Ganohonyohk (Giving Thanks)

Understanding Prosperity from the Perspectives of Urban Indigenous Friendship Centre Communities in Ontario

OFIFC
Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

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ABOUT THE OFIFC

Founded in 1971, the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) works to support, advocate for, and build the capacity of member Friendship Centres across Ontario.

Emerging from a nation-wide, grass-roots movement dating back to the 1950's, Friendship Centres are community hubs where Indigenous people living in towns, cities, and urban centres can access culturally-based and culturally-appropriate programs and services every day. Today, Friendship Centres are dynamic hubs of economic and social convergence that create space for Indigenous communities to thrive. Friendship Centres are idea incubators for young Indigenous people attaining their education and employment goals, they are sites of cultural resurgence for Indigenous families who want to raise their children to be proud of who they are, and they are safe havens for Indigenous community members requiring supports.

In Ontario more than 85 per cent of Indigenous people live in urban communities. The OFIFC is the largest urban Indigenous service network in the province supporting this vibrant, diverse, and quickly-growing population through programs and initiatives that span justice, health, family support, long-term care, healing and wellness, employment and training, education, research, and more.

Friendship Centres receive their mandate from their communities, and they are inclusive of all Indigenous people – First Nation, Status/Non-Status, Métis, Inuit, and those who self-identify as Indigenous from Turtle Island.

Learn more about the work the OFIFC does to
support Friendship Centres at **www.ofifc.org.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ganohonyohk/Prosperity Research Project explored how seven Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario understood the concept of prosperity.

The guiding research question of "How do urban Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario view a prosperous/wealthy life?" was used to gauge the meaning of prosperity through a community driven lens.

Friendship Centres have long recognized that successful poverty reduction agendas must factor in the historical/political context of urban Indigenous people as well as the culture-based knowledge that they hold. A conceptual shift in moving the conversation from one of poverty reduction to prosperity entailed the broadening of the mainstream notion of poverty reduction beyond services/programs that aim to exclusively improve the social and economic condition of individuals. In addition, the 'shift' requires looking beyond the short term towards better understanding how investments made towards reducing poverty in urban Indigenous communities could be tied more closely with culture-based understandings of solutions that encapsulate physical, mental, spiritual and economic benefits.

In the context of the project, conflict between prosperity as defined in the Indigenous communities we worked with and mainstream iterations of prosperity presented issues to developing a metrics for measuring urban Indigenous prosperity. Epistemologically, Eurocentric norms and value systems continue to underpin understandings of contemporary measurement and metric systems where they are mistakenly assumed to be universal truths applicable to all. As a result, the centralization of economic development theory that is underpinned by Eurocentric value systems renders things like racism, environmental degradation, unilateral resource extraction and community diversity invisible. As an alternative, a tool was developed from the research which provides a better orientation towards 'measurement'. The partnership development tool that accompanies this report aids in self-assessing the accountability of governments, organizations, academia and others to urban Indigenous, community defined prosperity.

Communities were interested in designing research activities that demonstrated prosperity rather than just dialoguing about it as a concept. The thematic

analysis in this report indicated that community expressions of prosperity, had to do with assessing overall quality of one's life through using, oral tradition, Indigenous value systems and cultural knowledge as a baseline to 'measure' their individual or collective prosperity against. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that an underlying attitude stemming from the Haudenosaunee understanding of Ganohonyohk (giving thanks) and the Anishinaabe understanding of Mino Bimaadizawin plays an important role in the tempering of mainstream perceptions of prosperity with Indigenous ones. Pending differences in cultural practice, Ganohonyohk (giving thanks) and Mino Bimaadizawin are somewhat parallel concepts in that they reflect social norms that call for mindfulness in everyday life in addition to causing one to reflect on and respect one's 'relationships' in the broadest sense of the word. Starting from a place of giving thanks for life (one's own and other life on the planet) allows one to become aware of the depth and magnitude present in the diverse perspectives on prosperity offered to us from the communities. In the context of being thankful, one can appreciate and deepen their relationships within the web of life. This appreciation begins with one's self and starts to extend to the family, extended family, plants, animals, land and beyond. What results from Ganohonyohk or Mino Bimaadizawin is an understanding about how the energy of reciprocity is a necessary and active component within prosperous communities.

Economically, it remains important for urban Indigenous communities to have 'enough' to drive both existing and newly created programs in a self-determined way. In contemporary urban contexts, Indigenous communities require resources to offer programs and services to a growing demographic. Indigenous people have been in urban centers now for several generations and others continue to arrive, but there is still often a disconnection in trying to reconcile Indigenous core values with more mainstream models of prosperity and wealth distribution.

Supporting urban Indigenous communities in the pursuit of prosperity is a priority within policies adopted by the governments of Ontario and Canada, and globally within the United Nations system. As far as Friendship Centres' in Ontario are concerned, rather than trying to assess the achievement of individuals and communities towards a common goal of 'prosperity' as measured in mainstream contexts, there should be a refocused effort on supporting self-determined initiatives for communities to choose their own path towards prosperity and fulfillment.

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1

INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ganohonyohk (Giving Thanks): Indigenous Prosperity Research project (also referred to as the Prosperity Project) inspired culturally-appropriate methods necessary for urban Indigenous prosperity growth and considered the role and impact that Friendship Centres play in nurturing community prosperity. Our findings illustrate that Indigenous prosperity is wholistic and that it stems from a dynamic and complex network of meanings enmeshed within historical, social, economic, political and Indigenous knowledge processes. Attainment of prosperity reflects Indigenous value systems that relate strongly to community safety, environment, beliefs, kinship patterns, social arrangements, communication networks, and regulatory norms of individual, familial, and social conduct. With respect to the larger society, we hope that these findings will help others to reflect on how Indigenous perspectives on prosperity can illuminate some basic components that we as human beings all share. For example, we need to consider not just individual needs for food, water and shelter, but a collective need for nutritious food, clean water, and a safe living environment. The findings in this report accentuate the importance of self-determination in the attainment of prosperity rather than trying to measure the achievement of individuals against common mainstream ideas of prosperity that are assumed to be universal.

The project explored how seven Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario understood the concept of prosperity. The partnering communities were:

- Ne-Chee Friendship Centre (Kenora);
- Ininew Friendship Centre (Cochrane);
- United Friendship Centre (Fort Frances);
- Council Fire Native Cultural Centre Inc. (Toronto);
- Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre (Windsor) ;
- Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (Fort Erie); and
- N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre (Sudbury).

From the beginning and throughout its duration, the research project was guided by OFIFC's community-driven USAI Research Framework (2016, 2nd Edition). USAI takes its acronym from the four principles that guide it: Utility, Self-

Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality. The seven community partners guided how research was conducted in their communities. Over the duration of the project, the OFIFC Research Team provided research support to the communities in a way that allowed them to achieve their research goals while articulating and demonstrating what prosperity meant to them.

The USAI Research Framework ensures the research process is responsive to community needs. In the context of this project, this meant that the project trajectory moved away from the original proposal of developing an Indigenous Prosperity Metric. Communities and project evaluators (three Indigenous evaluators from three different Universities in Ontario) felt that there were substantial difficulties present in trying to develop a measure of Indigenous prosperity. Through an ongoing discussion with communities and evaluators, the OFIFC Research Team realized that it would be more useful to develop a partnership development tool that would help governments and other external bodies self-assess whether they are meeting the needs of Indigenous communities and supporting self-voiced Indigenous prosperity.

The report starts with a discussion about the project research question, its origins and the strength based ‘conceptual shift’ which changed the focus in our work from poverty reduction to prosperity. Next, we illustrate the difficulties faced in creating and/or utilizing measurement metrics in Indigenous contexts. In addition to providing a literature review that substantiates numerous difficulties in trying to both develop and apply metrics measurement systems in Indigenous contexts, we present a case study from one of the communities where a prosperity metrics pilot was attempted (Appendix A). Following this, the project research design section illustrates how the community-driven approach resulted in methodological changes allowing for the research process to better correspond to community needs. In addition, this section also outlines data collection procedures, data collection methods and data analysis tools. The report then presents research results as a thematic analysis, representing what prosperity meant for each community. The report closes with a description of the self-assessment partnership development tool and a concluding discussion.

2

RESEARCH QUESTION AND ITS ORIGINS

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND ITS ORIGINS

The OFIFC envisioned a research project that would explore how Indigenous concepts of prosperity are operationalised by Friendship Centres and how this is understood in relation to poverty reduction. We proposed a research project that would look at how the organisational approaches of Friendship Centres support community-defined prosperity and how these approaches are substantiated by culturally-informed indicators of success. We acknowledged that there are existing wise practices in the infrastructure of Friendship Centres and that these practices can contribute to the growing evidence-base for innovative, culturally-informed strategies for local poverty reduction.

Over 80% of Indigenous people in Ontario live off-reserve with 62.1% in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2006). At the onset of this project, we already knew that Indigenous people in Ontario are often in more precarious economic positions than the non-Indigenous population. According to Census data, urban Indigenous communities are a vulnerable population and disproportionately more likely to experience poverty in their lifetime. Indigenous people in Ontario have a poverty rate of 18.4% compared to 11% of the non-Indigenous population (Noel and Laroque, 2009) and are one third more likely to be unemployed and live in low-income neighbourhoods. When considering income levels and rates of poverty for urban Indigenous people in Ontario over the past 25 years, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF, 2007) notes that poverty continues to impact the majority of urban Indigenous people. In 2007, Statistics Canada defined the 'poverty line' or low-income cut off (LICO) for a single person living in a major city as $21,666 (before taxes) and determined that 29 % of urban Indigenous families and 53% of single urban Indigenous people live below the LICO (Dinsdale, 2010).

While economic poverty is an issue that affects Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations alike, our starting point for this research project incorporated a more wholistic approach that foregrounded Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in examining the issue. After consulting with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, the OFIFC decided to take a strengths-based perspective and shift the lens of understanding from one of poverty to one of prosperity. The Haudenosaunee practice of Ganohonyohk refers to an underlying attitude of remembering before all else, to give thanks for

and appreciate the diversity of life inhabiting this planet. In its most basic sense, remembering Ganohonyohk and putting it into practice within the context of ni'kinaaganaa (Anishinaabe word for all my relations) is a fundamental foundation for prosperity. Through ongoing dialogue about Ganohonyohk, the central research question of the project emerged: "How do urban Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario view a prosperous/wealthy life?"

Supporting urban Indigenous prosperity is a priority within policies adopted by the governments of Ontario and Canada and even globally within the United Nations system. The Urban Indigenous Action Plan identifies four key action areas to create respectful relationships with Indigenous people as the foundation of all policy, programming and interactions between the province of Ontario, urban Indigenous organizations and urban Indigenous communities. The Ontario Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination and harassment (including spiritual and cultural practices) against Indigenous peoples in Ontario, whether they be status, non-status, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action call on governments, educational and religious institutions, civil society groups and all Canadians to take action. Calls to Action 7, 19, 20, and 92ii connect to urban Indigenous understandings of prosperity developed through this project. In 2016, the Government of Canada officially adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) without qualification. UNDRIP states, "Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development" (p. 4).

2.1 THE 'CONCEPTUAL SHIFT' FROM POVERTY REDUCTION TO PROSPERITY

The conceptual shift from poverty reduction to prosperity meant that we devised research methods to support Friendship Centre communities in defining Indigenous concepts of prosperity, and contemplated how local infrastructures support Indigenous concepts of community defined prosperity.

This shift allowed us to broaden the notion of poverty reduction beyond

services/programs that aim to improve the social and economic condition of individuals. Our approach posits that poverty reduction can be addressed through Indigenous concepts of prosperity. This project proceeds from the understanding that the protective measures operationalised by Friendship Centres to sustain Indigenous culture and lifeways can inform the development of wholistic infrastructures that support urban Indigenous poverty reduction. Friendship Centres have long recognized that successful poverty reduction agendas must factor in the historical/political context of urban Indigenous people as well as the culture-based knowledge that they hold. This project built on these understandings and incorporated this special attention to context into the methodology. The conceptual shift from poverty reduction to prosperity integrates these long-held understandings from Friendship Centres as well as the direction of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers.

