would allow them to see the big picture so that informed decisions could be made concerning resource management and development in northwest Saskatchewan. Again, my training has allowed me to remain critical and to question the assumptions that I carried into this research. This leads to my final and most important assumption. In my research I acted as a 'local outsider' attempting to illuminate to community members the many perspectives and issues that are woven into regional environmental governance.

Conclusion

The comparative case study design and the objectives incorporated into its flexible framework provided the means to engage in the relationship between Métis communities and environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. This methodology incorporated theoretical abstraction with real-world contexts to explore how the structuration of environmental governance in the region impacts Métis communities and actors. Focusing on oil sands exploration and mining activity, the role of Saskatchewan Environment in land use planning and consultation, and the agency and lived experiences of Métis actors in Pinehouse, La Loche, and Buffalo Narrows provided a rich mix of data in which to examine the complexities of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. Although my treatment of the research problem engendered an attempt to conceptualise a myriad of relations among actors, institutions, structures, and processes that lash up – which was often challenging and at times overwhelming – the trade-off was that it offered a rich source of data in which to interpret and to examine Métis peoples' participation in the regional economy in the context of environmental governance. In this light, I am reminded of a passage by Flyvbjerg (2001):

> To the researcher practicing *phronesis*, however, a particularly "thick" and hard-to-summarise narrative is not necessarily a problem. Rather, it may be a sign that the study has uncovered a particularly rich problematic. (p. 84)

Chapter 5: Findings

Introduction

In this study I examine three Métis communities and their involvement in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. I conceptualized the field of environmental governance empirically by following the flow of action around recent oil sands exploration, provincial land use planning, and the experiences and perceptions of local Métis community members regarding natural resources and local land use conflicts - all of which are connected to the region's political economy. In this way my research seeks to gain a better understanding of the relationship between Métis agency, the structures of regional environmental governance, and the social forces playing out in the contemporary political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. In this chapter I discuss the findings and major themes that emerged from the community interviews with Métis individuals from Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche during the summer of 2007.

The community interviews highlight many significant influences on Métis participation in regional environmental governance. In this chapter I present six key themes that emerged from coding and analysing the data. The first theme summarizes key findings connected to the environmental concerns raised by Métis respondents from Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche.

Environmental Concerns

The findings from the community interviews suggest that overall Métis people are very concerned about the health of the environment and the impacts resulting from large-scale development in the study region. Although there was variation in the specific concerns expressed by respondents, every person I interviewed attributed their concerns to industrial activities such as large-scale mining or commercial forestry. I commonly heard such things as pollution, ecological destruction, habitat loss, and impacts to wildlife as significant environmental concerns in my interviews with community members. Métis community members were also concerned about the health effects of such land uses as uranium mining on local populations, such as in Pinehouse where community members spoke about concerns of transporting uranium from the Key Lake Mine adjacent to their community. In one exception, an individual from La Loche felt he was "not overly concerned" with the current state of resource development in the region. However, later on in our interview he conceded that:

the development stage becomes another issue because then they get into the commercial development stage. And I know that is hard on the water system and also it becomes a messy, messy process of removing any type of oil from the ground. So that's my major concern but as for now, the exploration side of it, I see a very minimal impact on the community. (La Loche community member)

In many cases respondents were also aware of the oil sands in Fort McMurray and its perceived impact on the health of the forests and lakes in northwest Saskatchewan. For instance, one individual from Buffalo Narrows stated that 'Fort McMurray acid rain is going to kill us. I think the tar sands are pretty well going to wipe us out'. It is clear from the interviews that Métis communities are generally concerned about the health of the environment and the pressures associated with resource development in the region. However, the data also showed that not every community member shared the same values towards the environment and natural resource management.

In my fieldwork I made the effort to interview Métis people from different social backgrounds (elders, commercial fishermen, trappers, community leaders, and others holding common social roles found in northern Aboriginal communities). My findings reveal that traditional land users exhibited the strongest level of concern towards the environment. Commercial fishermen and trappers appeared to have the most knowledge and insight about resource management and they also seemed to be the most engaged in the politics of environmental governance. However, through my field observations and the community interviews, I learned that town leaders (e.g., members of the Local Community Authority) were also engaged in the political aspects of environmental governance, such as in consultations between government and industry. The interviews also suggested that the younger generations in the communities are least likely to show concern for the environment and that they have no real interest in following the politics and issues that are shaping resource management in northwest Saskatchewan. The most observable differences between the youth and elders, combined with those who carry out land-based non-traditional livelihoods, could be observed around issues of environment and governance. Before I present these additional views, I briefly draw attention to the sharper contrasts I noticed in the community interviews between the youth and those who earn some income or subsist in some capacity from the land.

In one interview a young La Loche community member employed at the time by Oilsands Quest Inc. told me that, "we talk about the environment and it should be the first concern on the table, but people don't look at it that way. People have different ways of looking at things". This individual's comment confirmed my own thinking about how community members' environmental

concerns are influenced by the many factors that distinguish actors in the community, such as whether or not they rely on the forest for their livelihood. I noticed a connection between the social roles of community members and the strength of their concerns for the environment. At opposite ends sat traditional land users, giving highest priority and concern, and younger generations, which most community members felt gave little consideration of environmental concerns. It became clear to me that Métis youth (and those well into their 20s) were viewed as the least likely group to possess concern about the environment or natural resource management, as demonstrated in the following statements made by these community members:

> I would say of my generation that they're not concerned at all [ ] a lot more kids are spoiled. They don't really care about anything. They just tend to do whatever they feel like doing, so [the environment] doesn't matter to them. (Pinehouse community member)

> People my age will [think about environmental impacts]. But the young people, I don't think so because they're into high wages. High wages, let's go for it. And that's the temptation that the oil companies have. (La Loche community member)

> Like the younger people, it doesn't bother them that much because they weren't brought up that way [ ] the younger people don't go out and trap and fish anymore. It's a dying way of life.

> I don't think there's enough training in terms of teaching our kids to respect the land [ ] There are a lot of young people that do what they like to do and I don't like it when they shoot a lot of moose [ ] I believe that if you play with [wildlife], it will be taken away from you. (Pinehouse community member)

On the other hand, traditional land users such as trappers and commercial fishermen in my study expressed the strongest concerns about the impacts of large-scale development in the region. This seemed to make sense given that traditional land users often described their negative experiences associated with historical and existing resource management and development of local forests. It was in this particular context that I observed strong environmental concerns stemming from close relationships to the land and also how these concerns appeared to be in opposition to regional political and economic forces, such as pressures from sport fishing, commercial forestry, and mineral exploration. For example, one commercial fisherman/trapper referred to the trade-off between traditional livelihoods and higher paying work in the mining and oil and gas sectors as a significant barrier to balancing other land use values: "Yeah, give me a job and you can burn the forest. Basically that's what it's looking like. You know, as long as somebody is making $25 an hour, they aren't going to worry about pollution or what they're leaving behind." I also heard from one

fisherman that in Buffalo Narrows, "[commercial fishermen] closed our season from the summer to the winter season [ ] we took the initiative to phase out small mesh nets and then we pushed for the hatchery."

I noticed that provincial management policies and structures often conflicted with traditional land users' experiences with accessing resources for livelihood purposes and also their understanding of resource management. For example, I typically heard such statements made by traditional land users in this study:

> I think it's a pretty poor way to count fish but that's the way it's done. The thing is there should be a lot more input from the commercial fishermen to tell [provincial managers] that you should maybe try counting fish using our knowledge [ ] Our input isn't valued. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

> We work with the environment every day. We live with it every day. But a guy living down in Saskatoon or Ottawa is telling us what we can and cannot do or how to manage resources and that's kind of silly. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Thus, in my interviews it was evident that Métis traditional land users and their related environmental concerns were significantly tied to challenging political situations and contexts (i.e., such as tourism and sport fishing vs. supporting the local commercial fishery), as this commercial fisherman's comment demonstrates:

> [Commercial fishing] is an industry. It built this town. It put the gas stations here, it put everything here, the school, everything. Fishing. Why are they trying to kill it? You don't kill one- if you want a healthy economy, you don't kill an industry to create another. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Within this spectrum of local environmental concerns and perceptions of natural resources, I found that the remaining groups of Métis community members, consisting of elders, municipal council members, Métis Local representatives, business leaders, and community members employed by local and regional sectors, described a variety of opinions and attitudes about the environment and natural resource management. The range of comments highlighted four key areas of concern that Métis communities have regarding the field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan. First, Métis community members expressed the need for greater protection of the land and resources that their communities rely on for subsistence, livelihoods, and other important cultural purposes, as indicated by the following community member quotes:

There's sort of a split, a lot of people are worried about revenue and money. A lot of people are just totally different and enjoy the outdoors and use it differently. A lot of people are greedy and its only human nature I guess. But for me, I think we've still got to manage our resources properly. We can still make money from the forest so long as we manage it too. Take something out but put something back at the same time. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

We're just recently finding out about all of these [different land uses] and a lot of it is new to us. But we are really, really concerned about the environment. We want those jobs. We want these things. But we don't want to lose our traditional livelihoods and experience more broken promises like we have in the past. (La Loche community member)

Now with all of this development happening with the Oilsands and realizing that all of our land has already been sold off. That happened to us with Mistik and Weyerhaeuser when I was younger. And it breaks my heart that the same thing 25 years later is still happening. Nothing has changed. I'm concerned with what is going to happen with our lakes. Because we're all talking right now about jobs and contracts and nobody is saying 'how about the environment'. People are just worried about right now and not the future. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Second, respondents expressed the need for greater involvement in natural resource monitoring and decision making, which included a desire for respectful understanding of local and traditional ecological knowledge by 'outsiders' like government agents and industry representatives:

Well, with all of this exploration happening, and all of these companies that are out there – they usually hire somebody that's being paid by the company to monitor the environment. Now my concern is, is this person really giving accurate readings? Would it be different if this person was somebody hired from the community? (La Loche community member)

Yeah, it's a good relationship [with Saskatchewan Environment] but a lot of people would probably say no. But, if you have a [conservation officer] coming in for two years and they leave, and they bring another [conservation officer] in [ ] some of those people don't have a clue what northern Saskatchewan is all about coming from the South. If it's Regina for an example, it takes them two years just to understand the issues. So sometimes we have a hard time getting across to the government and well, it takes years to get policy changed. I mean, we've always had fights with [provincial resource managers] before but the only way we will get things done is if we communicate between the two. There's still a lot of people out there that are mad with Saskatchewan Environment but you have to start somewhere. (Pinehouse community member)

Third, community members' concerns suggested that the Métis need more capacity to benefit from natural resources in the area (e.g., non-timber products), as this quote demonstrates:

I think about our berries and I think why can't we get something going in that? And why can't we have some sort of a small processing plant with Saskatoon berries, you know? And then it brings employment for some of the berry pickers. Because I'm finding that our traditions are slowly petering [out]. People aren't going out as much as they used to. All the old people that used to go out have either died or they're too sick now to go out and pick berries. So those are the things that we need to start building on, those traditional cultural pieces. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Finally, the concerns raised by community members showed the need for more community-directed discussions and planning around the trade-offs of large-scale development projects and its costs to the local environment and to potential traditional land uses:

To me the elders are saying that the youth are the most important people to consider. The way things are going, [the elders] want the next generation to be prosperous [ ] So a lot of the elders, when you talk to them, and they talk about these [development projects] that are happening up there, they don't want to see the land and everything go. No. That's one thing, a main issue for them. But, at the same time, they also want to see these developments happen because they want to see jobs for the community. They want this community to benefit. (La Loche community member)

I mean, you don't really want to deal with any of those issues, you just want to live off the land, stay there, and not discuss the issues. But us, we know it's coming, tourism is coming, sport fishing and anglers using our lake – it's coming. So unfortunately it's going to happen sooner or later down the road. And you have to discuss those issues now and not ten years later. You're too late if you do it ten years down. And that's the big thing I'm trying to inform the community. I have a big battle on my hands all the time but it needs to be done. (Pinehouse community member)

I have a major concern. For example, I sit the on co-management board. I also sit on the Economic Development board. I have a very serious concern and I can't predict the future but according to what's happening here, there's going to be a big boom of [large scale developments] and that's all [ ] But I think as a community we'll have to look at these things, monitor them, and keep an eye on things. And try to get involved and like, I've just been saying, I don't know how we can control it or whether it's going to happen or not. Probably our lakes will be depleted. Our population will increase and big businesses will come in. You know, I don't oppose development but it should be controlled. They should not let [outsiders] just walk in and fill the whole landscape with this and that. And that's my fear. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

I think once you start talking about these environmental concerns, you talk about it, you mention it, and people realize it, we're giving up a lot. I don't know if [the community] is really prepared to get up and do anything about it at this time. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

The above quotes also indicate frustrations with the level of influence Métis people have had over incremental diminishment of access to natural resources that has been an integral part of their lifestyle. Thus, the following section addresses more directly another recurring theme in the interviews around a sense of powerlessness over resource management decision-making.

Powerlessness

> Government dictates. And that's what it's all about. They set the rules and there's no such thing as going into a community for a consultation, a public forum - that type of thing, meet the people. What are your ideas, I mean, c'mon! We've been here all our lives. You don't walk in here and ask us for our ideas, that type of thing [ ] They come in after the fact, after the decisions are made. That's the way it is.
> (Buffalo Narrows community member)

One of the key themes that resonated from the community interviews was that Métis people expressed deep frustration and concern over not being in charge of their traditional territories and that the majority of environmental governance-related processes acted to reconfirm this lack of control. The quote above by one community member in Buffalo Narrows captures the sense of powerlessness shared by the majority of Métis people I talked to in this study. Over half of the Métis respondents I formally interviewed strongly expressed the view that Métis communities are not at all successful in influencing the policies and decisions related to provincial resource management and regional development. Community members repeatedly pointed to the actions of provincial government as the main factor contributing to their lack of power in natural resource contexts. And, as the following quotes demonstrate, Métis respondents felt their voice is too insignificant because of existing government authority over policies and decision making in the region:

> The land is all that we have. The land gave us everything. So, we understand it, and we also understand that we don't have much say as to what goes on with the land. And development is going to happen, we all understand, the community understands that it's going to happen regardless of how we think or how we wish it would be.
> (La Loche community member)

> Like I said, we have no say really [ ] Government has their agenda and this is what they figure they have to do to keep the world going round. So that's what they're doing and it's at a pace that's too fast and irresponsible. So, hmmm, I never thought of government being irresponsible but I guess I just said it [ ] We all live in this place and government, like I said, they have their ideas and they do what they want because they have the long arm of the law to protect them. Basically, we're slaves to it all. We're all slaves to their system and it's not a system that I want be a part of. But, like everyone else, I guess I feel like I'm a victim. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

It's one-sided. There's no balance because we have no input. We have no say. The government moved their head offices south and we simply have no say [ ] the way I see it right now, there's no such thing as democracy up here [ ] I just believe that the government is going in the wrong direction. If democracy is about having a vote, well we don't have our vote. We don't have our say. That's not democracy.
(Buffalo Narrows community member)

Well, that's basically how Saskatchewan Environment runs this country. You think that you put your two cents in but what's the use of having a meeting when the plan's already been developed [ ] We've got pretty well no influence at all with natural resources. Basically, I've been to quite a few meetings and the government always has the final word. We have our input but when it comes down to it, decisions have already been made by the time it comes to us. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

In some cases, respondents felt the status and rights of the Métis in the province also contributed to this sense of powerlessness, as indicated by these two quotes:

We have very little say in our community. You know, we could do a lot of things. Like First Nations, they have all the influence. The Métis don't have anything at all. Nobody listens to the Métis. Government doesn't recognize us like they do with First Nations. (La Loche community member)

The Métis are unacknowledged. The government doesn't acknowledge us. As far as I'm concerned, the Métis are not acknowledged in the province. They don't acknowledge our leaders, they don't acknowledge our people. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

For those who did not share the views presented above, respondents offered other points to consider. For instance, one community member in La Loche said that although she did not think much about how the Métis are influencing decisions, she expressed to me that at the very least it would be beneficial if government, industry, and community leaders would 'let La Loche people know what's going on'. I heard from another individual from La Loche say:

Compared to before, I think the Métis are fighting harder now. I think other people are starting to speak out against what's going on. Before, I think not many people spoke out because of fear or whatever, and maybe also because they can't speak English. But now, there are people out there that can read somebody else's language and translate it for others to understand in the community. (La Loche community member)

Another respondent shared the same view as above, stating 'we're pretty successful as opposed to before when the Métis had no voice at all'. In another interview one community member from La

Loche felt that certain communities were more successful relative to other Métis communities in the region:

> Some communities, for example, Beauval, Ile-a-la Crosse have been very vocal [ ] they believe strongly in their Métis roots and their causes. They fight hard for them. This area here, the Métis have been screwed around so many times [ ] I think a leader has to come forward from the community and sort of give Métis people in this community a vision and a focus to fight for to revive the strength of the Métis people. Who that person is, I don't know. But hopefully we'll find out one day. (La Loche community member)

The impression of one community member in Pinehouse was that Métis communities were 'slightly' successful in influencing policies and decisions regarding natural resources. Interestingly, immediately afterwards he made the comment that:

> I shouldn't always just blame government. I mean it's partly an issue between the communities [ ] They're all fighting their own little battles [ ] I mean they're all divided and that's the biggest issue we face with government. I always criticize the government but sometimes it's our own fault not working together to get things done. (Pinehouse community member)

It is also significant to point out that only one respondent perceived the Métis to be successful in influencing natural resource management in the area. It is likely that this Pinehouse community member held this view given that in my interview with him, he shared with me an example in which town leaders participated in preventing a limestone quarry project from going through near the community.

