

Introduction

Editor's Introduction *aboriginal policy studies*

Chris Andersen

Editor, aboriginal policy studies

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aboriginal policy studies is an online, peer-reviewed and multidisciplinary journal that publishes original, scholarly, and policy-relevant research on issues relevant to Métis, non-status Indians and urban Aboriginal people in Canada. For more information, please contact us at apsjournal@ualberta.ca or visit our website at www.ualberta.ca/nativestudies/aps/.

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Welcome to the first issue of Volume Two of *aboriginal policy studies*. Following the path set in our first year, the articles in issue 2.1 continue to touch on a wide array of policy issues pertaining to Métis, Non-Status Indians, and urban Aboriginal people.

To state once again what we hope is, by now, an obvious fact: *aps* welcomes relevant submissions from all geographical and political regions of Canada. At this point in the journal's history, we are not yet receiving an adequate number of submissions on issues pertaining to Métis policy, nor are we receiving a satisfying number of submissions on Non-Status Indian and urban Aboriginal issues in central and eastern Canada. We will continue to attempt to increase submissions in these areas. In particular, we have stepped up our social media campaign through a massive increase in our Twitter followers, in an effort to raise awareness of the journal and to attract new readers and submission.

The articles in issue 2.1 contain discussions and examinations of a number of important policy issues that researchers are only now beginning to get an analytical handle on. The first article, "Housing and Aboriginal People in Urban Centres: A Quantitative Evaluation," includes an analysis by Yale Belanger, Gabriel Weasel Head, and Olu Awosoga on the current state of Aboriginal housing in Canada, as well as suggestions for its improvement. Originally written for the National Association of Friendship Centres and the Office of the Federal Interlocutor, and subsequently sent out for review by this journal, the article touches on the lack of centralized and coordinating housing policy regarding urban Aboriginal renters and owners. It also touches on several structural issues (such as racism) that appear to inhibit higher rates of home rental and ownership. Among other suggestions, the authors endorse the need for a national non-research housing strategy, as well as increased research into the complexity of reasons behind the current state of Aboriginal housing and homelessness.

The second article, by Loleen Berdahl, Greg Poelzer, and Bonita Beatty, "Aboriginal Federal Turnout in Northern Saskatchewan," explores the complex and largely understudied issue of Aboriginal voting in federal elections. Using original quantitative survey data, the authors establish the sociodemographic context of voter turnout, marking differences between on-reserve First Nations and Métis people and that, in particular, on-reserve First Nations are less likely to vote in elections, even after accounting for other sociodemographic factors. The authors argue for the importance of taking account of local context and history in making sense of this under-participation.

Lorenzo Cherubini's article, "Postsecondary Aboriginal Educational Policy in Ontario: Policy and Practical Implications," explores the issue of postsecondary Aboriginal educational policy in Ontario. Cherubini undertakes a discourse analysis, in order to demonstrate the gap between policy intentions and their practical effects. More specifically, he draws attention to the problematic language used through out the Ontario Aboriginal

Postsecondary Education and Training Policy Framework that subtly reinforces a “deficit lens” by laying responsibility on Aboriginal peoples (rather than the larger structural context within which lower learning rates exist) for success or failure. Relatedly, Cherubini notes the equally problematic issues around measurement that continue to dog attempts to make empirical determinations about whether the gaps are actually closing.

Finally, Brenda Parlee’s article on Traditional Knowledge and resource management explores policy issues pertaining to Traditional Knowledge in Canada’s north: in particular, to the creation of co-management boards that impact resource management decision-making. Parlee explores the highly vernacular context within which Traditional Knowledge has been incorporated, and the various legal and political contexts that have increased their presence and impact on resource management. Parlee pays close attention to the important issue of “scale,” discussing issues pertaining to the complex interconnections of local, regional, territorial, national, and international institutions. Her empirical context seeks to demonstrate one (unevenly) successful context of the integration of these scales.

In addition to our peer-reviewed articles, we were lucky enough in this issue to receive two quantitatively based commentaries of policy relevance to Métis, Non-Status Indian, and urban Aboriginals. The first, written by former Yukon Bureau of Statistics Chief Greg Finnegan, explores the problematic nature of official statistical categories and their interpretations to making local sense of Aboriginal realities and social relations in the Yukon. Finnegan points to the challenges of otherwise largely accepted categories of language and terminology, geography, and the changing character of Yukon First Nations with various orders of government, particularly in the context of recent land claim agreements. He also addresses the inability of official statistical categories to keep up with these changes.

A second commentary, written by Jacqueline Quinless and Shalene Jobin, incorporates data from the recent Urban Aboriginal Peoples Survey into categories of analysis generated by the local Edmonton Aboriginal community through their “Your City, Your Voice” research project. That research project, undertaken as part of the city’s creation of the Wicihitowin model of local government (part of the city’s local creation of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy), generated a number of categories through which the local Aboriginal community “understood” itself. Quinless’s and Jobin’s analysis represent one of the first attempts to incorporate data produced synoptically into a more locally attentive context. Though the nature of the data collected in the original study means that their findings are not generalizable to the larger Aboriginal community in Edmonton, their research nonetheless offers tantalizing glimpses into what more locally created data categories look like in practice.

The third and final commentary is written by Tracy Bear, Special Advisor to the Provost on Aboriginal Issues at the University of Alberta. Bear’s commentary serves as a summary of the process through which the University of Alberta created its Elder’s Protocol and Guidelines document. She notes that as the University of Alberta has produced more formal relationships with local Aboriginal communities—in particular, the increased use of Aboriginal Elders on campus— various problems, tensions, and opportunities have emerged about how to do so respectfully. The Elders’ Protocol and Guidelines document includes a list of recognized Elders and areas of expertise; issues pertaining to the issuing of honouraria; information on the respectful treatment of Elders; and the establishment of a knowledgeable Advisor Committee to deal with the ongoing dynamics of these increased relationships.

Finally, issue 2.1 of *aboriginal policy studies* contains a section on foundational documents that, through the permission of the Office of the Provost at the University of Alberta, contains the Elder's Protocol and Guidelines document discussed by Tracy Bear, including the main report and the various appendices that provide more detail on specific issues.

We thank you for your continued support of the journal. As well, I would like to personally thank Kirsten Lindquist, *aboriginal policy studies*' editorial assistant, for her work in increasing our web and social media presence through the creation and diligent monitoring of our Twitter and Facebook accounts. Please feel free to add us (Facebook: aboriginal policy studies; Twitter: @apsjournal) to your own social media networks.

Enjoy issue 2.1. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at apsjournal@ualberta.ca.

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