Through this research project, we hoped to look beyond the short term, and to better understand how investments made towards reducing poverty in Indigenous communities in Ontario could be tied more closely with culture-based understandings and solutions that encapsulate physical, mental, spiritual and economic benefits. Generally speaking, the cost savings associated with investments into wholistic, culture-based practices guided by the Indigenous community are potentially huge. Successful examples exist in the context of Indigenous health programs which utilise relevant Indigenous health traditional knowledge mechanisms. For example, a cost-benefit analysis done on the Hollow Water First Nation's Community Wholistic Healing Process (CHHP) – a model that works with victims, victimizers, families, and the community – determined that savings to the government were large if abusers went through the CHHP instead of conventional routes. If offenders had gone through the CHHP rather than through the criminal justice system, and the many costs associated with it, it could save the government over $200 000 per year. (This does not include the cost of reoffending - the numbers of reoffenders are high among those who have gone through the penal system vs. those who completed the CHHP) (Buller, 2004).

The OFIFC has also conducted evaluations of Friendship Centre programs which demonstrate the significant cost savings associated with investment into culture-based supports. In January 2019, the OFIFC conducted an evaluation of the Cultural Resource Coordinator (CRC) Program, a program that provides a culturally-safe space for individuals and families to come together to learn

about traditional practices and protocols (OFIFC, 2019). The evaluation includes a Program Economic Impact Forecast, which focuses on the impacts of suicide prevention and reduction of family violence. The Forecast determined that with an annual cost of $3.3 million to deliver the CRC Program, there is an annual estimated savings of $43 million to the Province of Ontario. This finding demonstrates that there is also a strong economic rationale for supporting culture-based, strength-based initiatives for urban Indigenous people.

Similar discussions (although not identical concepts) about poverty and prosperity have been used in the Ontario Trillium Foundation's (OTF's) online Knowledge Centre. The Knowledge Centre is an online community that aims to connect Ontario's non-profit sector, share knowledge, build capacity and build more personalised relationships with the OTF and other organisations (https://otf.ca/knowledge/about). For example, one of the Knowledge Centre's 'Community Hubs hosted by OTF's Tracy Robertson' is entitled 'Prosperous People'. Robertson states:

> *The face of poverty is complex and one-dimensional solutions just don't work. Everyone has the potential to contribute meaningfully to their community. We need to invest in initiatives that strengthen individuals' social and economic resiliency, and match their interests with local resources. Share your ideas, knowledge, promising practices, and discuss innovative solutions to increase our shared prosperity. (https://otf.ca/knowledge/prosperous-people).*

Another entry by Trudi Collins on the site under 'shared prosperity' notes:

> *I'm one of the Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF) Program Managers at OTF and will be working with grantees and others in this space to share learnings that are emerging around "what works" for poverty reduction / shared prosperity. Just wanted to share some stories from people participating in the LPRF projects that illustrate how additional supports are a key piece for ensuring that everyone can share in community prosperity …. as it is creating hope for individuals. (https://share.otf.ca/t/what-are-your-insights-on-shared-prosperity/140/50).*

One common thread amongst OTF entries on prosperity in relation to poverty reduction was the primary centralization of economic factors. However, for the urban Indigenous communities that we worked with, understandings about prosperity focused on the *restoration* of a prosperous way of life in our

contemporary world through being connected to traditional teachings that both reflect Indigenous value systems and promote wholistic well-being. While economic security is understood to be part of the solution, it is not necessarily centered within urban Indigenous wholistic understandings about prosperity –at least for the communities that we engaged with in the project. In addition, Friendship Centre communities also demonstrated (as articulated in the analysis of this report) that there are also diverse, locally-specific understandings of what it means to be prosperous.

In the next section, we provide a literature review that further contextualises the shift from the development of an Indigenous Prosperity Metric to a project that centered self-voiced, locally-specific understandings of prosperity.

3

DIFFICULTIES IN CREATING AND/OR UTILIZING METRICS IN INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS

3. DIFFICULTIES IN CREATING AND/OR UTILIZING METRICS IN INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS

As discussed in Chapters' 1 and 2, our original intent for this project was to create an urban Indigenous-defined prosperity metrics tool. The purpose of the tool was to 'measure' community prosperity and to inform organisations about developing and implementing locally relevant strategies that enhance Indigenous prosperity growth. Nevertheless, in the early stages of the research process, we realised that there would be considerable difficulty in trying to harmonise this rather mainstream method of measurement with culture-based approaches that include traditional Indigenous understandings and a self-determined community voice. Some of these difficulties are illustrated in a case study which outlines the attempt to pilot a computer generated prosperity metrics in one of the seven communities (see Appendix A). In addition, 'red flags' went up as evaluators and other community members indicated that creating a metrics around Indigenous prosperity could potentially cause more harm than good. Utilizing western methods of measurement in the analysis of situations in Indigenous communities has consistently resulted in inaccuracies due to the negation and invalidation of Indigenous knowledge. Therefore, based on the pilot, community feedback and findings in the literature, the alternative was to create a partnership development tool that would be more useful to communities and reflective of project findings (Kukutai & Walter, 2015). The partnership development tool that resulted from this project (located in the back pocket of this report) is one which will allow governments and other organisations to examine their own processes to see if their structures and behaviours align with and support Indigenous understandings of prosperity.

Indigenous communities have been working with measurement tools rooted in distinct cultural worldviews since time immemorial to support and understand our world and our responsibilities within it. Over time, Indigenous communities have been systemically researched to death and evaluation tools have relied exclusively on whether communities are fulfilling external expectations. The research that resulted from this project provided an alternative approach by centering and prioritizing the knowledge and needs of urban Indigenous communities in the anti-poverty discussion. Communities opted to move away from past narratives that emphasize fulfillment of external expectation and determined that, moving forward, it would be more useful for external partners

to self-assess their involvement in supporting urban Indigenous priorities. Thus, there is a need for community specific tools and resources to be further developed to support urban Indigenous understandings of prosperity.

The tool enclosed with this research report was created to support Friendship Centre communities in building authentic and strong working partnerships grounded in Indigenous values and priorities with external partners, including but not limited to other organizations, governments, and academic institutions. This tool embodies the key themes and guidelines gleaned from the Urban Indigenous Prosperity research findings and is an example of an approach to integrating findings in direct tangible ways. As a set of guidelines, these themes can also support Friendship Centre communities in the development of community-driven evaluation tools grounded in their own local contexts. This research demonstrates an opportunity for urban Indigenous community to self-determine the requirements and boundaries for their engagement in research and evaluation projects, as well as external partnerships with other organizations, governments, and academic institutions. Our hope is that the research will be utilized by communities to create assessment tools reflexive of their own knowledges, experiences, and priorities instead of the creation of a universal model filled with insignificant, and potentially harmful, measures. These tools would be especially useful for those interested in assessing their involvement in projects and initiatives with Friendship Centre communities and to determine whether the work they have begun is truly supporting urban Indigenous understandings of prosperity.

Communities shared the importance of having accessible resources to deepen their own understanding of the research relationship process, but also as a way of determining important boundaries when building partnerships. The report findings showcase multiple opportunities throughout the research process where Friendship Centre communities were engaged in activities in ways that did not initially recognize their priorities. More importantly, the research project illuminated the strength and efficacy in the project when processes re-shifted towards community priorities. In Appendix A, an example is showcased where external partners sought to extract information from an urban Indigenous community in the development of a measurement tool discounting the community's intellectual property, relationship to data, and role in analysis. The priorities and goals as determined by the community must always be at the center of community-driven research. Developing self-assessment tools that

provide opportunities for partners to consider their involvement in projects and initiatives with urban Indigenous communities ensures the relationship is reciprocal, supportive, and fundamentally beneficial to participants. Ultimately, these tools can encourage governments, academia and other organizations to ensure their own processes align with and support urban Indigenous understandings of prosperity.

This chapter includes a literature review of scholarly work that outlines complications in creating and/or utilizing metrics in Indigenous contexts. Relevant to the findings of this literature review, the case study in Appendix A describes some of the issues that were encountered early in the project while attempting to collaborate with external partners to pilot a prosperity metrics in one Friendship Centre community. Contesting understandings about intellectual property, academic freedom and legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge systems played out to such a degree that there would have been no space for community guided Indigenous research methods. Therefore, the partnership had to be terminated.

It is important to note that this literature review supplements and contextualizes Friendship Centre communities' self-voiced concerns about metrics and their incompatibility with culture-based understandings of prosperity. Friendship Centre communities and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers provided direction and insight about the need to shift the project, based on Indigenous knowledge and lived experience. In addition, we benefited from ongoing conversations with evaluators who provided valuable critical analysis. The evaluators also shared examples of problematic uses of metrics in Indigenous communities. As such, the literature review is a way for the reader of this report to better identify and understand the specific issues with metrics which have been raised in other Indigenous contexts. Friendship Centre communities' culture-based knowledge of what works and what does not is not contingent on the availability of academic research. In our research process, the knowledge of Friendship Centre community members, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and evaluators was foregrounded, and the literature review is a helpful contribution.

3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the inaccuracies in metrics used to measure relative health and wellness both at the individual level and community level in Indigenous polities, and the harm that these interventions can cause. The literature review is limited by the scarcity of critical research in Indigenous wellness and prosperity indicator development. The following keywords were used to locate material: “prosperity,” “Indigenous,” “indicators”. The search was then broadened to include “resilience,” “measurement,” and “wellness”. A total of 52 articles were reviewed, and five were excluded as they did not respond to the focus of this review.

Five themes emerged from the literature reviewed. The first is that examining prosperity from a perspective that centralizes economic development theory renders structures of dispossession, racism, unilateral resource extraction, and environmental degradation invisible, while offering interventions that place responsibility squarely within the Indigenous community, family, or individual. Economic development models are also underpinned by western values of unilineal movement towards a “modernity” that is defined by the settler state. In this context other value systems are not recognized. The second is that current models of measurement and indicator development are largely designed by settler colonial governments, and are not informed by Indigenous epistemologies or values. The net result is that Indigenous lifestyles are measured in terms of deviance against a western norm. These studies rely on faulty sources of data that are troubled by inaccuracies or quality issues, the third theme examined in this review. A small number of papers have recently begun to examine accounting and accountability from an Indigenous perspective. The final two themes examine the resulting harm that these interventions can cause: the danger of equating mainstream nuanced definitions of ‘prosperity’ with wellness, and the danger of homogenizing experiences and voices. Each theme will be examined in sequence in this review.

Euro-centric modes of measurement

The western theory that underpins indicator design and development implies a linear development model that is facilitated by national economic and job growth and pays little attention to other obstacles to wellness like racism, historical political violence, and the intersection of Indigeneity, gender, and

violence. The terms that are used, like “poverty”, “wellbeing” and “prosperity” are most often contextually based on euro-western values that ultimately influence how metrics are defined, calculated, and weighted. Many of the resulting studies imply a western norm and measure Indigeneity along a spectrum of deviance.

The development of indicators and values to measure and determine the achievement of development goals has a long genealogy that is beyond the scope of this review. It is worth noting, however, that the original indicator to measure national development, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) came under criticism when it did not adequately attend to the unequal distribution of wealth, nor did it provide an adequate measurement of quality of life (Cooke, 2005). As a result, economists theorized a Gross National Happiness model (GNH) that was underpinned by environmental sustainability, infrastructure and economic development, while noting the threat of internal corruption (Zilberg, 2007). This model can, however, also be problematic because it posits development as progress along a linear scale. In 1999, Windle published a critical chapter examining issues with the measurement of resilience from a psychological perspective. Although the study was in a different domain, Windle noted that the attribution of resilience along a linear temporal line was misguided, noting the complex interactions that lead to a multi-directional model of wellness development. Using this example, we argue the same can be said about economic prosperity and wellness. Change may not occur along a temporal linear model, but rather may respond to multiple different influences, and branch out in multiple different directions, and yielding different benefits. Assuming that there is only one path towards prosperity imposes a false model that may also restrict analysts from noting diverse influences. The same temporal linear model underpins other economic solutions, like a feminist model towards prosperity (Segal, 2013).