The theme of powerlessness was observable in all three of the communities despite the fact that each community's field was composed of different structures and processes related to resource management and decision-making. For example, with regard to local Métis involvement in the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP, one community member stated that "I don't think there is anything in that land use plan that would be good to give us more control to our land. It's something that will give government and industry easier access to our forests, that's all," and added his impression that "Ninety percent of our forest could be cut down at any minute." This situation also appeared in certain contexts to constrain and affect particular groups in the community. In Buffalo Narrows, for example, commercial fishermen were frustrated because of the push by local Métis community leaders to support tourism and angling on the same lakes where their livelihood has been maintained. Commercial fishermen were concerned that increased tourism would significantly impact fish

populations (because of catch and release angling), which they perceived would significantly diminish their livelihood. As one commercial fisherman adamantly expressed:

> We can't get our limits back. It was the fishermen's co-op that went together at a meeting here about ten, fifteen years ago to get the fish back [ ] I put a hundred million pickerel in that lake. And I heard our mayor talking with that Klein guy from Alberta. In Lloydminister they had a meeting, and our Meadow Lake biologist was there, our government people were there, and they gave the whole Big Peter Pond, Little Peter Pond, Clear Lake, away to the tourism. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

This local conflict was confirmed to me by others in Buffalo Narrows, as demonstrated by this quote:

> And, like I said, I fished for 15 years and not once did…there might have been two, three different mayors but not once did they ever attend our annual meeting or even invite a fisherman over [ ] And then when the town has a hidden agenda and they meet with the Minister and say, don't give the fishermen any more quotas, after the fishermen built up their stocks. That's unethical. There's just no sense to it. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

This feeling of powerlessness was evident for some trappers in Buffalo Narrows participating in the co-management board administered by Mistik Management Ltd. One local trapper I interviewed explained to me that "they more or less bring a map here. They go through the map with us and they say we're going on to your trap line [ ] And that's it, you can't stop them." In La Loche community members expressed this situation on a bigger land use scale as many were frustrated with the recent government sale of exploration leases in the northwest region and how La Loche residents were not consulted regarding this government action. I heard the following sentiments from La Loche community members regarding this particular land use issue:

> We need to make sure that areas in the north are preserved specifically for hunting, trapping and fishing, and that the government really needs to pay attention to the amount of exploration permits being allowed in the area and they're not. It's taking up all of northern Saskatchewan. (La Loche community member)

> Saskatchewan Environment is selling permits to Oilsands Quest without notifying people locally. This is our territory that government is selling down south. We should be the ones to decide, not the government in the south. (La Loche community member)

Similar views and opinions concerning the sale of exploration permits in the region were also evident in the other two communities, as evidenced in the following statement expressed by one individual from Buffalo Narrows:

> You mean this oil now? There is no benefit because the government already gave the rights away. Like I said, it was on the news that it brought the Saskatchewan government out of debt, and for $180 million they gave those rights away. Once you give industry those rights, they can pretty much do whatever they want to the land. We have no rights. So, the government went above us. They didn't confide in the communities, they went right over us and did it. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Future Outlook in Northwest Saskatchewan

Many of the discussions in my interviews with community members focused on the changes that Métis people were experiencing in their communities. In these discussions, I heard mixed opinions about the future outlook in the communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche. The extent of issues and events in Buffalo Narrows and La Loche suggested that these two communities were experiencing significant impacts from large-scale resource development, the socio-economic circumstances within these two communities, and the outcomes of governance processes particular to their relative fields. Community members in Buffalo Narrows and La Loche perceived major changes in the immediate future concerning the health of the local environment, the decline in traditional forest activities and cultural pursuits, and the trade-offs of large-scale development in the region, as demonstrated by the following quotes:

> I don't think La Loche people will get anything out of it. What's the purpose of this oil drilling, I mean are they doing it for La Loche people or for themselves? They're going to be making all that money, they're going to take it away from us [ ] they're just going to come out here, destroy our land, wildlife, they're going to move away again. You know, and then us people won't be looked at. And then what are we going to do? (La Loche community member)

> Well, it's going to affect everybody in La Loche. Our hunting status, our camping, our kids' traditional – everything. It's going to be destroyed by these companies. It's not going to happen today, but it will happen. I know it. (La Loche community member)

> Well, I think a lot of people see opportunities. Myself, I don't think I want to work in a uranium mine or anything so I just stay away from that. I would sooner stick to fishing and forestry – the mining and the stuff like that, and the oil. It's sort of like the money is good, but then it's going to destroy us in the long run. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Environmentally, it's not good. Because the people in charge of making big decisions, they don't live out here and they've never been here. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying it's all bad [ ] But I mean, there's going to be people working and some people are going to get uses out of it [ ] So there's definitely going to be some positive things coming out of things like oil sands development. There's a few young people that I know [who]are in apprentice programs and they're in their third and fourth year and it's not going to be all bad. (La Loche community member)

I have a very serious concern and I can't predict the future but according to what's happening here, there's going to be a big, big boom of oil and uranium and that's all [ ] if it's going to be an automatic thing that's going to happen anyway, I don't know where we can step in. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

In Pinehouse, community members were also genuinely concerned about a similar suite of issues related to change, however, this community contrasted somewhat with Buffalo Narrows and La Loche in terms of its exposure to rapid change. For example, one community member commented that Pinehouse was not being pressed by change as forcefully as in Buffalo Narrows and La Loche:

Yeah, right now we do have two outfitters in our area and there hasn't been too much of an issue for discussion yet. When I see that the tourism industry is going to go and start affecting our fishermen for example, I mean, they are fishing in our boundary and that battle will be drawn in the next five years down the road. Right now it's not really affecting our lake. When it becomes a struggle in the future then maybe [ ] there are some issues already flying but nothing really serious yet. (Pinehouse community member)

That said, in all three of the communities the trajectory of change that Métis people described consistently drew attention to a mobilisation toward a large-scale resource economy in the northwest region, a major concern for the environment and the impacts of large-scale development, and a continued decline in traditional and cultural practises in these communities. In addition, many of the community members I spoke with perceived significant changes to the social contexts in their communities given the current trends in resource management and development in the region. Community members felt that 'greed and politics' are going to 'kill' local opportunities, the region is going to be 'infested with outsiders', 'there's going to be more drugs in the community', that the Métis 'could be going through an extremely important timeframe in our history', and, as one traditional land user commented:

The times are changing now, so pretty soon I might be a heavy equipment operator. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Thus, it was also clear from the interviews that, as one Buffalo Narrows community member put it, "there's going to be a lot of social impact. That's the biggest threat that I can see".

Variations in Community Level Effects

Despite the similarities in the themes already discussed, I noticed considerable variation in way that environmental governance processes and outcomes played out in the Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche. In particular, I found that the durable 'character' of each community lashed-up with such geographical factors as proximities to large-scale developments and surrounding historical land uses, which seemed to account for this variation. For example, in Pinehouse the community demonstrated one durable feature of working together cohesively in their local Co-op Store and in their monthly 'inter-agency meetings' which bring together community members and members of local agencies to discuss community issues. Geographically, Pinehouse's relative isolation from major development projects or major centres and the continued significance of forest-based livelihoods, such as commercial fishing, indicated that although powerless, this community was in a position to weather the major shifts in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan, due to traditional land uses that foster cultural continuity, at least for the time being. This contrasted with the conditions of environmental governance I observed in Buffalo Narrows and La Loche in which the pressure of large-scale development was already evident, and traditional livelihoods seemed on a noticeable decline.

As I mentioned above, the community of Pinehouse appeared to be much more cohesive in terms of its ability to act collectively. The community's interests seemed to be a shared responsibility shaped through local dialogue, support, trust, and community engagement. Perhaps the relative isolation of this community, combined with such community-based institutions as the Co-op Store (in which community members own shares) and inter-agency committee meetings, has made this a durable feature within Pinehouse. This community made for an interesting case largely because of its much slower experiences with change and through the cohesiveness I witnessed at the local community level. During my time spent in Pinehouse there were no overt conflicts or situations concerning large-scale development with which to observe how the community was responding or reacting, nor was the community experiencing much in terms of community-led actions as an outcome of existing or proposed resource developments in the area. What I did observe was a durable quality of cohesiveness and cooperation as individual community members described to me, for example, how locals were managing their fishery, or how, in terms of actions, the community was

looking to improve local services through such projects as seniors housing (which also trained locals and provided employment) and assessing the viability of a community-managed Combined Heat and Power facility (cogeneration).

Pinehouse's involvement in the Pinehouse – Dipper Integrated Forest Land Use Plan (IFLUP) gave me a unique opportunity to examine Métis community-level participation in environmental governance through a formalised process in partnership with the provincial agency Saskatchewan Environment. From my interviews with community members I heard that although this process was exclusive to certain people in the community, I got the sense that the Pinehouse – Dipper IFLUP was perceived by those involved to be at least a step in the right direction in terms of allowing for Métis participation in resource planning, as the following quote demonstrates:

> It is a good thing but don't forget this is probably the first one for a lot of our members in the community [ ] It's a first step for a lot of those members so the biggest thing that wasn't expressed is the misunderstanding between the two, not knowing that it's the protection of land and which areas you need to save, what should we protect as spawning grounds, berry picking grounds and that kind of thing. That wasn't really quite explained to a lot of the older members so there was a misunderstanding there [ ] But it's a good thing. With the consultation with forestry for example, it's getting a lot of the community members in those meetings that they never attended before so it's a learning step as well for a lot of the members and I recommend that they do more. I liked it. I got involved. It took what, probably forty trappers and stakeholders in our community to get together and put their ideas and thoughts in that planning process and so it's good [ ] So I recommend that it's a good procedure that Dipper Land Use Plan, I wish that it was explained a little bit better before, but it's an ongoing process so it's step one. (Pinehouse community member)

The community's involvement with the Pinehouse – Dipper IFLUP also gave me a glimpse into how local leaders informed the community about natural resource-related concerns, and how this northern village mobilises around such situations. For example, as one community member pointed out to me while discussing the Pinehouse – Dipper IFLUP:

> But the one thing I'll tell you is that the Northern Village [LCA], when it comes to business opportunities in our community, any concerns on forestry, there are meetings in our community. When it's jobs that are available in the mines, it seems to be blasted on our radio station, word of mouth, and the Village [councillors] actually seek community people to go work out there. And I've seen it done so, and that's a good thing. (Pinehouse community member)

In Buffalo Narrows I observed a number of significant issues in which place-making character and geographical factors appeared to shape the local outcomes of environmental

governance. I noticed that the community's proximity to Fort McMurray (with its outside investment interests, environmental impacts, employment opportunities) and other large-scale development, such as oil sands development and commercial forestry intensified local conflicts with natural resources and development. The local commercial fishing situation in Buffalo Narrows was one clear example in which geography and place-making lashed up, and it also demonstrated how this issue was connected to other challenges related to northwest Saskatchewan's current political economy.

The issues surrounding Buffalo Narrows' commercial fishery provided one example of how a particular group of Métis actors (in this case traditional land users) were engaged in resource-based decision making and planning. In this situation, the traditional knowledge of local commercial fishermen was being challenged by Saskatchewan Environment resource managers. At the same time, the interests of Buffalo Narrows-based commercial fishermen were also being challenged by their own municipality via the promotion of tourism-based development in Buffalo Narrows, which many commercial fishermen perceived as being detrimental to their already compromised livelihood. Métis participation, in this case, was limited not simply through a common situation of local knowledge/resource use versus government authority, but also in the community's political fabric whereby local fishermen felt that community leaders and institutions such as the Buffalo Narrows Economic Development Corporation were opposing and challenging their stakeholder groups' concerns.

The politics of the community's local fishery appeared to intensify a durable place-making feature of divisiveness that many community members expressed to me to as persisting within the community. In the case of Buffalo Narrows' commercial fishery, there was evidence of competing views about maintaining and supporting local economic opportunities in commercial fishing or embracing new economic opportunities which are dependent on non-local or outsider access to resources such as sport fishing, and finding a balance between small-scale opportunities and large-scale development. What I observed from my fieldwork in Buffalo Narrows was that issues pertaining to traditional livelihoods such as commercial fishing or trapping were of highest priority for those actively involved in these pursuits and yet from a municipality standpoint, these same issues were peripheral and in the way of development. For example, as one community-elected official expressed his views to me:

One of the things is that when we started our development here, there was an old guy from our local Métis office [who said], 'they are destroying our tradition. They're gonna bring all these white people in, they're gonna take all our fish'. I said no they're not. This is a municipality. Our job here is to sell land, collect the taxes out of it and build on our infrastructure with it. And create population and a better life for our kids. I want to see [ ] instead of loading up my kids and family and going to Prince Albert where there's a WalMart, and there's a McDonalds's and there's a theatre, I want to see that here [ ] Not all the communities have the ability to do that but we've got to do something [ ] Work with us. We offered that opportunity. And be partners on some of our projects. We gave [other community stakeholders] an opportunity to be part of it, an opportunity to also earn some financial revenue. But no. They prefer to fight us. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

In comparison with Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows' capacities appeared to be compromised by the strong divisiveness among local stakeholders and local political institutions, by the mixed views and strategies concerning local development, by the influence of large-scale development such as in Fort McMurray, and, importantly, by a community which seemed caught on well-defined lines of division.

The situation regarding Buffalo Narrows' commercial fishery also provided me with a greater awareness of how the community is responding to current development pressures in the region. The municipally-supported push for tourism, the development and sale of municipal lots (which was being driven by wealthy Albertans and which the majority of community members could not afford to purchase), the partnerships with Fort McMurray-based business interests, and to a lesser extent, the emphasis placed on training opportunities related to mining, heavy equipment operation, which I noticed in the community, gives some indication that Buffalo Narrows is already experiencing impacts from the shifting political economy in northwest Saskatchewan. One clear example of this was in the fate of the local fish plant (established in 1943 and its ownership passed down from generation to generation) where the local commercial fish agent/buyer had been restructuring his operation into a marina to service the growing number of tourists accessing the local lakes.

In the case of La Loche, the community's proximity to large-scale resource developments lashed-up with the durable character of this Métis community, which seemed to also contrast with the observed outcomes in Pinehouse. In La Loche it did not take long to notice that the issue of oil sands exploration was on the minds of community members and local leaders. At the time of my fieldwork, Oilsands Quest Inc. already identified La Loche as an 'impact community' along with the Clearwater River Dene First Nation (CRDFN), located just down the road from La Loche. The area immediately north of La Loche had recently seen significant government sales of exploration leases,

and I later found out in my fieldwork that Purepoint, a uranium exploration interest, was also in the process of engaging La Loche as an impact community. Oil sands exploration and potential large-scale development in the area expose a number of key challenges facing the community in terms of natural resource management and decision-making.

The situation surrounding oil sands exploration in La Loche highlighted two environmental governance-related processes, one of which is community involvement in an industry-led Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) between Oilsands Quest Inc. and La Loche. The other significant process was the Saskatchewan Environment-led Clearwater IFLUP, which was at the time being proposed for the region.

In the context of the IBA, one significant issue I became aware of was how municipal representatives appeared to dominate the negotiations with Oilsands Quest Inc. such that local Métis political entities, including the trapper's association and Métis Local members felt excluded from this community consultation and negotiation process. In addition, the majority of community members I spoke to about the Impact Benefit Agreement with Oilsands Quest had very little knowledge of what was being negotiated or how the talks with Oilsands Quest Inc. were proceeding. Thus, in this industry-led process, participation appeared quite exclusive and community members expressed to me their dissatisfaction with community-level information sharing and transparency. However, with the limited information I was able to obtain through my interviews with key respondents in the community, at the very least, the Impact Benefit Agreement presented La Loche leaders with an opportunity to voice concerns identified by municipal representatives, such as granting the community the power to independently monitor the environmental impacts of development and to secure more benefits from development (unlike the community's past experiences with the Cluff Lake Mine) as these two quotes demonstrate:

> In order for us to be prepared, we want to have our own way of monitoring the environment and that's a real big concern for us right now. We have a company in La Loche and the environment is one of the big, big issues on it. And that was what I was telling you about all the stakeholders and having our own and trying to get some sort of funding whether it be from these companies and the government to train our local people, maybe Grade 12 graduates or somebody, to go out and pursue these careers and to actually be able to go out into these areas and have on-the-job training, or whatever, and be able to come back and tell our people, from our own people, to say, this is the way it is. (La Loche community member)

So the community's determined not to make the same sort of mistakes for lack of better words than thirty years ago with new development and ensure that there's a lot more benefits derived for the community [ ] There's not a lot of opportunities other than some small or minimal employment opportunities during the exploration phase at this particular time. But obviously if it gets into its commercialization phase, it's a different story coupled with the fact that there's going to be another uranium mine also in the area. So the expectations are significant. The new approach in terms of generating opportunities is definitely here in La Loche. (La Loche community)

However, one local reaction I picked up on in La Loche concerning oil sands exploration and IBA negotiations with Oilsands Quest Inc. was how the community shared with Buffalo Narrows a situation of community divisiveness which appeared to create conflict among local stakeholder groups. I noticed a lack of information sharing and transparency between municipal leaders, Métis-affiliated institutions (e.g., fur block association, Métis Local), and community members. Respondents in La Loche continually confirmed this situation to me, expressing the following:

Yeah, it's hush-hush. They should have a meeting. Even if they set up a meeting and they'll say they'll do this and that and once people leave the building, [but] nothing's being done. It's just like those people are, you know, they talk for nothing [ ] It seems like they don't have time for us, their local people, and I don't know what the hell they do but they're never in town. (La Loche community member)

I noticed also that this situation was contributing to community members' perceptions of finding it difficult, based on past experiences, to support and trust their own elected leaders, as evident in this comment:

Not being very informative [ ] A lot of people begin to wonder what the hell's going on. And again, they become very distrustful of the village and council and mayor and so you know, they've tried to change it. They've got to have community meetings, they can't be afraid of their own people because if they are, what the hell is the use of being part of a process. You're scared to consult with your people then you're not actually a leader, you're a dictator. (La Loche community member)

In addition to this, I noticed conflict between La Loche and the CRDFN reserve, the other impact community that Oilsands Quest was in negotiations with. What was interesting in this context was the way in which the ongoing IBA negotiations perhaps prevented the formation of a partnership or alliance between the Métis community of La Loche and the CRDFN, which could be potentially beneficial for both La Loche and the CRDN, as one community member pointed out to me:

But I think seriously now that if these organizations can come together, the CRDFN, the town of La Loche, the Métis Local, and create some type of tripartite agreement

amongst those three and present a working plan to Oilsands Quest that we'll be able to achieve what they want. (La Loche community member)

Another significant community-level response or reaction to both oil sands exploration and the IBA negotiations was the types of discussions and strategies being offered by various people in the community. For instance, from the perspective of community leaders and politicians, it was apparent that the community was looking to the lessons of the past (i.e., especially concerning the Cluff Lake mine experience) as a means of dealing with the existing and future challenges presented by oil sands activity in the region. In this way La Loche seems determined to secure and ensure that local benefits flow to the community, that local community members be given the opportunity to monitor the environment independent of Oilsands Quest Inc., and that the community receives support and funding to prepare for future employment in the growing regional economy. More generally, my impression is that the issues surrounding oil sands exploration was forcing the community to weigh the perceived benefits of development with the kinds of impacts the community has already witnessed through the Cluff Lake Mine experience. In this instance, my understanding is that the community was in a difficult position to decide what is best for La Loche in the present and for future generations, as this community member quote describes:

Finding that balance. The elders in our community, the population of our elders is extremely low compared to the youth in our community. Our youth right now are one of the main issues because there's really not too much for them to do. A lot of youth nowadays do not want to go in the bush and go snare rabbits. They want to play their Nintendo, they want to go on the computer, they have all these things and our elders recognize that and they know what's best for the future of our kids in the community. To me, the elders are saying the youth are more important. And the way things are going, they want to see the next generation be prosperous, I guess if you want to say that. So a lot of the elders, when you talk to them, and they talk about these things that are happening up here, they don't want to see the land and everything destroyed. No. That's one main issue for them. But in the meantime, by saying that, they also want to see some development in the area because they want to see jobs available for community members. And for me, personally, if we want to move forward, we have to change and we have to learn to accept the things we cannot change. And have the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. (La Loche community member)

In the case of La Loche, I also found the issues surrounding Saskatchewan Environment's proposed Clearwater IFLUP to be quite significant given its mandate of dealing with regional land use planning and development in the province. What is interesting in this particular context is comparing the Pinehouse IFLUP experience in which a forestry-related development triggered the

IFLUP process, and the situation in the La Loche area in which the sale of exploration leases and exploratory oil sands activity preceded the implementation of a government-directed IFLUP process. From Pinehouse's experience, I learned that although this forum was not perfect, it did allow for local concerns to be expressed and that it solicited direct participation from Métis leaders and Métis resource users. However, in La Loche, I saw no evidence of any government action in terms of engaging the community in this particular process to improve local involvement in land use planning. Instead, it seemed to me that the provincial government, in this case Saskatchewan Environment, was choosing to stay inactive during the exploration phase of oil sands activity north of La Loche. This raised concerns in the community, particularly in terms of the government's lack of involvement in this critical stage of resource planning, policy, and decision-making at the community level. For instance, one local leader expressed the view that, "The [provincial] government in my opinion needs to do a lot more in the area to know what's going on and to have more of an active role." Similarly, another community member I interviewed was sceptical of the industry-led IBA process and made the comment that, 'Oilsands Quest, these are not the people we should be dealing with. We should be talking to government. Government is the one that gave out those permits under our nose'.

Opportunities and Constraints

In my interviews Métis community members shared with me their views on the kinds of opportunities and barriers that exist for Métis people in northwest Saskatchewan. Quite often respondents brought up the notion that jobs were scarce in the communities and so people perceived such projects as oil sands exploration and "the mines" as one of the more significant opportunities for Métis communities. I was told by most of the respondents in the communities that traditional forest-based livelihoods, with the exception of commercial fishing, were no longer viable economically, as these quotes demonstrate:

> Well, there's no opportunities left in the forest other than logging. You can gather berries and you can get other food from the forest [ ] for actual money now, there's nobody making money in the bush. (La Loche community member)

> Except for the commercial fishermen, I don't think there's much of anything going on [ ] We're not doing too bad. Everything is so expensive and sometimes you feel like giving up. But we hire a couple of guys and they make pretty good money from it. (Pinehouse community member)

It's a tough one here because all there really is basically is fishing and the mines. Other than that, there's nothing here. Even the tourism doesn't do enough in this community to really make any affect on a person's livelihood. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Although many felt that large-scale resource developments presented the potential for more jobs and economic benefits to flow into Métis communities, respondents commonly expressed the opinion that many community members lacked the skills or training demanded by these opportunities. Many in fact made the point that Métis communities in the region lack the resources or institutions that would make these opportunities more available to interested community members. Consequently, respondents also pointed out that another significant barrier in the context of industry-based employment was that community members often had to leave their communities to train or to 'chase where the money is'. And, as one respondent from La Loche pointed out, 'Once they leave the community to get training, they end up getting work elsewhere [ ] A lot of people tend to leave the community and don't come back'. In addition, I also heard from some respondents that in terms of earning a living, the notion of having to leave the community felt to them as though they were being forced into this situation, as this community member quote demonstrates:

I love it here. This is my home and I wish I had a good job but unfortunately [ ] This is where I want to be so I'm going to stay and come winter, maybe I'll be forced to go to Fort McMurray again. I don't know. I don't really relish the idea but I'm going to have to, I got to make a living somehow. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

Divide and Conquer

It was clear from both my interviews and from my fieldwork that natural resource-related issues and situations in the region were contributing to conflict and tension within the communities, which community members often described to me in terms of a 'divide and conquer' situation. For example, and in reference to past large-scale developments in the region, the following quote by one community member reflects a common understanding by many in my interviews concerning a pattern of 'divide and conquer':

This is the way it has been since day one, since the signing of the treaties. If the government and whoever wants the land or resources, they make sure that they throw a little bone at us and we're all fighting over it. We're involved, and in the meantime they're making all the big decisions. It's going on all the time. If something is going good and we're getting power, they don't like that. So they like us to fight each other [ ] If there's no fighting and things are good, they're going to make sure that they're going to start a fight and then we're not going to like each other, we're

not going to work together [ ] Divide and conquer. That's a powerful way to do business. And it works all the time. It's a dirty, powerful way. While we're fighting over that little piece of meat, the big piece of steak is getting cut up and is going down South. The same thing happened with the Cluff Lake Mine, right? (La Loche community member)

Throughout my three community cases I noted several 'divide and conquer' situations that were embedded at the various levels of environmental governance and within a range of development contexts. In La Loche's case, for example, the IBA process involving Oilsands Quest, the northern village of La Loche, and the CRDFN (the two impact communities identified by the exploration company) was creating tension among these two Aboriginal communities. I heard from one La Loche resident that in the context of the recent IBA negotiations with Oilsands Quest, "the CRDFN chief is not supporting our territory because he says [the land] is all Treaty eight". "We're not going to fight him," this same community member explained to me, "but if he wants to do a dirty deed behind our backs, then we've got to put a stop to it right away." This situation was described to me by another La Loche community member who made the comment that,

> I get this from the Reserve and it really upsets me at times, that the [CRDFN] figures they're here and we're third class citizens as far as Métis citizens are concerned in this province…the biggest thing is that we fight amongst ourselves…The CRDFN put up roadblock and we come over there as Métis people to support the roadblock and we're told that it's okay, we don't need you. That's, you know, that's our relationship. (La Loche community member)

This tension traced to oil sands development was not limited to the communities of La Loche and the CRDFN. I also found that community members in La Loche felt that the better off, or 'have' communities, like the central hub of Buffalo Narrows and other Métis communities in the region, might jeopardise the potential economic benefits flowing into their 'have-not' community. As one La Loche community member stated,

> Now with this oil sands exploration happening and all this boom that's taking place in our area, now we've got communities like Beauval, Ile-a-la Crosse and Buffalo Narrows that are trying to jump on the bandwagon [ ] And as a region and as a whole for us here, we're saying no. (La Loche community member)

I also became aware that within this oil sands exploration-IBA context La Loche's Métis Local was unable to participate in the proceedings. Moreover, with La Loche's LCA taking on the responsibility of IBA negotiations, during my fieldwork the majority of residents could not explain to me what in fact was being negotiated, which was also creating conflict between local leaders and community

members. Often I heard such statements as "the town mayor and council, they don't have time for us."

In Buffalo Narrows, I observed a similar set of 'divide and conquer' situations corresponding to tourism developments (promoting angling access which limits commercial fishing access) and in local development of municipal land lots which was encouraging 'outsider' investment and was discouraging (economically) locals from purchasing properties. As well, I also observed an historical conflict between the LCA and the Métis Local as one older community member commented to me: "our Métis [Local] and our [LCA] are not together. It's like there's always been two oppositions in this community…it's very frustrating because this has been going on for forty years." Such local divide and conquer situations were further dividing the community because, "then there's people in the middle saying well, who do I believe, what side do I go on?" and…

> Well, there's so much infighting amongst them, I don't want to get involved in their politics and fighting. If they would sit down and work together maybe I'd get more involved. But it seems like if you do get involved, it seems like you're choosing sides. (Buffalo Narrows community member)

In Pinehouse's field, although I witnessed very little in the way of local or internal divisions, I did find that the seven Métis community-owned Northwest Communities Wood Products was also caught up in a situation of divide and conquer:

> If the seven communities could get beyond themselves and actually see a partnership, it would be very successful [ ] If the seven communities could think beyond themselves, then it would move forward, but at this time, there's still a lot of misgivings, miscommunication, and a little bit of regional politics. (Pinehouse community member)

The interview data and observations in the field suggest that 'divide and conquer' situations were quite prevalent within the study region, and that they existed in complex social spaces and development contexts. As a result, in especially Buffalo Narrows and La Loche, this situation of 'divide and conquer' appeared to limit relationships of trust and cooperation and stifled community-level awareness of and opportunities to address local concerns.

Conclusion

The findings presented in this chapter provide a greater understanding of the contemporary relationship between Métis communities, the field of environmental governance, and the changes

taking place in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. In the following chapter I discuss the major findings and themes in the contexts of Métis agency, the structures that foster or inhibit locally-informed environmental governance, and the power relations embedded within the political economy of the study region.

Chapter 6: Discussion

Introduction
In this study I set out to examine the social spaces that Métis people occupy in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. This objective reflected one of the goals of the Otipimsuak Project to provide an analysis of contemporary natural resource management activities and policies in Métis communities of northwest Saskatchewan. In response, I designed my study to compare Métis participation in natural resource management and decision making across the Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows and La Loche. In choosing these particular communities as my three case studies, I also intended to examine the conditions of environmental governance by following the 'flow of action' of three attributes connected with northwest Saskatchewan's shifting political economy: (1) the introduction of oil sands exploration to the region, (2) the provincial land use and planning process called the Integrated Forest Land Use Management Plan (IFLUP), and (3) the contemporary experiences and perceptions of local Métis community members regarding natural resources and local land use conflicts.

On the one hand, I was interested in Métis agency – Métis people's perceptions of local and regional environment-society interactions (e.g.,, access to resources, cultural and traditional practices, etc.), their experiences and reflections related to resource management and large-scale development in the study region, and the opportunities and constraints that exist for Métis people to use, manage and influence decisions around local natural resources. On the other hand, I also wanted to address the influence of both the regional political economy and the style of provincial environmental governance on Métis culture and practice, particularly the durable social conditions affecting Métis agency in contemporary environment-society contexts. Within this dialectic between agency and structure, I draw attention to the power relations that are a part of regional environmental governance. My overall aim in this study was to examine Métis people's cultural and political relationships with their traditional land base and to offer insights on how Métis communities participate in a shifting political economy currently driven by large-scale resource development.

Summary of Research
The approach I employed in this study developed out of a general framework of thinking mutually about the sociological concepts of agency, structure, and power. My theoretical and conceptual

orientation to apply these concepts relationally by drawing from such works as Molotch *et al's* (2000) examination of 'lash-ups', Bourdieu's sociology of practice, as well as a selection of relational views on power such as Raik *et al's* (2008) 'realist' perspective. I used mixed qualitative methods and a comparative case study design to examine the field and social spaces of environmental governance in the Métis communities of Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche, all located in northwest Saskatchewan, Canada. In cooperation with a broader CURA research group, these communities were chosen as critical cases from the Otipimsuak Project study region based on the three broad criteria of geography, place-making features, and community connections and affiliations with the social forces I chose to highlight in this research.