Segal, however, uses an intersectional approach, one that is evident in a few other papers that successfully evaluate values wholistically to examine prosperity, wellness, and resilience (Choy, 2018; Gregory, Easterling, Kaechele, & Trousdale, 2016; King, Smith, & Gracey, 2009). For example, Choy (2018) examines the values underpinning the euro-western cost-based analysis method used to advance prosperity. She argues that these values lead to welfare distortions, because their value is judged by an aggregate result of benefit for the largest number of people and assumes that rational choice is based on profit. In her

study of Indigenous polities in Malaysia, she found that the obligation to past, present, and future generations was a far greater influence than profit. Using an intersectional approach to evaluate Indigeneity, land, and values, Choy's study convincingly argues for other relationships with land that are not predicated on commodity extraction, indicating that prosperity may be defined differently by Indigenous polities. Gregory et. al. (2016) argues that current assessment methodologies are fundamentally undermined by similar western-science definitions and values of rational choice based on money-units and profit. Brian Head (2008), designates these issues "wicked" policy problems because they necessitate an intersectional approach, and often involve differing value systems that cannot be resolved using policy changes.

The risk, they argue, is that these inappropriate assessment measures may facilitate further intervention in an Indigenous community that will exacerbate cultural loss, knowledge loss, disruption in the fabric of the community, and disruption in social relationships. A key example can be found in the analysis kin group definitions that do not align with Indigenous values of family (Tam, Findlay, & Kohen, 2017). Tam indicates that economic and census-based definitions of family use the nuclear construction found in euro-western societies, while some Indigenous families value broader, multi-generational, and non-blood related definitions. As Tam illustrates, using a euro-centric model of family allows an Indigenous family to be measured according to how much it deviates from the norm. These final examples indicate that values that underpin measurement systems need to be culturally and socially relevant, since "normality" is culturally and locally contingent (Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004).

Building on the previous point, measurements that begin from a euro-western definition of the norm also distort analysis into the realm of deficit models. Although many of the studies examining Indigenous issues are careful to include colonization and political violence, structures of exclusion and surveillance, and land dispossession and economic disadvantage, the overwhelming result is that of deficit (Jackson Pulver et al., 2010; King et al., 2009; Kral, 2013; Kral, Idlout, Minore, Dyck, & Kirmayer, 2011; Tomyn, Cummins, & Norrish, 2015). In other words, these polities fail to achieve equity with western norms evaluating criminality, education attainment, economic security, relative health and community safety. Each of these categories are defined and measured according to euro-western values.

The next section examines the way that western values and definitions influence the development of indicators and measurement tools. Analysts describe the obstacles of developing indicators and measures that adequately capture the complexity of Indigenous lives today and over time. In particular, the data sources and data quality issues distort the resulting analysis.

Inappropriate Indicator Calculation or Faulty Source of Data

Two key studies that challenge current assumptions about the value of indicators were completed by Fu, Exeter and Anderson (2015) and Sarah Prout (2012). They noted that current indices used to measure poverty or prosperity were developed by academics whose knowledge and interests were invariably situated within broader social and power relations and assumptions. These assumptions turned on a definition of "standard of living" established by euro-western academics with differing epistemologies. For example, the indices used implied a gender binary, patriarchal assumptions about wage earners, Eurocentric family definitions and structures, and ageism that did not reflect the knowledge and value of Elders. Fu et. al. argue that the current structure of indices renders middle-class European lifestyles and economic output as the default, while other constructions are measured according to their deviance to the norm. Privileges are therefore made invisible, while already marginalized populations are further stigmatized. Sarah Prout (2012) added that prosperity indicators in particular are created under the assumption that wealth accumulation and economic prosperity are the positive and main pathways towards wellbeing; subsistence activities and alternative markers of prosperity are excluded. Therefore, Indigenous norms and self-determined voice are obscured or erased.

These arguments can be applied to three reports that examined the validity of the First Nations Well-Being Index (Cooke, 2005; McHardy & O'Sullivan, 2004; O'Sullivan & McHardy, 2008). Of the three, the two published by O'Sullivan and McHardy can be collapsed into one: the same data is expressed in both with little change in methodology or composite indicators that are used. The indicators for the First Nations Well-Being Index (CWB) that were chosen were workforce participation, income, education attainment, and can all be situated within settler ideology. A settler definition of "wellbeing" is also used. Both compare First Nations to non-First Nations populations in Canada, both are completed through a memorandum of understanding in partnership with Statistics Canada, and both conclude by stating that the resulting data attempts

to identify “advantageous programs, policies, and community conditions.” Yet neither engages First Nations scholars in the development of the indicators, in the design of the study, or in the interpretation and analysis of the data. As Fu et. al. argued, the design of the study comparing First Nations to non-First Nations populations automatically establishes non-First Nations populations as the norm and problematizes First Nations populations. Cooke (2005) provides a brief overview of the development of social indicators, and then assesses the value of the CWB indicators in comparison. He concludes that although the indicators are not wholistic, involving a greater number of alternatives would destabilize the results. Cooke argues that there would be a greater chance that the definitions or collection methodology would change over time, making long-term comparability difficult to assess. The variability of definitions, in particular, was noted as a key weakness in the study of resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Some indicators, like environmental/ ecological health, gender equality, social determinants of health, and freedom from crime are difficult to assess in small communities where the data is unavailable, or there are jurisdictional issues. Cooke recognizes that the weight and scale of the various indicators are value judgements made by settler analysts. Yet despite these issues, Cooke concludes that the CWB generally meets the requirement of validity.

The reports and measurements discussed above rely on Canadian census data that only captures a subset of the Indigenous population, ignoring those that live off reservation, were rendered invisible by the sixties’ scoop, or suffer from jurisdictional complications (Smylie & Anderson, 2006). For example, Smylie and Anderson illustrate that health data is particularly weak for this reason since many health issues are captured in hospitals located in different jurisdictions from the geographical location of home. Other sources of data are not measurable over time because the unique indicators developed for the studies were used for a limited period of time, the definitions of the underlying metrics changed, or the weights of the underlying metrics changed.

Prout (2012) also argued that many relevant indicators that Indigenous polities identified are difficult to measure and are illegible to government actors. For example, state bureaucratic obstacles or “red tape”, cultural participation, and familial and community social support were all identified as salient, but designing a quantitative measurement and locating key sources of data was difficult. Other analysts (Tomyn, Norrish, & Cummins, 2013) dismiss the development of

Indigenous indicators outright because they would not be able to compare the results cross-culturally. Prout (2012) acknowledged that developing statistical measures that respond to Indigenous well-being, health, and prosperity was potentially ground-breaking, but that there were currently barriers to the work. These obstacles included local Indigenous participation, research governance, and community acceptance, not just buy-in at the leadership level.

Accounting/Accountability

Local Indigenous participation can be conceived in terms of accountability and audit and accounting knowledge. Both issues intersect as education in accounting is perceived to be missing in Indigenous polities, while the development of accounting knowledge is perceived to be another tool of settler colonization. Simultaneously, the development of accounting education also implies greater visibility of economic expenditure and expressed as a tool towards greater accountability towards community goals. The next section unpacks these two issues in greater detail.

As argued in the previous sections, many indicators are used by state governments to create a dynamic of accountability which may be different from the values and definitions of accountability among Indigenous communities. Yet there are too few Indigenous accountants that are able to bridge this gap between governments and Indigenous polities. In the first of two papers addressing Indigenous peoples and accounting or accountability, Buhr (2011, 2012) conducted a literature review and then research among Indigenous polities in Australia and Papua New Guinea. In the papers, Buhr argued that the majority of current literature depicted Indigenous peoples as passive recipients of accounting and argued for more active engagement in empowerment activities (see, for example, Tsey, Whiteside, Deemal, & Gibson, 2003 where Indigenous families are positioned as passive actors in family wellbeing initiatives, and must take further "control" of their lives). The nature of the articles that Buhr examined overwhelmingly contributed to a discourse of poverty, and objectified and essentialized Indigenous polities (see also Thomas, Mitchell, & Arseneau, 2016). There were three main themes identified: accounting as a tool for domination, accounting as a tool for dispossession, and accounting as a tool for cultural dispossession. Each explored how state funds are tied to a capitalist economy that requires an audit of expenditure which can then be used to deny payments or locate avenues to cut costs. Buhr's literature analysis, however, assumes a standard of living commensurate with non-Indigenous values. But

despite this shortcoming, Buhr ends with an important call for accounting and accountability by, rather than for, Indigenous peoples. In the subsequent research, Buhr located opportunities for training methodologies based on Indigenous practices. These included oral storytelling, along with flexibility and adaptability to life obstacles leading to educational processes that would facilitate a shift to accounting by Indigenous peoples.

Later work on accounting education for Indigenous peoples expanded the frame to argue that imperial logics and unacknowledged biases must be considered when approaching accounting and accountability issues among Indigenous polities. The first paper advocates for mutual capacity building in the domain of statistical literacy for all Indigenous and non-Indigenous analysts to recognize the underlying biases brought to statistical interpretation (Kukutai & Walter, 2015). The second argues that imperial dynamics continue to influence intellectual property when data extraction and ownership is dominated by state actors. This particular point can be extended to include the dynamics of census design, data collection and interpretation: these are always and already owned by the state (Whitt, 1998). Therefore, accounting and accountability must be defined and repositioned within an Indigenous framework first, and this orientation touches on issues of anonymity.

Once seen as the gold standard in qualitative research, Svalastog and Eriksson (2010) instead argue that anonymity is a hindrance to data ownership, establishing trust, and community engagement. They argue that stating a name meets the demand to acknowledge the sources and owners of knowledge. By removing ethical obligations that conceptualize Indigenous polities as vulnerable, data ownership is returned to them, and interpretation is completed by Indigenous people. Subsequently, accountability is reoriented: it is no longer a matter of Indigenous polities becoming accountable to the state, but rather a matter of Indigenous polities becoming accountable to themselves in a way that incorporates the relevant components of Indigenous knowledge that illustrate traditional modalities of wealth redistribution.

The next section underlines the necessity of interpretation by and for Indigenous polities. In many of the economics papers that were examined to establish euro-centric values, the link between prosperity and wellness was assumed. Yet the two were consistently decoupled in Indigenous critiques of economic wealth and the capitalist market structure found in settler colonial states.

Mainstream economically centered definitions of Prosperity do not equate to Wellness

The following section summarizes papers that examined wellness in an Indigenous context. The danger of current interpretations based on western epistemologies is that prosperity often equates to wellness in governmental discourse. The two are not linked in studies examining subjective feelings of wellness and economic wealth within Indigenous polities. As a result, developing metrics that measure Indigenous prosperity may be read inaccurately by state actors because of incommensurate definitions.

Many studies originating in Australia have contributed to the decoupling of wellness and prosperity (Biddle, 2014; Hunter, Kennedy, & Biddle, 2004; Jordan, Bulloch, & Buchanan, 2010), while similar arguments were found originating in Canada (Stienstra, Manning, Levac, & Baikie, 2017; Wilson & Tyedmers, 2013). Studies in Australia conclude that the indicators used by the Australian state are not clearly linked to Indigenous wellbeing because ideas about absolute poverty are defined by western values and norms (Biddle, 2014; Hunter et al., 2004). In a study examining three composite indicators intended to measure Indigenous wellbeing, Jordan et. al. concluded that all three were underpinned by normative assumptions about the link between economic prosperity and wellness. The net result of these studies were that they eroded Indigenous sovereignty, prioritized individuality and the logic of free choice, and homogenized the experience of Indigenous polities that were each historically, politically, and economically specific. In Canada, two research papers illuminated the danger of conflating wellbeing and prosperity. The first study took aim at the link directly, arguing instead that economic prosperity led to a decrease in social outcomes like ecological health, safe neighborhoods, and higher rates of employment (Wilson & Tyedmers, 2013). The second focused on the link between economic investment in the extractive industry and the resulting effects on Indigenous polities (Stienstra et al., 2017). The research team discovered that resource extraction increased economic prosperity for some polities, and yet moved others towards crisis, and in some communities, both occurred at the same time. Their study not only challenged the link between economically driven ideas about wellness, but complicated the idea of prosperity as a specific bounded object with only one ethical code that underpinned it. As they argue, prosperity can have multiple meanings, depending on where it occurs, under which circumstances, and to whom.