My study grew out of two initial stages of data collection for the Otipimsuak Project, which consisted of reconnaissance, semi-structured interviews with Métis community members, key informants, and Saskatchewan Environment representatives in 2005 and revised, more focused, semi-structured interviews in 2006 to broaden our sample. By participating in both stages of this research through reading texts, coding data, and in 2006 by conducting fieldwork with another colleague, this empirical background significantly broadened my understanding and awareness to the study region, which also shaped my overall research design and the framing of my research objectives.

For my particular research, I spent ten days in the summer of 2007 living in each of the three communities interviewing Métis people from different walks of life (e.g., possessing varied habituses, such as commercial fishermen, elders, and town leaders) and engaging in participant and non-participant observation opportunities to collect my primary data. In addition, upon returning from the field I reviewed relevant news accounts, government documents, and accessed various related internet sites to supplement the data from my fieldwork with other sources. The results of this study are based on 30 semi-structured interviews with Métis community members from Pinehouse, Buffalo Narrows, and La Loche, nine semi-structured interviews with Saskatchewan Environment government representatives, direct observations from my summer of fieldwork in 2007, and also review of secondary data sources. I analyzed the interview data using a coding strategy to uncover emergent themes and to discover the data in reference to my theoretical and conceptual approach. In this chapter I offer my interpretations of the findings presented in chapter five and discuss areas of significance illuminated by my position of thinking relationally about agency, structure, and power.

Given the exploratory nature of my research topic and the broad scope of my approach (which consisted of recognising different social positions at the community level, focusing on three community case studies, and exploring three attributes currently shaping northwest Saskatchewan's environmental governance context), the themes that I uncovered in my findings highlighted various relationships between Métis agency, the structures of environmental governance, and the political economy in northwest Saskatchewan. Although Métis community members expressed concern over the environment and the pace of large-scale resource activities such as oil sands exploration, the strength of conviction of these concerns appeared to be connected to Métis people's individual habitus or social position. The majority of Métis people interviewed also expressed the view that Métis communities hold no power in the public arenas of regional and local environmental governance and that they have no say in terms of how resources are allocated and managed within their traditional land base. Another theme that emerged was that the future outlook and implications of the current political economy of Métis communities would engender a further mobilisation towards large-scale resource activities, negative ecological impacts to the land, and a continued decline in traditional and cultural practices tied to local natural resources.

Despite these commonalities observed in all three cases, another finding was that there was considerable variation between the communities in terms of the impact of the political economy and the conditions and processes of environmental governance, such as in how the IFLUPs proceeded at the community level. In this context factors such as proximity to resource activities and place-making features such as town 'character' influenced this observed variation. In terms of opportunities and constraints, Métis people commonly expressed the theme that one of the biggest constraints in their communities is fostering co-operation and capacity to work together on land use issues and conflicts. Métis people identified increased jobs in mining, oil development, and economic activities that would support these industries as the only significant opportunity for Métis communities given the current conditions of northwest Saskatchewan's political economy. Finally, the political contexts surrounding environmental governance contributed to the social tensions I witnessed both at the community level and at the regional level, which was often described by respondents in this study as a situation of 'divide and conquer.'

By attempting to understand the social spaces occupied by the Métis in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan, I wanted to explore in Bourdieu's terms the field of environmental governance and its implications on Métis communities. In doing so, I argue that the

findings above mutually draw attention to the agency-related, structure-related, and power-related features shaping and defining northwest Saskatchewan's contemporary field of environmental governance. Moreover, as Bourdieu's theory points out, this particular social field exists relationally with the political economy, which Bourdieu refers to as the field of power. Significantly, within the field of power the distribution of economic capital and cultural capital held by dominant groups and actors shapes the political contexts in which decisions are made and policies are legitimated. Consequently, the field of power or 'politics' influences and defines other 'weaker' fields such as the field of environmental governance.

One important objective in this chapter is to critically reflect upon the conditions of the field of environmental governance in relation to the field of power in northwest Saskatchewan. One way of approaching this is to think about environmental governance in relation to northwest Saskatchewan's political economy, particularly the political contexts to which natural resources are allocated and managed, and how these decisions are legitimated by dominant or powerful actors. Freudenburg's (2005) notion of privileged access and privileged accounts, as well as Freudenburg and Alario's (2007) insights on the technique of diverting attention will facilitate in piecing together this part of my discussion.

In the second part of this chapter I wish to discuss the Métis and the field of environmental governance as a social space where people, places, and things lash-up. Thus, I want to consider the field of environmental governance not only in relation to the field of power or the regional political economy, but also as a complex social entity or whole. In particular, I want to explore the culture that surrounds environmental governance and how Métis communities are embedded within this culture. In this interpretation, I wish to point out what appears to be some of the defining features of the culture of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan, which includes a social structure comprised of privileged access and privileged accounts, a culture in which Métis agency is stifled by contradictory opportunities and constraints, and a power-related dimension in which legitimate Métis concerns about environmental impacts and the pace of northern development are diverted from political agendas.

'Believing' then 'Seeing': Identifying the Privileged Access and Privileged Accounts in Northwest Saskatchewan

The signs of change are evident in the province of Saskatchewan and large-scale resource exploration and development appears to be driving this contemporary shift. For instance, a Saskatchewan Environment *2007/2008 Performance Plan* reported that

> Investment in mineral exploration has increased nine-fold since 2001. Saskatchewan's exploration expenditures have risen from just under $23 million in 2003, to an estimated record $208 million in 2006. Last year was also a new record for number of active mineral dispositions with more than 12 million hectares under disposition. This has increased demand on the Department for processing invoices, approvals and inspections… Various environmental protection and allocation processes administered by the Department may pose a drag on the provincial economy by adding costs and delays to economic growth and development opportunities. In general, Saskatchewan compares favourably to other Canadian and American jurisdictions in the level of co-operation and efficiency of its environmental approval processes. (Government of Saskatchewan, n.d., p. 18)

It is difficult to say, based on the statements above, how capable a government agency such as Saskatchewan Environment is in addressing the range of concerns Métis people have about resource development given the pressures that currently exist in the province. One of the key challenges, as one government respondent pointed out, is that

> Saskatchewan Environment is organized differently in a number of ways, such as how we structure the department. We don't have a ministry of forests, a ministry of energy, a ministry of…we have the Department of Environment. So, in theory, we all report to the same minister and, you know, some people say, "How do you do that?" Well, I mean, it's a challenge because we are responsible for protecting the environment and potentially developing it at the same time. But, everybody always has those conflicting mandates. (Government respondent)

In terms of natural resource development, Freudenburg (2005) remarks that there is often an inherent notion of 'necessity' – of jobs, progress, and the goods that humans have come to depend on – which follows certain resource allocations and resource users, such as industrial development projects and multinational corporations.

The problem with this, according to Freudenburg, is that these assumptions or privileged accounts often go unchallenged, and in a lot of cases resources are in fact distributed unequally to a privileged few. This is so, says Freudenburg, because the assumptions about development are often taken-for-granted, such as who gets access and who gets to make the decisions. In this section of my

discussion I draw from my research findings and the perspective of the Métis and begin to challenge the current trend expressed above concerning the distribution and allocation of natural resources in northwest Saskatchewan. Freudenburg recommends in these instances to 'believe' first off that privileged patterns of access to resources do in fact exist, and then to start 'seeing' how these privileged opportunities are made possible by privileged accounts. Therefore, in this section I attempt to make sense of the connections between oil sands exploration, provincially-led land use planning, and Métis participation in the field of environmental governance. In doing so, my analysis will suggest that the traditional land base of the rights-bearing Métis in northwest Saskatchewan appears to be governed more by privileged accounts (and the decisions and policies that correspond to such accounts) rather than formal governance processes. Moreover, I will demonstrate how, as Bourdieu claims, the field of power – politics - shapes 'weaker' fields such as the field of environmental governance.

To begin, what struck me most about the findings was how Métis concerns about environmental impacts, cultural and traditional impacts, and the pace of large-scale development were often *diverted* as Métis communities engaged in the political dimensions of environmental governance in the region. Their concerns also seemed to be quelled and delegitimized by a sense of the 'inevitability' of northwest Saskatchewan's precarious yet booming economy, as suggested in the way that Métis people reflected on the future outlook for the region and also in their experiences of feeling powerless. I reflect on these two contexts, diverting attention and feeling powerless, by drawing from the situations of 'divide and conquer' and from the *obvious* inconsistencies within the provincial IFLUP process in my community cases. Once again, referring back to the 'double diversion' of privileged access and privileged accounts, Freudenburg (2005) argues "that sociologists have good reason to invest greater effort in *analyzing* the "obvious" – paying attention to, and making greater efforts to question and deconstruct, the taken for granted" (p. 106).

In this study I focused partially on the flow of action surrounding land use planning in northwest Saskatchewan and how the IFLUP process engaged with Métis communities and other stakeholders. Taking Bourdieu's position, I felt it was necessary to understand how IFLUPs (i.e. part of the field of environmental governance) related to northwest Saskatchewan's political economy (the field of power). Although there appeared to be very little information concerning Saskatchewan's IFLUP process beyond what was available from Saskatchewan Environment sources, I discovered two seemingly ordinary accounts that offer alternative perspectives on how IFLUPs are

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tied to provincial politics and natural resource policies. First, the following news piece titled *Wall Urged To Develop Land Use Plan For Oil Sands* was reported by the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) on 31 January 2008:

> An academic is responding to recent comments made by Premier Brad Wall over the future of the oil sands in northwest Saskatchewan. Last week, the premier said he wasn't sure implementing a land use plan for the area was necessary before industrial development took place. Wall said over-regulation could potentially deter investment in the oil sands, and he doesn't want to block development before it even begins. However, Dr. Jeremy Rayner of the University of Regina says he is not sure Wall is seeing the picture clearly. Rayner believes creating an integrated land use plan for the region would make sense on a number of levels. He says it is very important to have a regulatory framework in place to look at the scale and intensity of any oil sands operation, and the kinds of long-term impacts it could have on the environment. Rayner adds it makes sense for government to encourage investment in its natural resources, and he can see the logic of tax incentives and royalty breaks. But he says government should know the pace at which these developments are to proceed. Otherwise, he argues the volatility of oil prices could prompt too much activity at one time -- which could have serious effects on the environment. (MBC 2008)

The greater significance of this obscure news bite is how it mentions statements made by Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall that closely resemble privileged accounts, and how the Premier connects these comments in the above story to oil sands development (i.e. 'over-regulation,' 'block development before it happens'). At this point, a pertinent question to raise is how a government-based land use planning process functions if it gives privileged access to land uses such as oil sands *prior* to that area being planned in conjunction with other locally valued land uses, such as the cultural and traditional land uses practiced by the rights-bearing Métis.

Secondly, in 2007 Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society (CPAWS) Saskatchewan chapter, an NGO that has played an advisory and advocating role in other land use plans in the province, released a brief report titled *Province not Prepared for 'Big Boom' Impacts in Northern Saskatchewan* (CPAWS 2007). The report criticised the current land use planning structure and process as being biased toward industrial development, which CPAWS claim undermines both the boreal forest environment and the livelihoods of northern Aboriginals. The report stated that,

> Government land use planning has been underway for about a decade in various parts of the Saskatchewan forest, but plans aren't taking care of the forest. In efforts to maximize economic development, government plans open huge areas up to industrial activity without incorporating sound conservation measures recommended by nature-based sciences and local wisdom. Government plans do not address what

the forest ecosystem is sensitive to and what it can stand. They do not address declining species (such as the woodland caribou and some songbirds). They do not consider impacts to indigenous cultures. They do not incorporate much-need protection measures. They do not address cumulative impacts. And they do not keep an eye on the future by asking how today's actions will impact the potential options and abilities of northern citizens to make a living and feed their families. (CPAWS 2007)

The report also remained critical of how provincially-led IFLUPs "place undue reliance on operational business plans and environmental impact assessments to take care of the forest." The greater significance of the CPAWS report is that it criticizes aspects of provincial environmental governance not in terms of politics per se, but in the actual processes used by government to make decisions about future and existing land uses. Therefore, it is worthwhile to compare the criticisms presented above with the flow of action surrounding IFLUPs from my cases. And so to add more depth to my discussion, what needs to be pieced together now are the privileged accounts made by Premier Wall, the privileged nature of oil sands exploration, and the social factors that contributed in drawing attention away from a Clearwater IFLUP (which was proposed for the area where Oilsands Quest Inc. had been carrying out test drilling north of La Loche).

What makes this particular situation even more interesting is that Oilsands Quest Inc. and the northern village of La Loche were negotiating an independent, corporation-led Impact Benefit Agreement (IBA) in the midst of all of these social forces playing out. Therefore, as suggested by the CPAWS report concerning government reliance on other non-government processes such as 'operational business plans,' it is also imperative to scrutinize how the IBA process contributed to the complexity I witnessed in northwest Saskatchewan.

In fact, the lead-up to La Loche signing an IBA with Oilsands Quest proved to create a 'divide and conquer' situation in the community of La Loche. Significant conflict existed, for example, between the Local Community Authority (LCA) and the Métis Local in La Loche. The source of this tension, according to my interviews and 'town talk', was twofold: (1) the government sale of exploration leases in the area, and (2) the way in which representatives of La Loche's Métis Local and other community members were shut out of IBA discussions between Oilsands Quest and the LCA. This story made the local headlines on 18 August, 2008:

A Métis leader in northwest Saskatchewan says he's disappointed his group wasn't part of a recent signing of an economic agreement in La Loche. The village recently

completed a deal with Oilsands Quest that will provide funds to the community for things like roads, playgrounds and a youth centre. Métis Local 39 leader Don Montgrand says he's fine with that -- he just wishes the Métis had been represented in talks between the company and the village. He says his local includes over 3,000 members and he wants to make sure they're fully represented in agreements like this. Montgrand, who is also president of the N-19 fur block, says the trappers also should have been included in the signing. (MBC 2008)

Moreover, the majority of residents could not explain to me what in fact was being negotiated by the LCA on behalf of the community, which was also creating conflict between local leaders and the community as a whole. As a result, in La Loche this situation of 'divide and conquer' severely limited relationships of trust and cooperation and stifled community-level awareness of and opportunities to address the wide range of local concerns. For one thing, the level of tension and conflict in the community successfully diverted any attention away from discussion or awareness of the obvious inaction of provincial government in terms of (1) selling exploration leases to corporations like Oilsands Quest without meaningfully consulting with Métis people in the affected areas, and (2) also in terms of bypassing a formal land use planning process, relying instead on IBAs. In addition, although community members like Don Montgrand (and the traditional land users he represented) and others in the community were initially frustrated by the lack of consultation surrounding oil sands development in the region, the impact of the IBA seemed to shift the community's focus away from oil sands as a *potential* development and instead into an issue of how the community could benefit from the *inevitability* of oil sands production in northwest Saskatchewan's future.

To support this claim of diverting attention even further, it is necessary to examine the obvious differences between Pinehouse and La Loche in terms of the land use planning process and how IFLUPs unfolded in these two communities. In the case of Pinehouse, the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP was triggered when Northwest Communities Wood Products (NCWP) - a Métis-based forest company representing seven community stakeholders - was preparing to negotiate a Forest Management Agreement (FMA) with Saskatchewan Environment (Saskatchewan Environment 2000). In a background government document, it stated that "Since [NCWP] has expressed interest for an FMA, [Saskatchewan Environment] has initiated an Integrated Land Use Plan" (ibid., p. 7). When I arrived in Pinehouse to conduct fieldwork the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP was in its fifth stage – review of the draft plan – and considerable time and energy had gone into the traditional land use component of this land use planning process (approximately four to five years ongoing). Again, drawing from the same background document, a key aspect of the process was that this was "the

first time that Saskatchewan Environment has formalized a process where a community-based Traditional Use Study has been an integral component of the planning process" (ibid., p. 4). Meanwhile, NCWP had to abide to the conditions of their agreement with Saskatchewan Environment and when I asked community members about the state of NCWP, I typically heard such comments as,

> It was in 1999 when NCWP took over. Weyerhaeuser gave up their FMA and at that time [the participating Métis communities] saw the opportunity…we were going to put a lot of people to work. So in a way, for myself, I was kind of happy for that. That was in 1999. Then 2000 rolled around, and 2001 rolled around, and 2003 where it got worse and worse and worse instead of any better. I haven't seen ten men go to work yet.

This reported dissatisfaction likely relates to the other comments in our interviews suggesting that NCWP had created a situation of division among the seven participating Métis communities.

In contrast, a different situation emerged in La Loche, particularly in terms of privileged access to resources, involvement between Saskatchewan Environment and Métis stakeholders, and, importantly, the timing of the proposed Clearwater IFLUP. During my research I found different sources that made reference to a proposed land use planning process in the La Loche region called the Clearwater IFLUP. In fact, it was an IFLUP identified in Saskatchewan Environment's presentation titled "Integrated Land Use Planning" delivered at a workshop in January 2007 (Saskatchewan Environment 2007b). It was mentioned in Saskatchewan Northern Affair's *2006-2007 Annual Report*: "an integrated economic development/land use planning process was initiated in the Clearwater-La Loche area" (Saskatchewan Northern Affairs n.d., p. 8). The proposed Clearwater IFLUP was also mentioned by key Saskatchewan Environment staff interviewed in this study, such as the following government participant who said, "we do have other planning processes in the mix that will include Métis people. The Clearwater planning area, for example, will include the village of La Loche for down the road." However, the proposed Clearwater IFLUP has so far ended up as just that – proposed. In fact, whereas in the beginning of my research government IFLUP maps included the Clearwater IFLUP, approximately two years later the Clearwater IFLUP had been removed from Saskatchewan Environment's agenda altogether. Thus, we need to briefly consider the privileged access that Oilsands Quest Inc. maintained throughout the duration of this study, which was arguably the result of diverting attention away from any meaningful discussion of land use planning

(e.g., bringing government, industry, and Métis communities together in a particular governance forum) in an area projected to have extensive and cumulative impacts by large-scale development.

The main issue that community leaders and community members discussed in my interviews in La Loche pertained to oil sands exploration and the on-going IBA negotiations involving Oilsands Quest Inc. and the northern village of La Loche. Aware of this, I repeatedly asked community members if they had heard of land use planning or the proposed Clearwater IFLUP and surprisingly only two respondents said that they had, but appeared to hold few insights about the status of this management/consultation process, such as if or when it might be implemented. Meanwhile, Oilsands Quest Inc. continued on with its exploration activities (involving a permanent camp, road and infrastructure construction, and digging test sites) north of La Loche, which the company gained access to by purchasing exploration leases or 'rights' to access resources. Unlike NCWP's situation of waiting for the approval of the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP, since 2004 Oilsands Quest Inc. has appeared to receive fast-tracked exploration permits regulatory approvals for exploratory drilling, followed by rapid construction of various infrastructure land disturbances (camps, roads, air strips) related to oil sands exploration activity. Although these land uses were approved by Saskatchewan Environment, the majority of Métis community members were both concerned and aware of the ecological impacts resulting from oil sands exploration, not to mention their concerns about the benefit stream of the future commercial development of these resources. Community members also expressed frustration with the province's lack of consultation for this particular resource development context, or, at the very least, any communication or opportunities to discuss the future of development or land use planning in this part of northwest Saskatchewan.

What appears to be the case is that provincial land use planning (and consultation) is not particularly driven by a set of formal procedures. For example, in one government interview we heard that *discretion* was perhaps the key criterion in the context of land use planning and consultation relationships with Métis people:

> companies have to show how they have taken Métis interests into consideration. It's up to the minister, through this department, to decide whether an industry's actions are sufficient or not, and whether or not consultation has been adequate. If a concern has been raised, the company has to demonstrate how they are going to address the concern, and then the government decides whether the process is adequate or not. So that is the general policy. It's a standard feature of the planning process to consult with communities about their interests, and traditional use always comes up…by and

large, corporations are sophisticated enough to come up with ways to solve the issues with the community. Not always, sometimes they can't. Sometimes the government has to weigh in and say this is the way it will be. (Government respondent)

In light of this, one of the key observations in this study was to see how Saskatchewan Environment and the IFLUP process each played a significantly different role in the communities of Pinehouse and La Loche. In the case of Pinehouse, Saskatchewan Environment staff were directly involved in the various stages of the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP; the process itself was set into motion under the conditions stated in existing forest management laws, and the process followed formal procedures. In La Loche, however, oil sands exploration activity gained privileged access to resources, and the cumulative effect of privileged accounts evident in Premier Wall's statements, of discretionary land use processes, and a lack of community-level involvement on the part of Saskatchewan Environment contributed in diverting any attention away from such processes as the Clearwater IFLUP. Thus, La Loche efforts to balance environmental, social, and economic values, and resolve any conflict were thwarted by Saskatchewan government zeal to press on with development. To revisit the comment made by one government respondent about Saskatchewan Environment's 'conflicting mandate', my impression is that provincial politics and the corresponding field of power dominated the flow of action within field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan, which led to the outcomes described above.

In La Loche, the discretionary power of the Minister of Environment and the absence of any formal provincial land use planning process provided the ideal opening for Oilsands Quest Inc. to set the agenda in the region, given the current structure of IBA negotiations in Canada. IBAs tend to focus on the immediate economic benefits of development projects, which can prevent a deeper understanding of long-term social impacts of development and thwart subsequent objections to such projects (Caine and Krogman 2010). The economic imperatives of job creation and revenue sharing overshadowed much of the other concerns raised by community members in our interviews, such as the need for a community-based environmental monitoring process, or having a say in the pace of development in the region, and the perceptions of 'divide and conquer' tactics community members observed between themselves and with other adjacent communities. In Pinehouse, on the other hand, although there was no real sense of 'divide and conquer' aside from local impressions of NCWP, there still remained the issue of powerlessness given that most community members perceived the Pinehouse-Dipper IFLUP to encourage further large-scale development in the area.

This particular account was not the only situation in which I observed the themes of politics and privilege, conflict and division, and a sense of powerlessness in the spaces of environmental governance in my study. In Buffalo Narrows, we observed a similar pattern emerge in the context of their local commercial fishery. In this example, privileged access and privileged accounts helped to divert attention by creating a situation that community members consistently identified as 'divide and conquer'. What is common in these situations is that the presence of privileged resource users tended to correspond to privileged accounts and taken-for-granted assumptions.

Culture and Métis Participation in Environmental Governance in Northwest Saskatchewan
During my research I was told by a community member in Buffalo Narrows that the internal divisions in Métis communities and the situations of 'divide and conquer' are a normal part of everyday life, 'it's just a part of our culture,' he explained. What struck me about this comment is the perception that these situations of conflict are a durable feature in Métis culture and a 'normal' condition of natural resource management in the region. To what extent do Métis communities take-for-granted the everyday experiences and cultural processes connected with natural resources in northwest Saskatchewan? This made me reflect more critically on the idea of culture, particularly the social forces and elements that produce and/or maintain cultural distinctiveness, and also how culture in turn shapes and defines social action, social structure, and power relations in society. And, more specifically, how does culture shape Métis participation in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan? In this discussion I wish to interpret the field of environmental governance as a cultural effect that shapes how Métis people participate in, and relate to, provincial natural resource management and decision making. Before outlining three of the defining features of the culture that surrounds environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan, I briefly revisit ideas already discussed that draw attention to the cultural dimensions of agency, structure, and power relationships.

One aspect about culture that the themes and findings in this study have drawn my attention to is the relationship between place and culture. Molotch *et al's* (2000) work emphasises how places obtain their 'character' and 'tradition' through lash-ups and structuration (i.e. structure and agency). The authors propose the view that places differ and persist "because what is distinctive is not a list of attributes but the way these attributes lash-up and how the structuration process moves the resulting conjunctures forward through time" (p. 816). This approach helps to identify how culture is attached to the history of place through the 'empirical traces' of character and tradition. For Molotch *et al* the

unfolding of history occurs in ways similar to Bourdieu's understanding of structure and agency. That is, actors continually adapt and make choices based on the enabling and constraining contexts of both lash-ups and structuration; this action or human agency can either maintain or alter the ensuing character and tradition of place. In Molotch *et al's* words,

> A structure does not stand distinct from action (i.e., as a separate "variable" in the determination of human behaviour) but itself arises through human action, including mundane practices. In their structure-making actions, humans draw, per force, from existing conditions – that is from structures resulting from their prior actions. Thus, as people take action they make structures, and every action is both enabled and constrained by the prior structures. (Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 793)

One important implication of the 'rolling inertia' of place is the power effect it has on the less-privileged actors who are part of these social spaces. On this issue of power, Molotch et al. claim that,

> For local individuals and groups with only weak resources, the weight of accumulating conjunctures, and the routines they imply, set the terms for adjustments that must be made – however unhealthy, inegalitarian, or otherwise troubling these adjustments are. We thus reach, after a roundabout route, a possible contribution to ongoing Gramscian discussions of how hegemony works. It is not that a set of particular substantive ideas "take hold" in a place and "drug the masses" (to caricature a Marxian view), but rather that so much can and does occur as people react to arrangements that appear normal. (Molotch *et al* 2000, p. 817)

My interpretation of the statement 'the weight of accumulating conjunctures, and the routines they imply' is that cultural symbols, beliefs, and processes have a way of subtly making the underlying structures of social life appear as accepted or taken-for-granted. And so when Métis people expressed to me that they feel powerless in natural resource decision making, or that local tensions are expected in the struggle over valued resources, or that the future outlook in Saskatchewan will continue to impact the Métis in negative ways, these perceptions represent statements about the character and tradition of environmental governance as experienced by Métis people over time. Based on the findings in this study, I argue that in the culture which mediates the field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan, the social structure and pattern of privileged access and privileged accounts evident in the region, the contradictory opportunities and constraints confronted by Métis agency in the field of environmental governance, and the way that powerful actors and power relations divert attention in Métis communities all add up to significant

'conjunctures' that imply the 'routine' sense of powerlessness and frustration felt by Métis people in resource management contexts.

Approaching culture somewhat differently, Bourdieu makes the claim that over time actors develop a practical sense of the world, which therefore renders the conditions and outcomes of social life to appear 'natural' or the 'way things are'. In Bourdieu's view, however, this situation engenders a lot more than simply actors becoming accustomed to the routine social structures of culture. As Swartz (1997) explains

> The focus of [Bourdieu's] work, therefore, is on how cultural socialization places individuals and groups within competitive status hierarchies, how relatively autonomous fields of conflict interlock individuals and groups in struggle over valued resources, how these social struggles are refracted through symbolic classifications, how actors struggle and pursue strategies to achieve their interests within such fields, and how in doing so actors unwittingly reproduce the social stratification order. Culture, then, is not devoid of political content but rather is an expression of it. (Swartz 1997, pp. 6-7)

Bourdieu's ideas concerning symbolic power and symbolic violence are especially important to consider in this study given that the field of environmental governance, as I have argued in the previous section, is in many ways shaped and legitimated by politics and taken-for-granted, unchallenged social structures. Bourdieu's work illuminates how the symbolic dimensions of culture produce 'misrecognized' contexts whereby dominated actors accept their own conditions of domination as a natural part of life. Swartz's (2008) discussion helps to explain this notion of symbolic power and violence:

> Bourdieu's symbolic power does not suggest "consent" but "practical adaptation" to existing hierarchies. The "practical adaptation" occurs pre-reflectively as if it were the 'thing to do," the natural response in existing circumstances. The dominated misperceive the real origins and interests of symbolic power when they adopt the dominant view of the dominant and of themselves. They therefore accept definitions of social reality that do not correspond to their best interests. Those "misrecognized" definitions go unchallenged as appearing natural and justified. (Swartz 2008, p. 7)

My impression of the above analysis in the context of the themes and findings in this study is that Métis people do experience the field of environmental governance as an outcome of the exercise of symbolic power. However, based on my findings I would not suggest completely that Métis people 'misrecognise' or 'misperceive' the 'real' economic and political interests that underlie social practices in local and regional resource management contexts. Throughout my cases Métis people

identified powerful actors, whether local politicians, outsiders, government agents, and industry representatives, and their political involvement in the conflicting outcomes of resource management situations. For example, in Buffalo Narrows, community members were more than aware of the community divisions brought on by the struggle between local fishermen, business interests, local politics, Saskatchewan Environment biologists, and even the influence of Fort McMurray visitors and property buyers to define the community's relationships with the local fishery. Métis people also demonstrated awareness of the pattern of privileges that exist in natural resource management, such as how in all three communities Métis people were strongly dissatisfied in the way that industry is perceived to be granted preferential access to resources by government processes and policies. In this interpretation, however, I am not suggesting misrecognition, misperception or acceptance of dominant structures by Métis groups and actors does not happen; it just doesn't appear to happen as clearly as described in Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence.

My interpretation is that the techniques of diverting attention and the situations that draw attention to other land prospects help to mask the underlying symbolic dimensions of environmental governance, thus achieving a similar outcome as symbolic violence. In this sense, then, the Métis experience the effects of symbolic violence, but it is not that Métis people are "duped" or that they are unconscious of the politics and power behind resource management in northwest Saskatchewan. Rather, I believe that it is the combined effect of factors that define the culture of environmental governance that most strongly encourages Métis people to 'accept' the powerlessness, the community divisions, the lack of opportunities in resource management, and all of the other circumstances that are embedded into participating in natural resource management. Swartz (1997) situates symbolic violence in a similar context when he comments that, "according to Bourdieu, actors by and large "mis-recognize" how cultural resources, processes, and institutions lock individuals and groups into reproducing patterns of domination" (p. 9-10). Thus, it is not the case per se that Métis people are unaware of their real interests or of the taken-for-granted structures around them. Part of the challenge is that in many instances attention is diverted when powerful actors control the agenda in resource management, and set a trajectory in motion.

This is why it is also important to connect Freudenberg's (2005) understanding of privileged access and privileged accounts and Freudenburg and Alario's (2007) work on 'diversionary reframing' to my discussion above. Concerning the 'double diversion' of privileged access and privileged accounts, Freudenburg maintains that this has the overall effect of legitimizing the social

inequalities around the distribution of resource rights and access. In the case of La Loche, I showed how privileged accounts surrounding oil sands development and land use planning contributed to Oilsands Quest's privileged entry into the field of resource management in the region. Within the flow of action surrounding oil sands exploration local conflict and 'divide and conquer' situations emerged, which helped to deflect and shift local attention away from provincial land use planning opportunities and meaningful consultation with Métis communities prior to the start of oil sands exploration in the region. So, whereas in the context of the 'double diversion' legitimacy was produced externally (i.e., government accounts), in the context of local tensions, community divisions, and the IBA process, legitimacy around oil sands development was maintained internally by drawing Métis people's attention away from the events which led to Oilsands Quest's privileged opportunity in northwest Saskatchewan. The effect of symbolic violence can be appreciated in this instance in the way that social inequalities and domination become legitimated, and also in the way that Métis interests are diverted because of internal conflict and social tensions. The result of these processes is an acceptance of the conditions of environmental governance, which over time blends into the character and tradition of place as taken-for-granted, unchallenged contexts.

Still, what is also significant in my study is the *obvious*. That is, Métis engagement in the field of environmental governance, based on my findings and observations, engenders 'divide and conquer' situations, powerlessness, diversionary reframing, and other negative situations that deter Métis agency in resource management and decision making. The implication is that these outcomes constrain Métis people's capacities to address the full range of resource-related concerns in their communities. Perhaps, then, the critical aspect of Métis 'acceptance' of social inequality and domination in the field of resource management rests in the very fact that although environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan is intended to be a fair and equal process for all participants (as suggested for example by provincial land use planning or by the assumptions built into IBAs in Canada), it really is not. In other words (and to challenge unquestioned assumptions), the field of environmental governance instead mediates symbolic violence in Métis communities given that it is a social space that ultimately legitimates historical and on-going social inequality and domination at the intersection between the interests of Métis people, the governing responsibilities of provincial government, and the economic and symbolic power held by large corporations.