Indicators and measures, data analysis and interpretation necessarily generalize across vast groups of people. The homogenization of experience is an outcome of many themes in the literature so far. This final point is taken up in greater detail in the next section.

Homogenization of Experience

This final section argues that homogenizing the experience of "prosperity" or "wellness" within communities or across polities renders the specificity of each polity invisible. Indigenous communities are geographically and ecologically situated and sensitive to historic, political, and economic experiences that should be taken into account individually. The diversity of knowledge, values, and practices are examined in multiple research papers from different fields: health and psychology (Christopher, 1999; Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2012; Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004; Kukutai & Walter, 2015; Panelli & Tipa, 2007; Smylie & Anderson, 2006; Wendt & Gone, 2012; Yates-Doerr, 2013). Each conclude, however, that the research and conclusions must be specific, not generalized.

Researchers in biomedical health working with Indigenous polities internationally and locally have commented extensively on the ways that health and wellbeing is defined differently according to the locality of populations (Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2012; Kukutai & Walter, 2015; Panelli & Tipa, 2007; Smylie & Anderson, 2006; Yates-Doerr, 2013). Smylie and Anderson (2006), examining Indigenous health in a Canadian context, argued that measurement models must be locally customized and relevant. Writing in the same Canadian context, Greenwood and Leeuw argued that part of the problem with Indigenous measurement models was that they viewed data in silos rather than accounting for the myriad other influencing factors that are experienced among Indigenous polities. Panelli and Tipa, writing in 2007, examined Maori wellbeing and concluded that geographic specificity was essential when contextualizing health in order to illuminate the interconnectedness of food production, ancestral wisdom, ecology, education, and economic development. They also argued that these pathways to knowledge were not reproducible when the location changed. Therefore, these diverse practices could not be captured by a single homogenous framework for data collection and analysis. Writing eight years later, Kukutai & Walter similarly concluded that many Indigenous population statistics fail to recognize population diversity (2015). Each of these studies points to the ways that numbers obscure the lives and experiences of individuals and collectives (Yates-

Doerr, 2013). Although Yates-Doerr specifically writes in the context of obesity studies, her point remains valid in an Indigenous context as well. When making comparisons, she writes, diverse experiences are flattened. Rendering diverse experiences, values, and definitions homogenous runs a risk of essentializing different polities and publishing only a few (potentially harmful) narratives.

In a bid to circumvent this risk, several theorists have proposed alternate models focusing more on processual models of analysis. For example, examining the ability to choose an outcome has been examined as a specific mode of decolonized measurement (Christopher, 1999; Harvey & Delfabbro, 2004). Writing within a psychological perspective, Chambers (1999) argued that wellbeing is culturally informed within a specifically "social and natural backdrop". Instead of trying to measure the achievement of individuals against a common goal, he argues that the focus should be shifted to the ability to choose a path towards fulfillment. Harvey and Delfabbro (2004), however, illustrate how the logic of choice can similarly be misconstrued if the options are defined ethically by analysts. He gives the example of running away from home: a risky choice by some mental health practitioners, but socially advantageous if the action avoids a dangerous home environment while introducing new supports. Thus, even a procedural analysis risks being undermined by an essentializing narrative.

Summary and next steps

There are clear challenges to developing measurement matrices for prosperity research. As indicated over the course of this literature review, the pitfalls include: defaulting to a euro-centric value system; designing indicators that are inappropriate to diverse communities or that change over time, making them difficult to compare; diluting or misrepresenting values and indicators that are not informed by Indigenous worldviews to state policymakers; and homogenizing diverse and complex influences.

With so many potential pitfalls to be found in the value system, design, analysis, and publication of indicator systems, what opportunities remain for Indigenous polities wishing to measure prosperity? Regardless of the critiques offered thus far, measuring and analyzing data does offer opportunities for real improvements to Indigenous lives, both individually and collectively (Gregory et al., 2016). A few proposals offered by some of the scholars reviewed over the course of the research project continue to call for iterative assessments, and the development of collaborative and trusting relationships throughout the entire cycle of project management.

Many of the authors reviewed articulated reoccurring suggestions to resolve these issues. All indicated that design, data gathering, analysis and interpretation need to begin from Indigenous worldviews, informed by Indigenous values, and priorities (Green, Niall, & Morrison, 2012; Gregory et al., 2016; Hurst & Nader, 2006; Israel et al., 2008; Kukutai & Walter, 2015; Priest, Mackean, Waters, Davis, & Riggs, 2009). Green et. al. (2012) and Israel et. al. (2008) both advocated for iterative, cyclical design processes that were flexible, and based on the strengths of the communities involved. Several scholars also noted that capacity-building on statistical literacy was needed, along with data-sharing and ownership agreements in place (Gregory et al., 2016; Kukutai & Walter, 2015). Perhaps most importantly, Indigenous scholars working on measurement tools needed to carefully consider the audience and the purpose of Indigenous statistics. These scholars suggested that perhaps a better orientation would be to measure the accountability of settler states, rather than the accounting of Indigenous polities (Kukutai & Walter, 2015). A consideration of the audience and purpose would also ensure that the values that underpin these metrics would be interpreted and communicated carefully. These suggestions could potentially circumvent unintended consequences of homogenizing and generalizing narratives that may be misconstrued by state agencies and actors.

4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

This section describes the project methodology, data collection procedures, data collection methods, and data analysis tools.

4.1 METHODOLOGY DISCUSSION

Indigenous methodologies include concepts such as Indigenous values and cultural protocols as integral components (Porsanger, 2004; Hart, 2011). Smith in Porsanger (2004, p. 116) states, “They are ‘factors’ to be built into research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood.”

In order to provide answers to the overarching research question **“How do urban Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario view a prosperous/wealthy life?”** the OFIFC utilized its USAI Research Framework as its methodological foundation. USAI consists of four principles: Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, and Inter-Relationality.

UTILITY: Needs are based on community priorities

SELF-VOICING: Research, knowledge, and practice are authored by communities that are fully recognized as Knowledge Creators and Knowledge Keepers

ACCESS: Research fully recognizes all local knowledge, practice, and experience in all their cultural manifestations as accessible by all research authors and Knowledge Keepers

UTILITY: Research is historically-situated, geo-politically positioned, relational, and explicit about the perspective from which knowledge is generated

The key to appropriately implementing these principles stems from deliberately considering the community-driven component of the research project. The USAI Research Framework (2012, 2016) is a culture-based framework that is practical, community-determined, community-reflexive, and highly participatory. USAI is rooted in Indigenous Knowledge and is meant to help lead researchers and communities to a place where they will have enhanced their capability to collectively identify a research process that has real and immediate impacts. "In traditional Indigenous societies, the values of our culture were expressed through our collective worldview, our Indigenous knowledge, which is based upon our millennia of experience on this land, our understanding of connectedness, inter-relationships, and the daily expression of all these things." (OFIFC, 2011). Resulting from the implementation of USAI as the methodological approach, this research project was able to incorporate a flexible approach that allowed (and accounted for) contextual changes that occurred over time. In addition, this flexibility acted as a safeguard to help ensure that what was happening on the ground in community remained congruent with the more conceptual elements in the research process.

Concepts such as 'moment in time', 'flexibility' and 'allowing for contextual change' refer to being responsive in Indigenous research contexts rather than acting reactively. USAI is responsive rather than reactive because Indigenous Knowledge carries within it cultural standards to live by, which continue to be passed down from one generation to the next - orally and experientially. Recognizing what is relevant in a 'moment in time' involves taking into thoughtful consideration the accumulated relevant Indigenous knowledge of the past and applying it in ways that are responsive and useful within contemporary situations.

4.1.2 AN EVOLVING METHODOLOGY: USAI IN ACTION

The methodology of the Ganohonyohk (Giving Thanks): Indigenous Prosperity research project evolved significantly over the course of the 3-year term; however, we were always guided by the four USAI principles of Utility, Self-Voicing, Access and Inter-relationality. The forms of community engagement and relationship-building, research activities,

community expectations, and timelines were all negotiated with each of the Friendship Centre communites over 3 years. The project was an important learning journey for the OFIFC Research team in determining how to enact the USAI principles in diverse communities.

Depending on the project some USAI principles may play a more prominent role in the research process than others. The principles are not meant to be used as a standardized conceptual 'boilerplate' for conducting research. The USAI principles are meant as a guide and/or tool that could be helpful in thinking about and further clarifying the components of research within particular contexts. Based on engagements with communities at all stages of the process, we noticed that the emphasis in this particular research project gravitated towards the principles of Utility and Self-Voicing.

Utility

The principle of Utility greatly affected how this project unfolded, shaping the journey from the initial research plan to the direction that it took in each community. At the start of the project, the OFIFC Research team developed a plan which included three rounds of research activities in each Friendship Centre community:

During the **first round of research activities**, OFIFC Researchers engaged with staff at each centre to identify a specific research direction on Indigenous prosperity.

In a **second round**, OFIFC researchers held discussions with community members (chosen by Friendship Centre staff) on the prosperity topic that was identified in the first visit.

The **third and final** round was meant to provide feedback to the Friendship Centre.

The first round of activities went according to plan and Friendship Centre staff were able to identify areas of focus which made sense to them. Importantly, this round resulted in establishing a baseline for the research insofar as it set the community-driven research direction within each community. While some communities followed through with the original second round itinerary listed above, others decided that it would be more useful to conduct activities which actualized prosperity. By the third round all of the communities decided they wanted to engage in useful activities that demonstrated what prosperity meant to them. The OFIFC Research team was invited to gather research data at these

events. Gathering data in this way was enriching in the sense that we were not trying to impose a research space for the sole purpose of collecting data within the communities.

Utility was also an important guiding principle in terms of the conceptual shift of the project, described in Chapter Two. Aside from the numerous risks associated with creating an Indigenous prosperity metrics that are outlined in the Literature Review and Appendix A, most importantly, it was communities that did not perceive the overall utility of such a tool. By the end of the project, this was true even in the case of the Friendship Centre who originally planned to work with local researchers to create a metrics (see Appendix A for a more detailed discussion of this example).

Self-Voicing:

Throughout the research process, Self-Voicing was another principle at the core of this project. Participating Friendship Centres self-voiced what prosperity meant to them and hosted events that they felt would be demonstrative of prosperity within their particular communities. For example, at Ne-Chee Friendship Centre in Kenora, the community self-voiced an aversion to the words ‘prosperity’ and ‘wealth’ to determine the direction of the project and the scope of their involvement. For this community, these terms were linked too closely with mainstream concepts that centralize economic wealth. Ne-Chee preferred the more inclusive Anishinaabe term of mino bimaadiziwin (every day good living) to better represent what we were seeking to understand through the research question. This concept will be further articulated in the Ne-Chee thematic analysis section of this report.

As indicated in the **Utility** section above, all communities decided by the third research engagement to focus on an activity that demonstrated prosperity rather than participating in a focus group or interview, that was limited to only talking about it. Whether it was the pow-wows that occurred at Ne-Chee and Council Fire, the goose hunt at Ininew, or the construction of a space for youth at the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, all of these community-driven activity spaces provided an opportunity for the OFIFC Research Team to gather rich information. Everyone benefited because community members were attending an event created and delivered by the Friendship Centre, which were culture-based, a comfortable space for them, and relevant to their life.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The data collection process of this project involved several procedures, including:

- Consent;
- Indigenous protocols; and
- Data collection methods.

Consent

OFIFC obtained consent from all participants in the research process. After the project was explained by OFIFC Researchers, participants gave consent to write notes, audio record, take pictures and, in some cases, videotape events. The method of collecting information was contingent on guidance from the communities as they determined what would be useful for their purposes. In addition, individual participants were asked what type of recording method they were comfortable with. Some chose written, others consented to audio recordings and several wanted a video record of their events that were demonstrative of prosperity. Some participants who signed a consent form requested to have a copy of their transcribed interview. These participants were contacted and a transcript was sent to them in cases where they still wanted a copy.