To close this discussion I outline three critical features in the culture that surrounds environmental governance which are defining and shaping how Métis people participate in

contemporary natural resource management in northwest Saskatchewan. One of the main ideas I focused on in this chapter was Freudenburg's (2005) notion of the 'double diversion' of privileged access and privileged accounts. Part of the challenge faced by Métis communities in the field of environmental governance in the region is the prevalence of a durable social structure of privileged resource users supported by taken-for-granted discourses. This structure significantly shapes and defines Métis participation given that it engenders second and third dimensional power effects (Lukes 2005) in Métis communities. In terms of the second dimension of power or 'power as constraint' (Raik *et al* 2008), the La Loche case study showed that privileged government-based accounts and discretionary land use planning effectively mobilised a bias against the adoption of an initial land use planning process, and further on as the situation evolved into an IBA process, Oilsands Quest held the advantage of controlling the agenda in negotiations with select La Loche politicians. In both instances certain issues held by the Métis (e.g., initial consultations with government, land use planning, and the pace of oil sands development) were effectively organized out of the politics and decision making surrounding oil sands development. The third dimension of power, according to Raik *et al*, involves 'power as consent production', and as I have argued above, this appeared to be one of the outcomes in La Loche. In Buffalo Narrows, the observed conflict over the uses and values of the local fishery seemed to suggest that perhaps tourism and the potential for 'economic growth' were being privileged over the traditional commercial fishing livelihoods that helped to establish and support this Métis community. Thus, as Raik *et al* point out in their work, the implications of second and third dimension power on Métis agency are that the full range of interests of the Métis are not adequately recognized and addressed, and that power asymmetries become institutionalized and embedded into everyday practices.

Another key challenge in the culture of environmental governance from the perspective of the Métis is how the opportunities and constraints experienced by the Métis in resource management stand in contradiction to each other. The impact of this on Métis agency can be seen by connecting the themes in this study. Métis people perceived their biggest constraint to be the community divisions and their resulting inability to work co-operatively on local and regional resource management issues. Yet, on the other hand, Métis people felt that in the current field of environmental governance the only significant opportunity was economic-related, particularly in terms of benefitting from a large-scale resource economy (commercial forestry, conventional oil and gas, uranium, oil sands). Significantly, however, one of the key sources of internal divisions in Métis

communities, as I have shown, arises out of the political and symbolic dimensions of large-scale resource contexts. At the community level, the opportunities of jobs, investment in community services and infrastructure, and other related benefits also come at a cost, such time use shifted away from traditional livelihood activities, environmental impacts, as well as tacit acceptance of industry-based and government-based terms in decision making and management. Another theme that connects to this contradiction is the fact that Métis communities are comprised of actors with different and often opposing habituses, which further instigates local tensions over valued resources. Thus, in my view, Métis agency is stifled by the significant contradictions that are embedded in the culture of environmental governance and natural resource management in northwest Saskatchewan.

Finally, in the culture that surrounds the field of environmental governance, Métis agency is significantly defined by the power-related contexts that divert attention away from attempts to balance economic interests and development pressures with concerns about the environment and the current pace of resource development and future outlook in northwest Saskatchewan. I showed that this was the case as Métis communities and local leaders engaged in the environmental governance-related processes tied to oil sands development. However, this also appears to be the case at the community level as 'divide and conquer' situations helped to divert attention away from actual issues related to development and turned the focus instead towards criticizing the legitimacy of opposing actors involved in local politics and decision-making.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Introduction
The main objective of the Otipimsuak Project is to increase the overall capacity of Métis communities to participate meaningfully in the regional economy of northwest Saskatchewan. Contributing to the Natural Resource Policy Review component of the Otipimsuak Project, my comparative case study examined the social spaces that Métis people occupy in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. Working from this perspective and applying qualitative methods, I explored the agency and power of three Métis communities in relation to the structure of provincial resource management and the social forces emergent in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan. As much as I was interested in understanding contemporary Métis experiences with the land and their participation and engagement in provincial resource management, I also wanted to pay attention to key structures and forces acting upon the field of environmental governance, such as the IFLUP process and oil sands exploration in the study region. These objectives were guided by my theoretical position of thinking mutually about agency, structure, and power, and applying this conceptual understanding to the study of environmental governance.

The Métis, Social Space, and Environmental Governance
In this study I have demonstrated the importance of seeing environmental governance as a social space in which people, places, and things (such as the physical environment) lash-up. Applying concepts and ideas from place-making theory, structure and agency theory, and power theory, my work has attempted to gain insights about the connections between Métis agency, the structure of resource management in northwest Saskatchewan, the influence of local and regional politics and the political economy, and the power relations embedded within this particular field of environmental governance.

One important outcome of this research is that my approach encouraged a relational look at the social positions of provincial government, industry players and Métis communities in regional environmental governance. Significantly, this study sheds light on how these groups (and their positions) relate to each other in contemporary natural resource-related lash-ups and what this relationship means in terms of Métis agency and power in regional environmental governance. An important aspect of this study has been Pierre Bourdieu's understanding that in any given social

space, groups and actors occupy distinct positions within that given space. These social positions are shaped and made durable by such key factors as the volume and types of capital held by actors (i.e., economic capital, cultural capital, etc.), the nature of the struggle over resources and different kinds of capital, and the power relations that legitimate how actors and resources are arranged and distributed in the physical and social world. Treating environmental governance in this way thus facilitated a focus on Métis agency while at the same time not losing sight of the structures and social forces that influence environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan.

My findings confirm what previous studies have pointed out about Métis people in the region, which is that the Métis in northwest Saskatchewan occupy subordinate positions in the field of environmental governance. As a result, whether it is in accessing resources, participating in land use planning and future development, or making decisions about how resources are managed, Métis agency is significantly constrained because of their collective and individual subordination in the social spaces of provincial resource management. Collectively, the rights-bearing Métis of northwest Saskatchewan continue to hold no externally recognized authority over natural resource management in the region, nor do Métis communities have any legal control over natural resources and 'outsider' land uses within their respective fur blocks. Moreover, at the community level, Métis agency in resource management appears to be further compromised by the fact that traditional land user groups such as commercial fishermen, trappers, and other community members at large tend to be excluded from any meaningful participation in regional environmental governance. A key issue in this context is that 'outsiders' appear to be consulting predominantly with Local Community Authority (LCA) representatives, which is problematic given that town mayors and elected councils (LCA) only hold jurisdiction over the municipality and not the entire fur block area. Thus, it became apparent in this study that certain groups within the community, mostly LCA elected actors and local business leaders, seemed to be more 'involved' in situations related to natural resource management. Another important aspect of this situation is that the people in the community who continue to rely on the forest for their livelihood and who have the strongest concerns about development trends in the region are essentially missing at the very least from community consultation opportunities.

The situation above also points to another key outcome of this study, which is that in terms of agency, environmental concerns, and perceptions about the future, the differences that existed in the community (i.e., because of community members' habitus) tended to draw the focus away from the commonalities in and among the Métis communities of northwest Saskatchewan. I learned in this

study that the majority of Métis people in the region feel powerless in the face of large-scale resource development, and that many are deeply concerned about the ecological and social impacts of current resource management. Many of the study participants held that the future of northwest Saskatchewan will continue to erode the traditional bush economy that has supported the Métis. However, as I began to look more closely at the different social positions that various Métis actors occupy in the spaces of environmental governance, another picture emerges: as much as there is evidence that Métis communities are united in their *overall* concerns (e.g., powerlessness, concern for the environment, cultural losses), there is also strong evidence of community fragmentation and a lack of co-operation within and among the communities. Interestingly, Métis people in this study understood this internal conflict as an 'old trick' used by outsiders called 'divide of conquer'.

Divide and conquer was a key issue that Métis people identified in this study, and has important implications for understanding Métis agency in environmental governance. Based on this study, Métis people seemed aware that natural resource-related lash-ups have a tendency to produce situations of divide and conquer. Recall that the findings in this study showed that a range of attitudes about natural resources exist in Métis communities, which coincides with the various roles and spaces that Métis community members occupy. Add to these apparent differences the fact that Métis people felt a lack of trust with community consultation processes and negotiations, and also that internal divisions and local power struggles have been problematic in the past between, for example, LCA and Métis Local groups in communities like Buffalo Narrows and La Loche. Thus, when corporations like Oilsands Quest engage with a community such as La Loche and begin to negotiate an exploration benefit agreement with the LCA, this tends to accentuate the differences that exist in the community. At the same time, the overall concerns that Métis people have about development, the environment, and their culture often become overshadowed by local internal conflicts. As a result, it is as though communities become caught up in their differences (i.e., development versus conservation, traditional economies versus large-scale resource economies), which diverts attention away from the *shared* concerns that Métis people expressed in this study. Thus, I argue that despite these shared concerns about development, the land, and traditional Métis practices, the politics of environmental governance Métis communities make it difficult and challenging for Métis communities to co-operate to try to resolve natural resource-related conflicts in the region.

Molotch *et al's* (2000) insights on the effect of place and lash-ups offer an additional perspective in which to better understand 'divide and conquer' situations and Métis powerlessness in environmental governance. Molotch *et al* claim that 'weaker' actors in a given place are often most vulnerable to the effects of place-making. This vulnerability comes as a result of lash-ups that over time become so durable that they form 'traditions'. Applying this idea to the Métis of northwest Saskatchewan, my research suggests that divide and conquer situations have been so prevalent in regional environmental governance contexts that Métis people regard it as something of a tradition. This perspective on the effect of place-making has helped me to interpret the comment made by one Buffalo Narrows community member that community divisions and infighting is 'just part of our culture'. Instead, Molotch et al. explain that traditions, be they hierarchical, unjust, and so forth, take hold in places to such an extent that they can appear as everyday normal occurrences to local actors who have become accustomed to certain kinds of lash-ups. Accordingly, I conclude that environmental governance-related processes have played, and continue to play, a significant role in making divide and conquer situations a durable constraint on Métis agency in provincial resource management.

John Law's idea of 'power/effects' finds common ground with Molotch *et al's* claim regarding how traditions take shape in particular places, which also adds to our understanding of Métis agency and power in regional environmental governance. The significance of Law's notion of 'power/effects' is that no matter how power is defined in a certain context (i.e., as a capacity, as something that can be stored, etc.), the key point is to also draw attention to the stable network of relations that allows for different forms of power to emerge and/or exist. To use Freudenburg's (2005) work as an example, the double diversion of privileged access and privileged accounts can contribute significantly to a durable social structure of disproportionality in natural resource management contexts. Consequently, this kind of situation sets up a stable network of relations in which dominant groups and actors are capable of defining the rules of environmental governance and shaping the unchallenged legitimacy of environmental and discursive privileges. The danger with this form of symbolic power is that it is, according to Bourdieu, the most effective way that dominant groups can impose their definition of the social world (Sallaz and Zavisca 2007). At this point, what I want to emphasize is that the powerlessness of the Métis must be placed in the context of natural resource-related lash-ups found in northwest Saskatchewan. In this way, Métis agency and power in provincial resource management is more appropriately understood as an outcome of the

kinds of lash-ups currently playing out in the field of environmental governance. So, although it is important to confirm, as Beckley and Korber's (1996) study concluded, that Métis leaders and community members essentially occupy 'advisory' roles in natural resource management (i.e. not having any power in actual decision making), my study reveals other dimensions of Métis powerlessness that deserves greater attention. One key dimension has to do with the structure of provincial resource management in northwest Saskatchewan and its effect on Métis people and their communities.

Provincial Resource Management and Environmental Governance
Authority and decision making power are no doubt important in influencing the outcome of a situation, such as large-scale development proposals or being able to access natural resources in a given area. However, it is also important to consider the factors and events leading up to pivotal decisions and the social contexts where these situations play out. One important conclusion about the structure of resource management in northwest Saskatchewan is that although provincial policies and processes are intended to 'balance' environmental values and land uses, my findings showed that provincial resource management was having the opposite effect in northwest Saskatchewan. By focusing attention on the IFLUP process and oil sands exploration in the region, my study points out that provincial land use planning is not driven by formal guidelines. Moreover, it appears that local place-making features and lash-ups can propel different outcomes concerning provincial resource management processes, as was the case in Pinehouse and NCWP's bid for a FMLA in comparison with La Loche and the potential for oil sands development in the region.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion from this study is that the structure of provincial resource management in northwest Saskatchewan involves what Freudenburg (2005) calls the 'double diversion', in which industry players such as large-scale corporations enjoy privileged access to resources in the traditional territory of the rights-bearing Métis. Critics might overlook this conclusion and claim that industry players such as Oilsands Quest Inc. played within the rules, purchasing exploration leases from the provincial government, and acquired access to resources in a fair manner. Although this might be the case, this is only part of the story. What's missing from this account is the way in which Freudenburg's second part of the 'double diversion', the privileged accounts, works to legitimate the current social structure of resource management in northwest Saskatchewan. One of the key privileged accounts in this study was Premier Brad Wall's position to allow oil sands exploration activities to proceed in the absence of any land use planning process,

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which came at a time when many Métis people in the region expressed frustration over the government sale of exploration leases. Wall's comment also coincided with the fate of the 'proposed' Clearwater Integrated Forest Land Use Plan, which would eventually disappear from Saskatchewan Environment's future IFLUP responsibilities in the region. Thus, it is important to factor in the politics and power relations of regional environmental governance to really understand Métis agency and power in provincial resource management.

Politics, Power, and Environmental Governance: Two Very Different Stories
In this study I have provided evidence demonstrating that large-scale corporations such as Oilsands Quest enjoy privileged access to resources despite the Government of Saskatchewan's current position regarding the duty to consult with Aboriginal people in the province. Recall that their consultation policy is guided by the idea that consultation must occur *prior* to "any legislation, policy, program or other activity that could adversely affect Treaty or Aboriginal rights" (Government of Saskatchewan 2006, p.2). In my interviews and discussions Métis people were frustrated with the government's treatment of Métis rights in the study region, especially in the way in which government has encouraged exploration activities (i.e., such as mining and oil sands development) in northwest Saskatchewan. However, based on the findings of this study, the problem of privileged access to resources enjoyed by large corporations' points to a much deeper and more pervasive issue of how politics and power - particularly the technique of diversionary reframing – influences certain courses of action over others in the field of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan.

Freudenburg's (2006) work reminds us in situations involving diversionary reframing that words often speak louder than actions, and importantly that those same words can mask or cover up an all too common three step process where in the middle 'miracles' are supposed to take place. What Freudenburg means by this is that too often politicians and those in power secure their interests by diverting attention to the promises or first stage and the last stage of the intended goal (e.g., Freudenburg offers the example of a 'brighter future for the family farm), but they are not capable of 'being specific' about the middle stage or what actually happens in between the original promise and the end result. In the context of natural resource management, privileged accounts like the one made by Premier Wall about oil sands development are predicated on the belief that more large-scale development in the region will result in economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in the region, which will solve many of the problems in northern communities. However, Métis people from La Loche still have not forgotten about the broken promises that came out of their experiences

with the now decommissioned Cluff Lake mine, which was supposed to increase the quality of life for Métis people in the region.

Instead, in communities similar to La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, and Pinehouse, Métis people are faced with the weight of accumulating conjectures left by a legacy of environmental governance activities that continue to constrain Métis agency in provincial resource management. To see the influence of politics, power and diversionary reframing in regional environmental governance, I would like to compare two very different stories taken from La Loche that illustrate how powerful actors control the agenda, how attention is diverted away from Métis concerns about large-scale development, and how unequal relationships between government, industry players and Métis communities remain unchallenged in northwest Saskatchewan.

By *not* following the flow of action around oil sands exploration, provincial land use planning, and the experiences of Métis people with natural resources, one version of the events in La Loche goes as follows: Métis rights to a traditional land base in Saskatchewan remain unresolved. Consequently, this land is seen as 'Crown' land and thus is open to provincial land use policies. Oilsands Quest Inc. purchases leases from the province and the company proceeds with exploration activities in northwest Saskatchewan. Oilsands Quest Inc. establishes relationships with local communities that will be 'impacted' by activities. The Métis community of La Loche is identified as an 'impact community' and the company and community leaders begin negotiations for an Exploration Benefit Agreement so that some of the economic benefits of the exploration ostensibly flow to the local community. To be continued….