Indigenous Protocols

To the best of our ability, the OFIFC Research Team followed the local Indigenous protocols of the partnering communities. We understand Indigenous protocols to be culturally grounded instructions and guidance for how to conduct oneself in relation to others in a respectful way that honours Indigenous values. We each bring our own knowledge of Indigenous protocols to our work, but it is important to note that protocols are different in each community. In each Friendship Centre community, we took direction from Friendship Centre staff to identify and provide guidance on specific local protocols. Following local protocols was especially important when engaging with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers during the research process. We followed the general protocol of making a tobacco offering through the research interview process. Additionally, reciprocity is an important cultural value that is common across many territories and communities. Participants were provided with small gifts and Elders and Knowledge Keepers were provided with gifts or honouraria to honour their time and contribution of Indigenous Knowledge.

Data Collection Methods

A compendium of methods were used to creatively engage with communities and collect data. These methods were developed collectively, guided by Friendship Centre communities' needs and preferences and supported by the OFIFC Research Team. Data collection methods included:

- collaborative art creation and discussion;
- interviews (in Friendship Centres, on the land, at pow wows);
- focus groups;
- participation in land-based activities and cultural events;
- sharing circles;
- participation in ceremonies;
- sharing meals; and
- video and photo documentation of interviews, cultural grounds, Friendship Centres and powwows.

Over the course of the project, data collection methods evolved as communities shifted their attention from dialoguing about prosperity to suggesting activities where prosperity could be seen in action. At the same time, data collection methods had to be flexible and responsive because Friendship Centres had unique ways of expressing prosperity. Through this process, the OFIFC Research Team was able to support communities in something they were interested in pursuing rather than 'imposing' interview spaces that mainly consisted of standard 'focus group and 'individual interview' levels of engagement. For example, a video interview during the spring goose hunt with Elders at Ininew Friendship Centre in Cochrane in addition to interviews at pow wows in Kenora and at Toronto Council Fire, provided rich data and valuable experiential context for deeper insights into how communities understood urban Indigenous prosperity.

A common underlying thread across data collection methods was the importance of maintaining and building positive relationships. So much of the success or failure in Indigenous research processes depends on the status of relationships. If good relationships do not exist or are not cultivated, it is easy for the research process to take on a 'clinical' feel which results in participants feeling isolated or disengaged. Indeed, 'research' continues to carry negative connotations in many Indigenous communities. There are many historical and contemporary examples in which researchers extract

knowledge from Indigenous communities for their own purposes with no attention or consideration for the community's needs, self-determination, or ownership of their traditional knowledge (Battiste, 2007; James et al., 2008; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). We work with a community-driven approach guided by the USAI Framework and, as an urban Indigenous organization, are very mindful of the historical and contemporary tensions with respect to research. Engaging with communities through this project provided opportunities to demystify research and the role of researchers. Community members continued to guide the research process at all stages of the project from start to finish.

Our intent was to do our best to join the different circles of the Friendship Centre communities -rather than trying to enter communities and impose our own circle of understanding. For example, when the OFIFC Research Team and Council Fire staff met to plan the project, Council Fire staff emphasized that it was important for OFIFC Research to spend time to better understand the Centre and participate in the life of the community. Before planning research activities, they felt that time would be better spent developing a relationship. Through this relationship, the Research Team could learn how the community understood prosperity, by listening, observing and participating. Council Fire asked the Research Team to attend community events, including family cultural nights and the First Fire Dance Annual Showcase, an evening featuring the community's youth dancers, drummers and singers in both traditional and contemporary performances. The Research Team learned that for Council Fire, a key focus for the community is youth wellbeing and development. This is reflected in the care and attention that the Centre places on children and youth programming.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

In the context of OFIFC's community driven USAI Research Framework, the two types of data analysis techniques that best supported the Indigenous analysis processes used for this project are interim analysis in combination with framework analysis.

Interim Analysis

For qualitative studies, such as this one, data analysis tends to be an ongoing and non-linear process. The term traditionally used to describe this cyclical process is interim analysis – which Johnson and Christensen (2012) describe in Chapter 19 of Educational Research: Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Approaches. The interim analysis for this project took place over several months and consisted of several sessions of analyzing and synthesizing the data. Interim analysis continues until the process or topic the researcher is interested in is understood (2012). The end result for this project was a clearer picture of the relationships that existed (or did not exist).

Framework Analysis

This approach to analysis has been developed over time by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen). Here, a thematic framework is utilised to classify and organise data according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories that evolve and are refined out of a process of repetition. The final stage of the framework method involves summarizing/synthesizing the original data from each interview within the appropriate part of the thematic framework (Ritchie, Spencer, & Lewis, 2003).

For this study, through an ongoing collective review of the data, the process of analysis consisted of categorizing the information as well as collapsing it into representative themes and sub-themes.

5

ANALYSIS: URBAN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON PROSPERITY

5. ANALYSIS: URBAN INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON PROSPERITY

This section presents a thematic analysis of locally-developed understandings of prosperity within each of the seven participating Friendship Centre communities. The Chapter finishes with a synthesized perspective on urban Indigenous prosperity that is grounded in the research findings of the seven participating Friendship Centre communities.

These thematic analyses present the story of each Friendship Centres' involvement in the project, and inherently these stories are distinct. The thematic analyses vary in length and breadth. This is a result of several factors. Since we used a community-driven research process, Friendship Centres and community members respectively own their data and have the autonomy to decide throughout the research process the ways that data can be used. For some research activities during this project, communities requested that we not record or take notes. Some participants also specified how their data could be used. Our thematic analysis and the specificity of information included were developed in consideration of community directions, which were different based on different project trajectories and different community preferences.

5.1 MAKING OUR OWN PATH: NE-CHEE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (KENORA)

At Ne-Chee Friendship Centre connection to land, culture and involving youth were large aspects of prosperity. Located in Kenora, this region is located near the Lake of the Woods. This image was created to highlight the beauty of the landscape, and the connection youth have to the place. Canoeing around the river and finding a path represents literal and metaphorical representation of individuals making their way through life. As one youth stated, “travelling on the river teaches you how to make a path, areas to avoid and how to get where you’re going”. This teaching is encapsulated in the concept mino bimaadiziwin, which means everyday good living. Mino bimaadiziwin is a concept that teaches about how to live a good life through practice. At Ne-Chee Friendship Centre, this was described as honouring and being connected to children, teachings, culture, language and positive support networks. Youth were described as important as

they are the next generation. Learning from Elders and their families about how to paddle forward into a good life is essential for living prosperously.

Community Profile

Ne-Chee is Ojibway for “a close friend or brother”. The Centre promotes the education and cultural advancement of Indigenous people. Ne-Chee was founded in 1975 and incorporated on May 31, 1976. NFC is also a founding member of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) which was incorporated in 1971. Its founding directors are: Sam Copenace Sr. (deceased), Joe Morrison, Kitty Everson, Steve Skead, Christine Gordon, Len Hakenson, and Derick Pitawanakwat. The NFC is now over 40 years old and continues to grow. The Centre salutes those individuals who contributed their support and time for making the Centre what it is today.

Thematic Analysis

At Ne-Chee Friendship Centre in Kenora, Ontario, the Prosperity project illuminated findings that spoke to the importance of co-developing key language and terms with urban Indigenous communities, rather than assuming their preconceived relevance. As we learned, the term ‘prosperity’ did not resonate with some members of the Ne-Chee community as the best way to frame the project. The project also highlighted many challenges and obstacles

for urban Indigenous people in Kenora. It identified the ways in which community members use both cultural spaces and services (like the Friendship Centre) as well as their own cultural grounding to navigate this challenging urban landscape. Prosperity themes developed from an analysis of research activities with the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre community include:

- Obstacles to prosperity;
- Questioning the term 'prosperity': A progression from prosperity to mino- bimaadiziwin; and
- Prosperity in action.

Obstacles to Prosperity

At Ne-Chee, the first round of data collection for this project entailed focus groups with Ne-Chee staff to discuss the staff's understandings of prosperity. The conversation focused on the particular context of Kenora which made it difficult for urban Indigenous people to thrive, the ways that the Friendship Centre already supported community members, and the changes that needed to be made in order to make Kenora a place that supported urban Indigenous prosperity.

At Ne-Chee points were raised around what it would mean to foster and support urban Indigenous prosperity. Key issues for the Friendship Centre community revolved around racism and discrimination in Kenora. In addition to this, a mistrust of government in the urban Indigenous community exists based on experiences of broken promises and past negative experiences. These combined points led to frustrations around the need for immediate action and available funding to support urban Indigenous people in Kenora. Other concerns included a general need for more trauma-informed training for agencies and services who support urban Indigenous peoples and reconciling the current affordable housing crisis.

Questioning the term 'prosperity': An evolution from prosperity to mino bimaadiziwin

The second round of research activities involved meetings with Friendship Centre community members. We heard from a wider range of urban Indigenous people in Kenora regarding their experiences in town and the challenges or obstacles they faced to attaining 'prosperity'. At this time, a working definition or common understanding of prosperity for the community had not yet been established within the context of this project. Therefore, when the first community

gathering was held in May 2017, there was some confusion about the topic and purpose of the research. Some community members could not relate to the word 'prosperity' and were upset by the expectation that they would be able to relate to it. For most of the group, the word 'prosperity' carried mainstream connotations of financial wealth and people stated very strongly that this was not their reality. One person asked:

> *"How can I sit here and talk about prosperity when maybe I'm having a hard time feeding my kids, paying my rent? There are lots of us in that place in Kenora right now."* Community members continued to list the obstacles to prosperity that they faced- including lack of affordable housing, racism, and food insecurity.

Participants asked us to clarify the project purpose. We explained that the project was meant to be a way for participating Friendship Centre communities to articulate their own understandings of prosperity and the conditions necessary to support prosperity. We explained that the research could be used by Friendship Centres and other service providers in urban areas to better understand how to meet the needs of urban Indigenous people, as well as by the municipal, provincial and federal governments to better understand the priorities of urban Indigenous people across Ontario.

After this, the group realized that it was the word 'prosperity' itself which was the issue and that this had been preventing people from thinking about their lives in a truly strengths-based way. The conversation then moved from discussion of obstacles to one in which people talked about what they had or what they did to make them feel well. One person suggested that mino bimaadiziwin would be a more appropriate term to use in the conversation. Mino bimaadiziwin is an Anishinaabemowin phrase which loosely translates to 'good life' in English. Mino bimaadiziwin is a wholistic cultural concept which contains within it many ideas and teachings about what it means to lead a good life, as well as instructions for how to do it. For the remainder of the focus group, community members used 'mino bimaadiziwin' and 'good life' interchangeably. People talked about the importance of connection to family or a positive support network; the importance of having a safe home; the importance of living in accordance with the seven grandfather teachings (humility, bravery, honesty, truth, respect, love and wisdom); the importance of gratitude and living one day at a time; and overcoming intergenerational trauma that has resulted in addictions and mental health issues. Toward the end of the session, one man reflected on a drawing that he had made as during the

conversation:

> *"You know, as people were talking I always like to try and visualize answers for myself by using the culture. And what I drew here is a man in a canoe. This good life for me means healing and sobriety, first. You know, as he travels on the river there's a current and he's got to move his canoe around to avoid certain areas, so basically he has to make his own path. Me as an Aboriginal person these are things I have to do in my life. And for me, to have my own path, I do that through the culture and my spiritual beliefs. To have that ability to make choices for myself, not people telling me what I should do. By practicing the seven teachings, the hunting and the fishing. Me being a counsellor, I'm always teaching my clients about healthy living and making healthy choices. By getting honest with yourself [and] having that integrity to be proud of who you are [then] you stand strong, belief in yourself [and] get up. Me being an alcoholic, I've been sober 13 years and I fell thousands of times [but] each time I got back up. And today I live a pretty good life."*

As these conversations ended, we finally had a common, culturally-grounded understanding of prosperity for the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre community: mino bimaadiziwin. This concept included the principles, practices, relationships, and material conditions that were necessary to live well, all within a cultural framework that made sense to everyone participating.