By *reverting attention* back to what's missing, the story above changes dramatically. Métis rights to a traditional land base in Saskatchewan remain unresolved. Despite this unresolved issue, the Government of Saskatchewan does have a clear policy on the duty to consult with Aboriginal people. However, this land is still seen as 'Crown' land and thus is open to provincial land use policies. Oilsands Quest Inc. purchases leases from the province and the company proceeds with exploration activities in northwest Saskatchewan. Métis people were not consulted in this process and many community participants in this study expressed frustration over this government decision. The Clearwater Integrated Forest Land Use Plan, initially proposed for the area where oil sands exploration has commenced, is shelved and Premier Brad Wall comments on why it is important for oil sands exploration to carry on without a provincial land use plan in place (which might deter

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investment and development of resources in the region, or limit in some way the pace, scale or nature of the development). With the discretion of Saskatchewan's Minister of the Environment, Oilsands Quest Inc. has the power to control the agenda concerning oil sands exploration and impacts to Aboriginal communities through the Impact Benefit Agreement process. Oilsands Quest representatives meet with La Loche Local Community Authority representatives and negotiate. Local Métis groups like Métis Local 39 are not allowed to participate in the negotiations and community members express concern over the lack of communication between LCA leaders and the community regarding the nature of this important agreement.

The main point I wish to make by comparing the two stories above is that as decisions and actions proceeded in favour of oil sands exploration, attention was drawn away from the initial sale of leases without proper consultation with Métis communities, attention was drawn away from a formal land use planning process in the area, and attention was drawn away from questions about the impact agreement and the nature of this type of development (more destructive than many other kinds) or how much or who will benefit. The second account also demonstrates that as decisions and actions proceeded, Métis people were not meaningfully consulted in resource management and land use decisions that helped large-scale corporations such as Oilsands Quest to gain privileged access in traditional Métis territory. Yet, by signing an exploration benefit agreement with the company, perhaps the community of La Loche and other impact communities facing a similar situation will have forgotten about the details leading up to these kinds of agreements.

Management Implications and Recommendations
The discussion above has attempted to raise awareness and a greater understanding of the various social spaces that Métis communities occupy in natural resource management and environmental governance frameworks. To summarise from my key findings, I found that within Métis communities a range of attitudes about natural resources exist largely as a result of the various social roles and spaces that Métis community members occupy. One key implication is the need to raise more awareness of the political dimensions of natural resource management locally and regionally in which conflicting land uses and power structures are embedded in the various environmental governance contexts. Thus, reaching agreement requires at the very least an understanding of how traditional land users, local business interests, and local leaders relate to one other and to resource management initiatives designed by 'outsiders.' Moreover, another implication related to this particular social context is that resource managers and various related agencies attempting to

promote more balanced initiatives will inevitably have to creatively recruit community members to participate in the consultation processes, given that not every community member prioritises their environmental concerns or trust they will have the opportunity to meaningfully voice their concerns in the forum provided, in part due to a sense of powerlessness.

As other studies have demonstrated, such as Gaventa's (1982) classic study on large-scale development and local people's sense of powerlessness, lack of involvement of community members in public forums is often misinterpreted by outsiders as apathy or contentment with status quo. This study suggests, like Gaventa's, that resource managers, various agencies, and even community-based or local organisations will face the difficult challenge of designing, implementing, and engaging Métis community members with institutional land use planning and consultation processes. In this research, the Métis experience of powerlessness has appeared to be repeatedly reinforced in environmental governance processes. This issue is further challenged by the internal divisions that often prevail in the three Métis communities in this study, consistent with Slowey's (2008) study in other Aboriginal community settings.

I pointed out that the shifts in the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan have varied effects at the community level. Thus, a key implication of this finding is that resource management strategies must take into consideration past community attempts at land use planning, resource development, and local government land-related allocations that have shaped Métis experiences and thereby expectations of the possibilities of new planning processes. The importance for those who work in Métis communities to achieve greater involvement in environmental governance to tailor their processes to the needs of the community for increased understanding, trust, clarity of information, and cooperation within their communities, cannot be understated.

Despite the overwhelming and complex challenges that I have presented within the findings, the majority of Métis people I interacted with during my study firmly suggested that a balance can be found among contradictory economic, social, and environmental interests. However, as I have pointed out, the majority of outcomes pertaining to environmental governance processes – be it co-management opportunities, local development, IBAs, or IFLUPs – tend to be viewed as situations of divide and conquer. Thus, a key implication of this study is that the existing environmental governance processes in these communities do not give adequate attention to balancing these interests. Rather, it appears that privileged access and privileged accounts for large-scale development

are dominating the planning processes. The current context of record sales of explorations leases in Saskatchewan may worsen ecological and social risks in this boreal forest region, given the lack of attention to Métis environmental land values and abilities to influence the stream of development impacts in their communities.

The following recommendations are therefore intended to foster alternative ways of confronting 'environmental dilemmas' in contrast to the existing and emerging institutional structures, processes and social contexts that are embedded within the contemporary environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan.

Oil sands development and the IBA process in La Loche's field appears to be an emerging trend within the political economy of northwest Saskatchewan, and I predict that this particular structure will become a common feature in the environmental governance of the region. Thus, industry leaders, various levels of government, Aboriginal groups, NGOs, and other public stakeholders must be aware of the contentious issues that exist within this strategy "to accommodate aboriginal interests by ensuring that benefits and opportunities flow to the community" and "to address social risk factors within the community such as adverse socio-economic and biophysical effects of rapid resource development" (Fidler and Hitch 2007, p. 50). The IBA process itself is premised by the "free entry" system of mineral staking (Sosa and Keenan 2001), a form of historical privileged access to natural resources, and is governed by a provincial regulatory system. In this context, a range of issues exist, especially in terms of Aboriginal environmental justice, which has been clearly articulated in a recent study by Fidler and Hitch (2007: 66):

> IBAs can perpetuate injustices if benefits are not equally distributed to and within the community, or if follow-up and the monitoring of provisions on behalf of both parties are not continuous. The relatively recent emergence of IBAs over the last three decades leaves it unclear if the community will benefit in the long-term, particularly in regard to aboriginal youth as Canada's fastest growing population (Statistics Canada 2008). While acknowledging these concerns and many more like them, the question remains, can IBAs provide long term benefits that outweigh the negative impacts? Or will IBAs be similar to historical treaties and maintain inequality for aboriginal communities within the broader Canadian society (Galbraith 2005: 75)? Moreover, what are the effects of blurring the boundaries between corporate and government agendas – and whose interests are in greater jeopardy? Given mining proponents – as capitalist entities – are negotiating IBAs absent of the government, from our perspective, there is a fundamental concern that IBAs may nurture injustice and hinder long-term sustainability if agreements are not procured in a manner that reflects the collective voice of the community.

Government agencies can build trust with various stakeholders in Métis communities by cooperating with representatives from Métis Locals and regional representatives from the northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council and the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. One significant issue for outside agencies is trying to decipher who to properly consult with, the LCA or the Métis Local. In my findings I observed that the LCA was predominantly involved in the IBA negotiations, leaving out the Métis Local and the stakeholders represented in this organisation. As exploration activities and development projects expand in the region, impact communities such as La Loche will inevitably be faced with increased negotiations, which I predict to be in the form of IBAs. Thus, Métis communities throughout northwest Saskatchewan need to coordinate their Métis Locals with regional representatives from the northwest Saskatchewan Métis Council and the Métis Nation - Saskatchewan to build capacity around the various types of consultation opportunities and planning efforts to achieve improved outcomes for the communities and for the region as a whole.

Change in the leadership of agencies that deal in environmental governance contexts such as Saskatchewan Environment, the northwest Saskatchewan Métis council, the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, and among Métis Locals and within municipal elected positions is common. Too often these changes disrupt planning processes and trust that has started to form in cooperative planning processes. I suggest that government agencies cultivate partnership with community leaders and other opinion leaders in these communities who are not in elected positions, but who are known for their interest and/or commitment to the communities in which they live. By investing in these individuals, more continuous partnerships and local capacity to influence others regarding the benefits of balancing land use values may be possible.

My final recommendation follows from the above discussion. The Métis of northwest Saskatchewan as a collective need to come together and strategise about how rapid development is not only impacting the ecology of their traditional territory but also their social fabric. For example, particular communities may be perceived to benefit at the expense of other Métis communities, or they may receive compensation while others may not have that opportunity. This could very easily lead to diversions and situations of divide and conquer. Thus, I encourage the various Métis political organisations and communities to continually share their experiences, ideas, successes, and failures in order to build a stronger and concerted understanding of the complexity of issues that rapid resource development places on the Métis people of northwest Saskatchewan. To put this in another way, the idea is that rather than be pushed and pulled by the forces of the political economy, Métis

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communities have to perhaps repair, re-build, and encourage networks of support, which can then extend outward to supportive and sympathetic 'outsider' agencies and organisations. I often heard from various Métis community members, "We can blame government a lot of the time, but you'll find that there's a lot of infighting between the communities."

Future Areas of Research

Applying Freudenburg's (2005, 2006) work has demonstrated to me that sociologists play an important role in exposing and challenging the taken-for-granted assumptions that lead to privileged access in natural resource management. In doing so, I see a greater need for scholarship on environmental governance that focuses attention on the details that are often left out, not seen, or forgotten by the time a development project has commenced. Examining the agency and power of subordinate groups in the social spaces of environmental governance can facilitate in refocusing attention to decisions and actions that dominant social actors wish to keep hidden from view, which have enormous consequences in terms of social equity, community resilience, and the lash up potentialities that flow from certain kinds of extractive resource developments.

Conclusion

What this study points out is that the structures of environmental governance in northwest Saskatchewan constrain the agency of Métis communities. The results of this study suggest that Métis communities are unable to legitimately voice concerns about the current pace of large-scale development and the associated social and ecological risks in northwest Saskatchewan through existing provincial policies and governance processes.

My interpretations of the major results highlight key problems in the contemporary relationship between Métis communities and participation in the environmental governance of northwest Saskatchewan. One significant problem is that the majority of environmental governance processes simply continue to reconfirm Métis community members' perceived lack of control in land use management. Recall that in my interviews, Métis community members were concerned about their future in northwest Saskatchewan because of the pace of development and the social and ecological risks playing out in their communities. Given that the Métis have no real decision making power in environmental governance, the implication is that concerns about the extent and pace of development also go unrecognised. In this study I observed how oil sands exploration received privileged access to resources and that privileged accounts shifted the focus away from provincial

land use planning and encouraged an IBA with Oilsands Quest Inc. At the very least, La Loche residents might benefit from a community-independent 'resource monitoring association', an issue that LCA community leaders wanted to bring into the IBA negotiations. There is considerable Métis concern about local sustainability and ecological values in northwest Saskatchewan, and a corresponding interest to generate alternative benefits from the boreal forest. The policy and governance contexts, however, appear to provide few reliable openings to pursue such things as small scale forestry employment or ensuring the continuation of local traditional forest-based livelihoods, areas to which increasing supportive policies are most needed.

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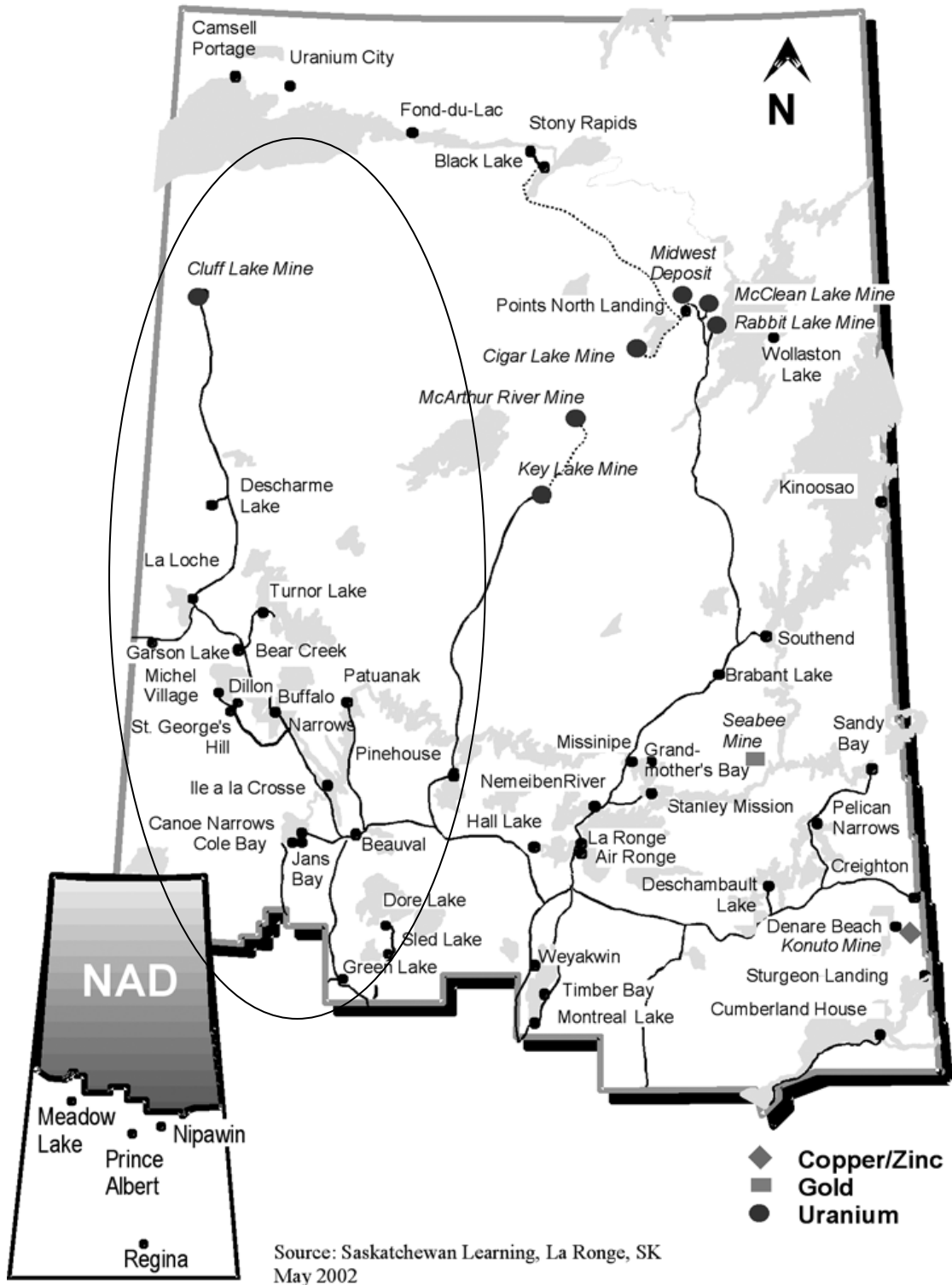
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Appendix 1: Map of Study Area

Source: Saskatchewan Learning, La Ronge, SK
May 2002

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Appendix 2: Ethics Document

Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society
Community Members

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brynp@ualberta.ca

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Naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca,
Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca
Phone Naomi: 492-4178, Phone Debra : 492-4598
Fax: 492-0268

Purpose:
As you may know, your community is involved with several other communities in a research partnership around Métis land use, history and access to natural resources. It is commonly referred to as the "CURA," or Community University Research Alliance project between the Métis of NW Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, and the University of Saskatchewan. We are part of a group of University of Alberta researchers who are studying the access Métis people have to forest resources and how land management policies have affected the Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan. For that reason, we are interested in talking to you as someone who has recently or is currently directly involved in activities in the forest.

Method:
CURA researchers will be looking at government documents, and talking to some government employees, but the most important part of this research is the understanding researchers' gain from talking to the community members themselves. If you agree to participate, you may decide where you would like the interview to take place, and then a researcher will meet you there. The interview is likely to take one to two hours of your time. There is no compensation given for the interview. The researcher will take notes, and also record the interview on audio-tape to make sure we don't miss anything you say. The interview may be listened to by a professional transcriber, or someone who types out what you say word for word, who must sign a confidentiality agreement stating s/he will not share what you say with anyone else or keep a copy of the transcript . Only the researchers on the project, Masters students Politylo and Joubert, and supervisors Krogman and Davidson, will have access to the transcribed interviews.

Voluntary Participation:
You can decide not to participate, not answer particular questions, or stop the interview after it has begun. If after the interview is over you decide you do not want your information used, please let the researchers know up to two weeks after the interview. If you wait any longer, there is a chance some reports might have already been written. We also realize that audio tape recorders may make some people feel uncomfortable, so if you choose not to have your interview audio-taped that is ok. You may also receive copies of any reports that are written that use your interview, and we will collect your address to send these materials to you on the consent form.

Confidentiality:
We will only identify your name on reports and publications if you request that we do so (we will note this on the consent form). Otherwise, your interview will be identified with a number, and this is all that will show up in any written report. We may quote what you say, and for this reason, it is possible that someone might be able to figure out who you are based on what you say. These transcribed interviews will be held under lock and key in Davidson's office, and will be returned to your Métis Nation of Saskatchewan's regional office in three years. Identifying information will be removed from your interview.

Benefits:
The proposed research has been designed based on the priorities identified by community members themselves at a 4 day Métis community- University alliance workshop in Saskatoon, Sask, June of 2004, and during a meeting researchers had with community members at Pine House, Sask. Our hope is that this research will provide the NW Métis more detail about the ways land use decisions have been made in the recent past, how resource management practices are affecting Métis people, and provide some recommendations for greater NW Métis involvement in decision-making around natural resource management practices.

Risks:
We will not be able to interview everyone who has had or currently has direct involvement with forest resources, so some people may be disappointed that they are not part of this study. It is possible that this research raises community expectations that resource management policies will change as a result of this research. While the researchers on this project are not able to change policy, we hope that this work will influence policy by providing documentation of the current impact of natural resource management policies on Métis livelihoods to policy makers and government decision-makers.

Use of the information:
The interviews will be used to write a summary report to CURA partners, and to inform the next stage of research on Métis capacity to influence land use decisions. In addition, the information provided in the interviews may be presented at NW Métis meetings, academic conferences, and provincial government meetings. The interview findings may appear in journal articles and CURA reports. Any publication from these interviews will first be reviewed and approved by the CURA Steering committee, made up of NW Métis leaders and community members and CURA researchers. Any disagreement on the interpretation of the findings will be explained in any publication from this research.

University contacts:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, and would like to discuss them with someone who is not directly involved, you may contact:
Georgie Jarvis, Secretary to the Human Research Ethics Board, 2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2P5, Ph (780) 492-8126, Fax (780)492-0097

Community Contacts:
Duane Favel, Community Research Coordinator for Otipimsuak, PO Box 42, Ile a la Crosse, SK S0M 1C0, dfavel@sasktel.net, Phone: 306-833-2282, Fax; 306-833-2289

Rosa Tinker, President Local #9, General Delivery, Pine House, SK S0J 2B0, Phone: 306-884-2173

Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society
Government Personnel

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Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca
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Fax: 492-0268

Purpose:
As you may know, several Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan are involved with the Universities of Alberta and Saskatchewan in a research project about the scope and nature of Métis land use and tenure, and the historical processes that have shaped these communities. This project is often referred to the "CURA" or Community University Research Alliance project between the Métis of NW Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, and the University of Saskatchewan. The goal of this project is to provide a better understanding of the relationship between natural resource policy and these rural communities, assess the ways in which Métis have been involved in natural resource management in the region and land-related policy decisions, and highlight potential areas for improvement in Métis involvement in land use decisions.

Method:
We would like to speak with government personnel, who have had direct responsibility for, or experience with, the management of the forests in northwest Saskatchewan. If you agree to participate, the interview can take place at a location of your choosing, or on the phone. The researcher will take notes, and also record the interview on audio-tape. It will probably take about 45 minutes. The interview may be listened to by a professional transcriber, who must sign a confidentiality agreement stating s/he will not share what you say with anyone else or keep a copy of the transcript. Only the researchers on the project, Krogman, Davidson, Song and the graduate research assistant will have access to the transcribed interviews. These transcribed interviews will be held under lock and key in Davidson's office, and will be destroyed three years after the project ends.

Voluntary Participation:
You of course have the right not to participate, and you can also decide you don't want to participate after the interview has begun. You can also decide not to answer any questions. If after the interview is over you decide you do not want your information used, please let the researchers know up to two weeks after the interview. If you wait any longer, there is a chance some reports might have already been written. We also realize that audio tape recorders may make some people feel uncomfortable, so if you choose not to have your interview audio-taped that is ok. If you would like, you may receive copies of any reports that are written that use your interview, and we will collect your address to send these materials to you on the consent form.

Confidentiality:
Your name or position will not be mentioned in any report, rather, your interview will be identified with a number, and this is all that will show up in any written report. We may find it important to

report what you have said in the interview at length, since your direct words are important. In this case it is possible that someone might be able to figure out who you are based on what you say, but we will avoid this in our write up of the findings.

Benefits:
The proposed research has been designed based on the priorities identified by community members themselves at a 4 day Métis community- University alliance workshop in Saskatoon, Sask., June of 2004, and during a meeting researchers had with community members at Pine House, Sask. In general, Métis community members would like to see social science research that examines how policy has impacted their people, which can provide insights as to how NW people may become more involved in forest use, management, and related natural resource management decisions. It would help us to understand the opportunities and obstacles that government personnel have experienced in their work with the Métis, and the ways in which government personnel have interacted, are currently interacting, and would like to interact, with Métis people on forestry-related issues. We believe this information will be helpful to the Provincial government and Environment Canada in pointing to some of the ways in which natural resource policies can support Métis communities and work towards mutual goals around conservation and biodiversity.

Risks:
We do not foresee any risks of this research to you, however, in some cases, you may feel uncomfortable answering a question in your capacity as a government representative. While we would like to hear your most honest answers, we will be careful to present your responses in a way in which no one can be identified and that recognizes the challenges government personnel face as they attempt to meet all of their work responsibilities. It is possible that others in your office may see us meet with you and identify your comments given we may only interview ten or so government representatives.

Use of the information:
The interviews will be used to write a summary report to CURA partners, and to inform the next stage of research on Métis institutional capacity. In addition, the information provided in the interviews may be presented at meetings in Saskatchewan which we are asked to share our findings and academic conferences. The interview findings may appear in journal articles and CURA reports.

Contacts:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, and would like to discuss them with someone who is not directly involved, you may contact:
Georgie Jarvis, Secretary to the Human Research Ethics Board
2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2P5
Ph (780) 492-8126, Fax (780)492-0097

Appendix 3: Consent Form

ORAL CONSENT FORM
(for community interviews)
To Participate in the University of Alberta Research Project:
Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society

<table>
<tr>
<td>
Bryn Politylo, Department of Rural Economy
543 General Services Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H1
Fax: 492-0268
brynp@ualberta.ca
</td>
<td>
Naomi Krogman and Debra Davidson
Associate Professors, Department of Rural Economy
527, 543 General Services Building
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H1
Naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca,
Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca
Phone Naomi: 492-4178, Phone Debra : 492-4598
Fax: 492-0268
</td>
</tr>
</table>

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study on the influence of natural resource policies on Metis access and use of land. I give my permission to be audiotaped. I have read the information sheet and have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I also I understand that I can quit taking part of the study at any time and withdraw the interview up to two weeks after the interview by contacting any of the researchers. I understand that my interview will be sent to my community's Métis Nation of Sask. Regional office 3 years after the interview has been conducted, and that the researchers taking part of this study will have access to the interview data. It is clear to me the information may be used to inform future research on the larger CURA project, and possibly be used in presentations, publications
and publicly available reports.

Do you give consent to participate in this interview?   Yes   No

This study was explained to the participant by: _____

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   Date   Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

ADDRESS noted if participant would like summary document on interviews:

Bryn Politylo
Department of Rural Economy
GSB 5-15
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H1

ORAL CONSENT FORM
(for government employees)
To Participate in the University of Alberta Research Project:Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society

Bryn Politylo and Brian Joubert, Department of Rural Economy 543 General Services Building University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H1 Fax: 492-0268 brynp@ualberta.ca brianjoub@gmail.com	Naomi Krogman and Debra Davidson Associate Professors, Department of Rural Economy 527, 543 General Services Building University of Alberta Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H1 Naomi.krogman@ualberta.ca, Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca Phone Naomi: 492-4178, Phone Debra : 492-4598 Fax: 492-0268

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study on the influence of natural resource policies on Métis access and use of land. I give my permission to be audio taped. I have read the information sheet and have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I also I understand that I can quit taking part of the study at any time and withdraw the interview up to two weeks after the interview by contacting any of the researchers. I understand the researchers taking part of this study will have access to the interview data. It is clear to me the information may be used to inform future research on the larger CURA project, and possibly be used in presentations, publications and publicly available reports.

Do you agree to participate in this interview?   Yes   No

This study was explained to me by: _____

_____   _____   _____
Signature of Research Participant   Date   Printed Name

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

ADDRESS noted if participant would like summary document on interviews:

Bryn Politylo or Brian Joubert
Department of Rural Economy
GSB 5-15
University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H1

Appendix 4: Community Interview Guide

Habitus-related Section

1. As you know, I am interested in understanding the experiences of Metis communities with natural resource management in NW Saskatchewan. Can you tell me about your own livelihood and the ways in which you use the forest and other natural resources?

2. Can you describe to me the important or significant cultural activities, livelihoods and employment opportunities that are present within your community?

    Probe: Have these activities and opportunities changed over time for community residents? Are there new opportunities outside of the community that are becoming available to community residents?

3. Communities are made up of people who fill certain roles in their community (i.e. elders, teachers, town leaders). How would you describe your role in this community and can you comment on the things you do to fulfill that role? What are some of the other roles that people in your community fulfill?

4. Are there key concerns you have about the health of the forest in the area in which you spend most of your time? Do you have any other concerns about the natural environment?

    Probe: How similar/different are these concerns with other members of your community? Can you comment on whether or not other Metis communities in NW Saskatchewan share in these concerns? To your knowledge, would other communities have concerns about the forest that are not an issue in your community?

5. Outside of formal town meetings, resource co-management boards, and community consultations, do you find that people within your community are discussing any concerns about the forest/natural environment with each other? Can you explain to me what these discussions are like, and about the important issues that are being talked about?

Field-related Section

6. Metis communities of NW Saskatchewan are involved in subsistence activities, local business enterprises, and have participated in corporate industrial development, such as forestry and mining. Can you discuss the prevalence of each of these activities in your community?

    Probe: How are these different opportunities affecting the possibilities for social and economic development in the community?

7. What kinds of opportunities/barriers, if any, have helped/hindered people in your community to earn at least part of their livelihood from the forest?

8. What are the most recent issues and concerns that are being addressed by your town council and the Metis Local office?

    Probe: Are these two groups of community leadership usually working together on local issues or is there conflict between the two? Can you give me an example of perhaps one issue and how both groups have responded to it?

9. Can you tell me about how you or others in the community participate in local and/or regional opportunities that have influenced the types of industrial activities in the area, local uses and access to natural resources, or addressing conservation and protection of forests/lakes in the long term?

    Probe: Have you heard of Saskatchewan Environment's Integrated Forest Land Use Management Plan? Can you comment on this process and whether your community has been involved in a regional IFLUP through consultation and public participation?

10. Can you describe to me the current interactions between community residents and representatives from Saskatchewan Environment in dealing with natural resource management issues?

    Probe: ..in dealing with consultations, co-management decisions, other industries, new programs or management strategies?

11. What do you see as the greatest threats to the long-term livelihood of your community?

Agency-Related Section

12. How successful do you think Metis communities are in currently influencing how local forests and other natural resources are being managed regionally in NW Saskatchewan?

    Probe: What groups have been supportive of you in your attempts to address local concerns? What groups or individuals have been unsupportive, or opposed?

13. How have you attempted to address your concerns, either about the health of the forest, or about restrictions on your access to the forest? How effective were these efforts?

14. Can you think of any significant events in the community's history that has had an effect on how community members participate in natural resource management policy, consultations and decision making processes today?

15. In your experience, in what ways do you think people in your community have shown successful involvement in resource management issues that addresses community interests? What do you think is failing or lacking in resource management situations in terms of giving more voice to Metis interests?

16. In what ways do think members of your community could/should be more involved in resource management decisions concerning your community?

Appendix 5: Codes

NVivo revision 2.0.161Licensee: Department of Rural Econ

Project: CURA Community 2007
NODE LISTING

Nodes in Set: All Nodes

Number of Nodes: 44
1   (1) /Habitus
Description: relating to one's personal beliefs, values, dispositions, etc.

2   (1 1) /Habitus/Livelihood
Description: occupations, activities and pursuits

3   (1 2) /Habitus/Style of Life
Description: more about values, personal philosophies, outlooks, ways of living

4   (2) /Accessing Resources
Description: availability of actors to be able to use forest resources, and also relating to
                forms of capital (economic, cultural, political)

5   (3) /RM Institutions
Description: types of resource management institutions

6   (4) /Field
Description: qualitative descriptors of key characteristics attributed in each community's
                socio-spatial area

7   (4 1) /Field/History
Description: events in the past that have left their mark on the community and the local
                area

8   (4 2) /Field/Lash Up
Description: when actors discuss many factors that operate together and the consequences
                of these associations

9   (4 5) /Field/Community Features
Description: things such as institutions or services available, people employed in various
                sectors, and other outstanding features that make up the community

10   (5) /Resource Conflicts
Description: where actors identify problems in resource management cases, terms,
                concepts, and/or situations

11   (6) /Employment
Description: jobs available, concerns about employment, and future work opportunities

12   (7) /Power
Description: in its general and ambiguous use

13   (7 1) /Power/Voice~Responsibility~Influence
Description: capacity to exercise decision making, to guide the direction of situations; to
                have power over

14   (7 8) /Power/Immanent
Description: in the Foucauldian sense - always present, pervasive

15   (8) /Fur Blocks
Description: anything discussed about the community's fur block boundary

16   (9) /Policies
Description: resource management policies corresponding with all levels of government,
                local to federal

17   (9 1) /Policies/Let it Burn
Description: Saskatchewan Environment's fire policy referred to by locals as 'let it burn'

18   (9 10) /Policies/Use it or lose it
Description: relating to resource access policy with particular forest/lake resources

19   (10) /Consultation
20   (11) /Public Information
Description: describing how community members are generally aware of resource
                management contexts

21   (11 1) /Public Information/Awareness~Understanding
Description: more specific to awareness; how well do community members understand
                resource management situations

22   (11 12) /Public Information/Involvement~Participation
Description: relating to engagement via availability of information

23   (12) /Agency
Description: relating to community members' ability to act

24   (12 1) /Agency/Obstacles
Description: that which is hindering actors' ability to act

25   (12 2) /Agency/Successes
Description: events, situations, or processes where agency has appeared positively

26   (12 3) /Agency/Failures
Description: events, situations, or processes which have proven to be negative,
        unattainable, or undesirable

27   (12 13) /Agency/Strategies
Description: things that actors are doing, or propose, in response to change, conflict, etc.

28   (13) /Land Use Planning
Description: IFLUPs, decision making processes, etc.

29   (14) /Balance
Description: a concept that community members used to describe ways of dealing with
        trade-offs of resource management and large-scale development

30   (15) /Politics
Description: as a broad concept

31   (15 1) /Politics/Provincial
Description: relating to provincial policies and jurisdictions

32   (15 2) /Politics/Federal
Description: relating to federal policies and jurisdictions

33   (15 16) /Politics/Local
Description: community politics and also regional politics

34   (16) /SE Relations
Description: describing interactions between Metis communities and Sask Env
        employees/agency

35   (17) /Opportunities
Description: relating to education, training, employment, ways of participating, local
        development, etc.

36   (18) /Threats~Challenges
Description: perceived threats and challenges impeding positive growth of the community

37   (19) /Cultural~Traditional
Description: commenting on cultural and traditional activities, pursuits, identity,
        generationality, and changing ways of life

38   (20) /Environmental Concerns
Description: perceived understanding of ecological threats locally and regionally

39   (20 21) /Environmental Concerns/Land Base
Description: commenting on importance of community members' land base ecologically

40   (21) /TEK~Science
Description: conflict between local knowledge and expert/outsider knowledge

41   (22) /Divide~Conquer
Description: tension among people within the community, between communities, and
               among Metis and First Nations

42   (24) /Solutions
Description: perceived ways of dealing with and resolving conflict

43   (25) /Change~Future Outlook
Description: community members' comments on local/regional changes and visions of the
               future for their communities

44   (26) /NCWP
Description: relating to Northwest Communities Wood Products