Prosperity in action

As we started to talk about the next steps, community members and staff pointed out that one cannot understand mino bimaadiziwin simply by getting together in a room and talking about it. Mino bimaadiziwin is a way of living, and as such it has to be lived to be understood. As we thought together about how to make this happen in the context of this research project, Friendship Centre staff mentioned their hopes to hold a powwow at the end of the summer to honour the children and send them back to school with school supplies. As one participant pointed out, "It feels like a powwow, when people are together and dancing and drumming is a good moment to talk about good living". In the final stage of the research process, the OFIFC team supported and attended the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre back-to-school powwow. Researchers' documented different parts of the powwow and conduct video interviews with community members on their understandings of mino bimaadiziwin and the role of the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre in promoting this. The video research products will be used by Ne-Chee Friendship Centre to educate their community on culture-based ideas around prosperity.

5.2 LAND AS A TEACHER: ININEW FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (COCHRANE)

This illustration shows how Ininew's cultural grounds are connected to the community's understanding of prosperity. The three ways that Ininew community members defined prosperity are through land, education, and cultural revitalization. Both education and cultural revitalization take place on the land at the cultural grounds. This land provides a safe space for community members to participate in ceremony, to learn, and to feel safe. The illustration emphasizes concepts of safety and ceremony, through the inclusion of the lodge as well as the older individual with the young child. This also represents an environment in which intergenerational knowledge transfer occurs. The cultural grounds play a very important role in the sharing of knowledge (for example, teaching young people how to traditionally prepare game). In a sense, the cultural grounds is a space that offers opportunities to 'grow the culture back' (shown by highlighting how green and alive the cultural grounds are and through showing two individuals at different life stages). In essence, this illustration shows the land as

a teacher and also the different generations as teachers for each other.

Community Profile

Among Ininew's objectives are to develop, expand and preserve Aboriginal cultural identity through the institution of social/ health programs, life skills programs, recreational events, gatherings and any other such functions that enhance the quality of life of all persons of Indigenous ancestry in the Cochrane area. The Ininew Friendship Centre was incorporated on November 19, 1974 and became a member of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) in 1975. The centre's founding directors are Marie Theresa Hall, Joseph Thomas Sackaney, Alice Anne Doris Louttit, Jacob Rupert's House Diamond, Marvin Gerald Lawrence Mountney, Richard Robert Moore, and Laughton Oconnel Binns. The surrounding communities that the Ininew Friendship Centre serves upon request are: Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Attawapiskat, Peawanuk, Fort Severn, Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Constance Lake, Hornepayne, Timmins, Foleyet, Chapleau, Iroquois Falls, Montieth, Matheson, Kirkland Lake and Haileybury.

Thematic Analysis

At the Ininew Friendship Centre in Cochrane, Ontario, there were three inter-related themes that arose with respect to the community's understanding of prosperity:

- Land;
- Education; and
- Cultural revitalization.

Land

The Ininew Cultural Grounds are just outside of the town of Cochrane and are a place for cultural activities that the Friendship Centre cares for and manages. The property belongs to the Friendship Centre and is a place where families and community come to practice traditional ways and participate in land-based activities. The grounds include a clearing with several traditional structures including a shaptewan, a miijiiwap, a sweat lodge frame, and fire pits. There are also tables for eating or preparing food and a forested area that is used for harvesting, snaring, and other activities. As one staff member explained,

“I know the urban lifestyle is a little hard, but [the Cultural Grounds] make it a little easier for [community members] to come out and practice that role that they need to fulfill within their family. That’s what these Grounds were designed for.”

The Cultural Grounds is an important place that facilitates opportunities for healing, connecting with the land and community, feeling safe as an Indigenous person, practicing ceremony, learning from the land, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.

Much of the urban Indigenous population of Cochrane are Cree, from either local First Nations or remote First Nations from the James Bay coast. As Friendship Centre staff explained, many community members face a difficult transition into the environment of Cochrane. By conducting prosperity research at the Cultural Grounds, Ininew staff felt that community members would be inspired to speak to the ways that the Grounds had improved their life. Simultaneously, the Research Team would also have an opportunity to learn and experience firsthand the relationship between connection to land and Indigenous prosperity.

Community members described how they felt at the Cultural Grounds in the following ways:

“Heartwarming.”
“At home, because you’re with people you’re connected to.”
“it makes me feel proud of my culture.”
“it makes me feel more connected to my culture since my family is moving away from hunting and stuff.”

One community member explained how connection to land and participation in cultural activities was integral to his learning and healing process:

“You know, it’s a balance for me to live in an urban area and to come back to nature like this, and help out as much as I can. I didn’t learn the right ways so I’m still learning and it’s a continuous thing in my life. I’m constantly learning every day how to do things [and] how to do them in the Native cultural way.”

Interviews at the Ininew Cultural Grounds highlighted the potential healing power of a traditional way of life that aligns with cultural values. Elders shared that a traditional way of life does not mean an individual simply absorbs everything

that others tell them about their culture. Rather, living traditionally is a critical process of acknowledging what 'fits' or makes sense for someone personally and what does not. It involves listening to oneself while critically engaging with cultural knowledge and seeking help or guidance from community when feeling lost. Through this process individuals will come to know how to make necessary changes and lead a good life. Connection to the land and connection to other community members, through time spent on the land, are key components of the Ininew Friendship Centre community's understanding of prosperity.

Education

The Ininew Cultural Grounds are a key site for land and culture-based education within the urban Indigenous community of Cochrane. During this project, many conversations emerged about the relationship between education and prosperity in community members' lives. Community members touched on many different types of education, including: teachings from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and other community members; learning from the land; interpretation of one's own experience within a cultural framework; and participation in the Western education system of public school, high school and post-secondary. Many people emphasized the Ininew Friendship Centre as instrumental in supporting these diverse aspects of education. As one community member noted:

> *"The Friendship Centre is very important… Not just to help people, but to find those other services I mentioned, the social services or jobs. It [wholistically] allows them to grow as individuals, to become stronger while they get training and education."*

The experiences and self-voiced narratives demonstrated that for the Ininew Friendship Centre community, the land is a teacher. The Cultural Grounds are integral for ensuring that the land, including the cultural context, teachings, and web of relationships which exist as part of the land, are accessible for urban Indigenous people in the area. In July 2017, the Friendship Centre organized multiple days of action-oriented research activities that included substantial time spent at the Cultural Grounds. Activities with Knowledge Keepers and community members included: preparation of traditional foods like moose stew, fried pickerel, bannock and sagabon (goose roasted over a fire); video interviews with Elders and Knowledge Keepers; a sweat lodge ceremony; and a feast. The day was an experiential learning opportunity for researchers and community members, as everyone helped with different tasks to do what needed to be done. Through this experience, Elders and community members taught researchers

about the cultural values of role modeling positive behaviour and educating in a non-imposing way with humour and patience. Through activities at the Cultural Grounds, we were shown that each person had a role and responsibility that needed to be upheld for the whole community to function. The role of kindness as a core cultural principle was evident through the way that all community members were willing to share their time and knowledge and contributed to a positive cultural experience for everyone.

Throughout conversations about the value of education, Elders emphasized the importance of parents' participation in and exposure to traditional teachings and cultural learning opportunities. Several Elders discussed their own educational journeys and the positive impacts on their parenting abilities when they became more immersed in cultural teachings. In some cases, this included being able to lead a drug or alcohol free life and supporting their children and grandchildren to do the same. Elders also stated many times that everyone in the community has something to contribute in an educational sense, including Indigenous people who grow up grounded in culture and speaking their language, Indigenous people who grow up grounded in culture without the language, and Indigenous people who grow up with neither their culture practices nor their language. Elders shared that a successful traditional education and success in the Western education system were not mutually exclusive and could be combined for the benefit of the community. One Elder discussed the powerful potential of Indigenous people who can engage with both systems:

> *"But from that experience from their homes [with traditional teachings] they will learn really quickly [in school] and these are the ones that will be well educated in the non-Native way, they go to school and they have high school and they go to college. And if they go back to the Native language, these are the ones that are going to find something new for the people. That's what I believe, that's what I've been told anyway, I really believe that.*
>
> *We're always trying to find new ways to live good, to have a good life and you need a good education to do that. And those traditional teachings are very good teachings and… it's like you learn that… on a high level, you know. You can go start from the beginning, all the way to the top and once a Native person knows that, they're going to be really something, you know – they're going to be anything they want to be. That's what I believe and that's what my dad told me and my sister too."*

Cultural Revitalization

One Elder described how this process of coming to understand one's identity is crucial for prosperity and well-being. They noted that from their perspective, self-harm in Indigenous communities' stems from people not knowing who they are or believing that they are inferior:

> *"It's hard, it's very difficult for somebody to learn Native traditional stuff, traditional teachings because there are so many teachers out there… Without even knowing it, [Indigenous people] are often raised traditionally but without the language."*

The cultural revitalization theme arose most strongly with the OFIFC Research Team's interaction with youth. In spring 2018, researchers were invited to attend a spring goose hunt with Indigenous youth and Friendship Centre staff. At the end of the day, youth were interviewed and asked to reflect on their experience and how it related to their own definition of prosperity. As one youth explained,

> *"When you're on the land it feels like home. You feel as if nothing else matters. Like, say you're depressed this day, and someone takes you out hunting. You're going to feel at home. You're going to feel better. I feel as if… the spirits are supporting you when you're in the bush. I mean, they're always there, but I feel like they're supporting you more if you're in the bush living the life. You know? And… you feel at home, but then again you remember that the land belongs to someone else."*

As this quote demonstrates, being an Indigenous person living out one's culture and striving for wholistic wellbeing in an urban context is complex. As this youth explains, presence on the land has an immensely positive impact on wellbeing in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual realms. At the same time, there are limitations to this 'presence', since ultimately community members "remember that the land belongs to someone else". Access is contingent on the cooperation of others, who are often non-Indigenous landowners. Youth are conscious of this situation and it impacts their experience of being on the land, even as they participate in cultural activities that they deeply enjoy.

Another youth spoke to the relationship between time out on the land and a sense of hope and optimism for the future:

> *"You learn that there's still hope out there because after what happened to*

the people… there's no… there's no getting away from that. Everybody… has a traumatic memory of some sort. It's in the blood now. But we can rebuild. We can grow the culture back."

In addition to contributing to wholistic well-being, time out on the land with Knowledge Keepers provides youth with survival skills that they value.

"I am glad I can go hunting and stuff out on the land. What we do is hunt for moose, geese, all those stuff. I'm also happy to learn how to find my way back if I'm lost. Because I trace, like I always carry something with me to put on trees just in case I'm lost or something, so I know my way back. I'm really glad that I know how to survive".

5.3 HAVING A SENSE OF HOME AND BELONGING: UNITED NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (FORT FRANCES)

For United Friendship Centre in Fort Frances, four themes emerged within the project: Sense of Home and Belonging, Connection to Land, Environment of Safety and Inclusion and Intergenerational Indigenous Knowledge Transfer. The four plants/trees on the outside circle represent the four sacred medicines: sweetgrass, sage, tobacco and cedar. These medicines show the importance of connection to the land. The hands held together in a circle represent feeling safe, supported and at home at the Friendship Centre. The roots between the hands and the medicines represent being grounded in Indigenous knowledge. The hands are created to depict people at all ages, adults, children, youth and

Elders and illustrate the intergenerational knowledge exchange across life stages. Overall, this image illustrates: how the community at United Friendship Centre supports each other; and a sense of home within the community.

Community Profile

In recognition of the ever-changing world in which we live, the United Native Friendship Centre (UNFC) is dedicated to enhancing the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in its community and surrounding area. Its primary responsibility is to serve Indigenous people with special services in the fields of social, educational, and cultural development while building bridges of understanding between all people in the Fort Frances area. The UNFC was incorporated on January 31, 1973 and became a member of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) on February 25, 1973. Its founding directors are: Jim Windego, Henry Ottertail, Delores Roach, Jerry Woods, Cathy Bruyere, Frederick Burtrum Joseph Whitehead, Ronald King, Charles Steward McCormack, and Willie Wilson. The UNFC is a place where Indigenous people can feel at home and have their needs supported through the programs offered. The Centre is housed in three buildings in Fort Frances and, in addition to being a place where Indigenous people can discuss mutual concerns, it also provides a setting and complementary programming that aids people in learning to plan and execute their own social, educational and cultural activities.

Thematic Analysis

Over the course of the Ganohonyohk research project, UNFC staff and community members decided that they would frame their ideas about Indigenous prosperity through a discussion about local priorities. Starting with this as a base, four themes were subsequently identified from the research events that took place in Fort Frances:

- Sense of home and belonging;
- Connection to land;
- Environment of safety and inclusion; and
- Intergenerational Indigenous Knowledge Transfer.

These thematic representations are present in the words of one UNFC community member that said:

> *"From a cultural perspective what is a [prosperous] good life? Good health, wisdom and knowledge, family, a healthy lifestyle, shelter, food and good positive support system. [Furthermore] it involves access to ceremonies and cultural activities [and] access to the land".*

Sense of Home and Belonging

Community members shared the importance of having a sense of home and belonging for themselves, their families, their communities, and for Indigenous people broadly. This entailed having access to safe and sustainable housing, positive support systems, opportunities to share knowledge and gifts, building confidence and self-esteem, and feeling connected to a community. UNFC envisioned enhanced spaces where people could gather, build relationships, and contribute to a sense of home. Some examples offered of spaces that promote a positive sense of home include community kitchens, safe spaces to participate in cultural teachings, and accessing safe and culturally-grounded places like the Friendship Centre.

> *"I remember this one woman was here all those years ago. They were leaving that night when the cultural show was done. She looked at me and she had big tears in her eyes and said 'thank you so much for doing this! It was so beautiful!' It's good to hear people actually saying thank you".*

Connection to Land

Having secure access to land was articulated as a top priority for community members in the context of Indigenous prosperity. UNFC shared the importance of having opportunities to practice, learn, share, and connect with their culture which, in turn, supports the restoration of Indigenous identity. Furthermore, community members shared that having access to land promotes spiritual connection, individual and collective healing, as well as the building of healthy communities. Community members also paralleled prosperity with self-determination. Having access to land in order to secure shelter, food, medicines, and other necessary

resources in a self-determined way was a strong indicator for prosperity:

> *"I think that it's really easy to not take care of ourselves, and if we're going to take care of each other we need to have that healthy environment. [We need to start] taking that time to go out on the land. Experiencing those sorts of things as a community, as a Friendship Centre I think is really important".*

Environment of Safety and Inclusion

Community members articulated the importance of having access to safe and culturally-grounded spaces in order to promote prosperity. For community members, this entailed that spaces contain positive role models and a welcoming environment with supports and resources to ensure basic needs are met. In addition, such prosperous spaces should also promote physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being and balance.

The community at UNFC had mentioned that examples of prosperity and well-being are related to spaces that are free of alcohol, drugs and violence. In addition, cultural connection and taking care of the natural environment (land, water and air) was of importance to the community. Cultural connection also involved having access to traditional medicines and teachings. As a community, it was also determined that promoting and ensuring safety and trust was important, along with the promotion of healthy self-care practices. As a foundation, a key mechanism to achieve balance and everyday good living was the recognition and addressing of impacts associated with intergenerational trauma.

> *"The actual physical environment when people walk in the door, the way it feels, that we have our drums, we have the medicines available for people. Access to resources. That we always operate with respect first".*

Intergenerational Indigenous Knowledge Transfer

Ensuring that community members have access to learn, share, and connect with Indigenous knowledge, particularly in an inter-generational context, was shared as a key priority. This priority was further described as having opportunities for children and youth to spend time with Knowledge Keepers and Elders to learn about their culture, language, roles and responsibilities, ceremonies, traditional practices, history, and teachings.

> *"I would like more opportunities for youth empowerment. To build up our youth and help make our youth shiny, and then they in turn become those positive role models. More opportunities for that".*

Community members of the UNFC also discussed the importance of promoting Indigenous cultural competency and cultural safety education for non-Indigenous people as an important part of collective community prosperity.

> *"As far as education goes, we need more of that piece, including sharing our knowledge, and sharing with people what we know, and what we've been taught about the history of our people. We'd like to be able to educate others and squash the ignorance."*

5.4 RESTORATION OF IDENTITY: COUNCIL FIRE NATIVE CULTURAL CENTRE INC. (TORONTO)

At Council Fire the youth powwow was a highlight in demonstrating prosperity. This image signifies the healing power of the jingle dress, and the Grandfather Drum. The turtle on the Grandfather Drum represents the Indian Residential School Survivors (IRSS) legacy project created by Council Fire. The drum itself depicts the protection of women and keeping the community safe. Each person carries a responsibility to maintain strong cultural values of protection, safety, and ending violence against vulnerable people in our communities. The drum is significant in many Indigenous cultures, as it is described to represent a heartbeat. The red jingle dress commemorates the importance of ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit people. The jingle

dress is often used for healing, and portraying the child and adult together highlights intergenerational exchange of healing and wellness. Overall, this image depicts the importance of the drum, the youth powwow and the restoration of identity.

Community Profile

Council Fire is an autonomous, vibrant cultural agency that involves and serves the Indigenous community with confidence for, and commitment to, their well-being. Located in the heart of downtown Toronto, The Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (Council Fire) was incorporated on February 9, 1982 (but was established in 1978) and became a member of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) on October 24, 1982. Its founding directors (members) are: R. Gordon Byce, Margaret MacLeod, Clarence Decaire, Raphael Dokis, Carol Farkas, Larry Leong, Alastaire Paterson, Jacqueline Rosen, Dr. Larry Rosen, and, Lydia Somers. Since Council Fire's inception, change has been constant. In the midst of change, principles and values were articulated that provided a cultural and spiritual underpinning to guide this growth and expansion within the supports and programs that are offered. Council Fire is proud to say it is an organization that provides a listening ear and caring staff to help people close the gaps that otherwise may have put them at risk of falling through the cracks. This means that when people are searching for help they are not told what to do with their lives but are shown acceptance, love, respect and support.

Thematic Analysis

At Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, the Prosperity project represented an opportunity to learn from the Centre about how they view the importance of 'relationship' as a precursor both to research and to understanding urban Indigenous prosperity. Through the project, we learned about the Centre's supportive role in the community insofar as it models wholistic wellbeing. The project brought opportunities to learn with the Centre about community members' specific needs and visions for the future. This project is

also an example of the positive outcomes that can be created when research is community-driven and attentive to community priorities. The evolution of the research with Council Fire carries important lessons for how to approach research relationships with Indigenous communities or organizations.

Council Fire staff identified that it would be beneficial for Prosperity project activities to align with and support their ongoing work with the Indian Residential School Survivor Legacy (IRSS) Project. The IRSS Legacy Project is an initiative headed by Council Fire which responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Call to Action 82. Action 82 requests the establishment of a publicly accessible and highly visible Residential School Sculpture in each capital city to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities. Toronto Council Fire engaged with residential school survivors and the broader Indigenous community to identify the southwest corner of Nathan Phillips Square as an appropriate permanent location for a "Restoration of Identity" turtle sculpture and a "Teaching, Learning, Sharing and Healing" space. The anticipated completion date for the project is 2020.

The following Indigenous prosperity themes arose from the research relationship and research activities with the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre community:

- Restoration of identity;
- Wholistic wellbeing and cultural programming; and
- Food security.

Restoration of identity

For Council Fire, the IRSS Legacy project is a top priority. Restoration of identity is a core motivation in all their work with everyone from residential school survivors to youth. As Council Fire staff explained, prosperity for urban Indigenous people is related to an understanding of oneself and restoring a sense of identity that had been eroded through the residential school system and ongoing colonial policies.

To address this wholistically within the Prosperity research with Council Fire, overlapping spheres of their work –supporting youth, restoring identity, and honouring residential school survivors– were taken into consideration. As an example of prosperity in action, Council Fire held their first annual "Honouring our Youth" powwow in Regent Park (August, 2017). Council Fire invited OFIFC's Research Team to attend and video document pieces of the powwow to better understand the Centre's work in restoring identity with youth. It was also identified that video footage of the powwow would be useful to the Centre for documentation purposes as well as potential uses in future videos or promotional materials. In addition, one-on-one and group interviews were conducted during the powwow with community members, including residential school survivors.

Feedback from participants confirmed the strong role Council Fire's network of programs and services continues to play in the lives of community members healing from the effects of intergenerational trauma and historical and ongoing injustice. One interview participant shared how going to the healing circle for residential school survivors opened his eyes to historical trauma, which impacted his mother and others within his family. The participant indicated that once one becomes aware of and accepts the reality of historical trauma, one becomes better positioned to heal from these experiences and move forward with life more positively. He went on to share that at Council Fire he was taught how to bring Indigenous ceremonial practices into his life. Access to Indigenous cultural practices and teachings provided by the Centre was framed by several interview participants as a pathway to overcome identity and culture loss associated with historic and contemporary colonization processes.

Cultural events such as the powwow are important spaces for passing on traditions and ensuring that young people continue to be engaged in community. The importance of involving youth and passing on traditional knowledge was noted by several participants who spoke of the central role youth hold in the continuation of Indigenous culture. Most importantly, community members perceived the powwow as a cultural hub where young people can exercise their leadership roles and responsibilities through both planning and participating in its cultural activities.

Finally, our research revealed Friendship Centres' role in helping end violence against Indigenous women through engaging men in cultural programing

and ceremony. For example, one participant shared how he witnessed an act of violence against a woman on the street and intervened in order to stop it and confront the perpetrator. In reflecting on this experience, he referred to his cultural teachings and learning experiences at Council Fire programming. For this participant, these learning experiences were a reminder that eradicating violence against Indigenous women is a collective, community effort as well as an individual obligation. The participant noted participating in events that reinforce Indigenous value systems had helped him cultivate kindness and respect toward women.

Since the first annual Honouring our Youth Powwow in August 2017, Council Fire held their second annual powwow in August 2018 as well as a three-day IRSS Legacy event in Nathan Phillips Square in October 2018.

Wholistic wellbeing and cultural programming

Council Fire community members made connections between prosperity and wholistic wellbeing: the concept of being well physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Participants named a range of different services that they access frequently which support their wholistic wellbeing, including: the food bank, talking circles for residential school survivors, bereavement assistance, computer classes, employment support, referral to different Indigenous service providers in the city, exercise groups, open meals, child-care, youth programming, education/academic upgrading, housing assistance and the women's drop-in.

Throughout the interviews, participants emphasized that Council Fire programming was successful at supporting their prosperity because of the ways that they were engaged and involved as active community members. As multiple people explained, this active engagement provided them with concrete skills and the motivation to stay involved or improve their lives as they understood that others were counting on them. One participant spoke to a period in his life when his mental and physical health were very poor and he began to participate and volunteer with Council Fire programs. He explained:

> *"So then I went away (from Toronto) and I came back and if it wasn't for Council Fire I probably would've croaked. Because before I volunteered to help them carry groceries in [for the program] I couldn't even walk without breathing heavy… So when I was doing all that, it got my heartbeat going faster so it was healthier for me to breathe. I was overweight… But in that way it made my health a little bit more stable and with the balance of that I still do things when they don't even ask. I just do it… I just respect*

Council Fire and give to the community what they gave to me –which was my heartbeat back.”

Several people we talked to viewed Council Fire as a place where peoples' gifts are identified and encouraged. The programs available give individuals a way to express and share these gifts. One participant shared that her son had bought her a computer which she did not know how to use, so she attended Council Fire's computer class. She had a wonderful experience there, and shortly after began teaching beading at the Centre. Another participant talked about his experience mentoring young people through the youth drum group at Council Fire and expressed that this involvement was central to his healing journey, in which he overcame drug and alcohol addiction. The importance of mentorship was reinforced by another woman who spoke about how mentoring the youth group at Council Fire restored her faith in the urban Native community. Participants considered this skill-share model to be a key way of promoting wholistic wellbeing through the growth of self-esteem, skills development, and building strong interpersonal connections.

Food security

Another common thread throughout interviews was the theme of food insecurity and the barrier that this represented to participants' wellbeing. Several participants highlighted the community meals, snacks provided during children's programming, and the food bank as elements of Council Fire that they relied on heavily to combat food insecurity. One participant explained that they see several members of the urban Indigenous community in Toronto who are "hurting" and living with different mental health challenges. This person identified that in their own experience, food insecurity exacerbates all of life's other challenges and proper nutrition can truly make a difference in someone's healing journey. As they said, "There are a lot of smart people out there, they're just hungry." Several participants discussed their hopes for expansion or more funding for the food bank and the community meals, as these services are heavily accessed.

5.5 FAMILY, CEREMONY AND HEALTH: CAN-AM INDIAN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (WINDSOR)

At Can-Am Friendship Centre, participants described prosperity as being surrounded by children, caring for the earth and being connected to culture and ceremony. Children in many Indigenous cultures are sacred, as they are closest to the Creator and nurturing their learning is an essential aspect of prosperity. Community members noted that learning from Elders was essential for intergenerational wellness and that learning how to care for Elders was also important. The younger little hands cradled by the older hands depicts this intergenerational learning and care.

In many Indigenous cultures, connection to earth and plant life is an essential element for good health. At Can-Am it was important to strengthen and nurture this connection through relating with sacred medicines such as tobacco and sage. Sage and tobacco amongst others serve as traditional medicines for many nations and allow ceremony and spiritual connection to occur. The image of the woman tending to the tobacco plant illustrates the importance of caring for sacred medicines. In many Indigenous cultures, every person is born with unique gifts that relate to their roles and responsibilities. This image acknowledges the responsibility we carry as

caregivers and nurturers of medicines and the importance of this relationship to prosperity. In addition to this, giving tobacco is a way of giving thanks and paying respect -especially if one is asking for something in return. The image of the tobacco tie represents the exchange of traditional knowledge that occurs within Can-Am's community.

Community Profile

The Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre (CAIFC) is driven by the desire for Indigenous peoples within the areas of Windsor and Essex County to become a self-sufficient, self-determining, self-governing community. Historically, the CAIFC has been the focal point for Indigenous peoples within the urban environment. (CAIFC) of Windsor was incorporated on June 8, 1981 and became a member of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) in October 1981. Its founding members are: Maryrose Barefoot Jones, Max Joseph Hedley, Abraham Tanian Pone, Candace Elaine Moore, Peter Nahwegahbo, Peter Evans Wickerson, Donna Florence Loyal, Sharon Ann John, and Kathleen Anne McCloskey. Over time, the CAIFC has sought: To remain a community, grassroots driven organisation; to improve the quality of life of community members; to develop programs and services that meet community identified needs; to incorporate Indigenous traditions and beliefs into Centre programming; to advocate on behalf of Indigenous people within Windsor; to remain committed to a Code of Ethics that sees all individuals as equals. The Centre strives to deliver the best possible service in accordance with traditional, spiritual and contemporary teachings.

Thematic Analysis

Can-Am staff linked prosperity to the amount of understanding and access to Indigenous knowledge that is infused throughout community –rather than contemporary interpretations that link prosperity more exclusively to profitability, luxury, ease and comfort. An analysis of the recorded discussions at the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre around the subject of prosperity revealed the following themes:

- Family;
- Ceremony; and
- Health.

Family

In the Canadian context, the breakdown of Indigenous traditional extended family structures (and the included roles and responsibilities within these structures) , has been identified as a significant factor in the current social and health disparities that we see in Indigenous communities (Indigenous and Northern Affairs, RCAP Highlights, 1996). It is therefore, noteworthy that participants at Can-Am spoke about good relationships within their families and extended families as an expression of prosperity. Prosperity was linked to the idea of having loving relationships with children and grandchildren and the existence of an extended community family that showed respect to older members through supporting them in their senior years.

> *"Having children that have respect and are able to help take care of you when you're in those twilight years, is what our people value. They experience this kind of good energy from their children and grandchildren was [what it meant] to have power".*

In addition, participants noted that traditionally, living, hunting, travelling and camping was a collective activity that was done with the extended family. The central role of women in the family as 'life giver' was acknowledged and the thankfulness for the general ability to provide for one's family was also seen as reflective of prosperity. If one of the major problems causing Indigenous health disparity has been identified as the breakdown in traditional family structures, then perhaps programs that integrate Indigenous understandings of kinship is necessarily a part of the solution.

Ceremony

From an Indigenous traditional perspective, participation in ceremonies helps to facilitate further awareness with respect to how individuals, families and extended family relate to the natural world. In a traditional setting for many Indigenous communities, awareness of this interdependent relationship through ceremony would start at an early age and continue for a lifetime (Thrasher and Robbins, 2018, p. 191-193). Participants at Can-Am mentioned fasting, feasting, sweat-lodges and the utilization of fire, prayer, pipes and drums in ceremony as vehicles to bring greater understanding with regard to the relationships between people and the natural world. Prosperity involves achieving a perspective

where one gains some insight into these interdependencies and then develops a more genuine thankful attitude as a result. One participant noted on how this knowledge was embedded within the understanding of a feasting ceremony.

> *"When we have a feast, even the food that we don't eat we don't throw out. A helper comes along and collects all that food and we put the food offering out in the bush or we put it in the fire. Depending on who or what we're feasting for, all that leftover food we handle in the same way, we put our tobacco in the bush or we put it in the fire. We're taught not to waste any of that food that we don't eat…"*

In moving from a discussion about feasting to fasting, another participant also noted a direct link between fasting in prosperity. That is, in addition to physical, mental and spiritual benefits that fasting provides, it was noted that:

> *"…in our traditions, denying yourself –your body – of those things that are meant to sustain us has a role and a value in the way we look at and value prosperity…"*

Health

Many participants in their discussions linked prosperity with the attainment and maintenance of good health. In the most general sense, good health meant to be free from sickness. People indicated that knowledge of food and 'medicines' support the ability within an individual to sustain, heal and strengthen themselves. In addition, it was mentioned that access to healthy food choices were a form of preventative medicine. Finally, it was mentioned that everywhere you turn in the natural world there is some sort of sustenance that can sustain a human being.

In addition to discussing prosperity as individual human good health, participants also discussed health in a larger environmental context. With respect to this common sense expansion to what is meant by 'wholistic health', there is often an emphasis in Indigenous approaches to health that focus on the connection that a human being has to the earth's environment (Robbins and Dewar, 2011). Arvol Looking Horse (Lakota, Dakota and Nakota) emphasized that Indigenous health systems "view the earth as a source of life rather than a resource" (Looking Horse, November, 2009). Thus, in approaches to Indigenous health that include Indigenous Knowledge, the health of the planet is very much connected to human health (November 2009). Participants at Can-Am noted that everything on this Earth has a right to exist and that trees, air, fish, animals, water, were abundant and plentiful 'sources' of sustenance. The importance of not being wasteful was also noted with respect to not exhausting these sources of sustenance.

5.6 WHERE THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE FEELS LIKE HOME: FORT ERIE NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (FORT ERIE)

At Fort Erie Friendship Centre, much of the cultural grounding comes from the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy consists of six nations, and this image was created to depict some of the teachings and stories among the confederacy. The Great Law of Peace is represented through a white pine tree, which in Haudenosaunee teachings, this represents unity and the coming together of nations. The White Pine in the image is very young which is representative of the youth in the community, and that their path to maturity will require nurturing and support. The hexagon wraps the tree and is purple to represent symbols and colors from the Invitation Wampum. This Wampum offers shelter under the White Pine to whoever has entered into relationship or agreement under it. At Fort Erie, youth were a highlight as voiced from the

community. The hexagon serves as a support to ensure youth feel at home, safe and at peace within the Friendship Centre.

Surrounding it all are six moccasins each with a unique design and to represent the six different Nations under the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The green moccasin with the sun and moon represents 2SLGBTQ+ youth with beads using colours from the pride flag. Strawberries are used on the second moccasin to represent women. Arrows were used on the next moccasin to show unity and strength among nations. The turtle moccasin represents the Haudenosaunee creation story, and the pine cone moccasin represents the Great White Pine. Lastly, the four flowers on the final moccasin represent the different life stages. For Fort Erie Friendship Centre these teachings, stories and cultural foundations are all representative of prosperity.

Community Profile

To trace the history of the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (FENFC), one has to go back to the depression period and before World War II when Indigenous peoples primarily from Six Nations but also from other First Nations moved from the United States (Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Rochester). Some were seeking employment; others (large numbers) joined the American Armed Services. During the mid and late 70’s some of these people who were members of the Buffalo Native Social Club moved back and formed the Fort Erie Native Social Club. An interaction with the Friendship Centre in St. Catharines eventually resulted in the establishment of a Friendship Centre in Fort Erie that grew out of the Social Clubs in Buffalo and Fort Erie. The Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre (FENFC) became an incorporated entity on February 17, 1983. Its founding directors are: Verna Grace Hill, Gerald Alexander Hope, Olivene Marie Hill, Elaine King, Dalton Bernard St. Germain, Eleanor Elizabeth Martin, Loris Arnold Jamieson, Ethel Leona Moses, Peter Wayne Hill and Orval Porter. Through the maintenance of Indigenous traditions, the centre has

encouraged and promoted the development and delivery of programs that foster the culture and needs of Indigenous people. The Centre promotes friendship and understanding amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and informs the Fort Erie Community, the Municipal, Provincial, Federal and Indigenous governments, the academic community and the community at large about the issues affecting Indigenous people in an urban environment.

Thematic Analysis

An excerpt from a letter by a Fort Erie staff member (November 13, 2017) describing how they perceive the Friendship Centre is a window into how the Centre mirrors a prosperous environment within this particular community.

> *"Why I love the Fort Erie Native Friendship Center is because it feels like home. This is my home, my community. It is my connection to the hopes, dreams and desires for our youth. There is a sense of belonging here. It is a safe place and everyone welcomes everyone with open arms. As the greeting of smiles and warmth isn't enough, the Friendship Centre extends the opportunity to become part of the Centre. Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre is a place of acceptance for anyone who is in need of healing (mind, body and spirit) or for those who just need to belong. It is a place to grow in so many ways. Through learning the culture and who you are, to finding the fire and living a spiritual path. They allow you to be greater than even you could ever imagine."*

At the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, the Prosperity project particularly illuminated the importance of youth-centred spaces within the Friendship Centre community. Through this project, the Friendship Centre consistently communicated the need for youth supports. They indicated that when youth feel safe, supported, and heard, the entire community is strengthened.

The following two themes express the trajectory of the Prosperity project with the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre:

- Adapting to meet community needs; and
- A focus on youth-centred urban spaces.

Adapting to meet community needs

Initially, the Friendship Centre envisioned the Prosperity project as an opportunity to engage with youth through art. Through the vehicle of artistic expression the Friendship Centre gauged youth understandings of prosperity.

Early conversations focused on the possibility of creating a mural in collaboration with the Youth Council to improve the youth space. However, given the many commitments of the Youth Council as well as the school year schedule, the plans to initiate the mural were postponed. The evolution of the Prosperity project in Fort Erie demonstrates the importance of inherent flexibility within the USAI community-driven research methodology insofar as conducting research in a flexible way that meet community members where they are at.

Through discussions with Friendship Centre staff, the OFIFC Research Team learned that the true motivation for the mural was the need to reimagine the youth space and emphasize the value of youth in the community. The Friendship Centre wanted youth to continue to feel comfortable and at home in the Centre and understood the Prosperity project as a potential means to meet this goal. We learned that even if the Youth Council and OFIFC Research Team were not able to come together to work on a mural, it was the centering and uplifting youth (and contributing to their wellbeing) that was the main priority of Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre in terms of promoting prosperity. The Friendship Centre decided that the best use of project resources and activities would be to reimagine the Centre's youth space in a self-directed way. At Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, this project revealed a desire to honour community members that contribute positively, and that they find ways to do so even given infrastructure constraints.

A focus on Youth-centred urban spaces

In the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, there is a space where youth can spend time, talk, work on homework, play games, and eat. This is an integral part of the Friendship Centre because the community understands that it is important for young people to have access to spaces that are dedicated to them and reflect their identities. The presence of this youth-centred space reflects the larger truth that Friendship Centres are not just places for programs and service delivery, but also places that feel like home for urban Indigenous people. It is in these spaces where prosperity is generated. In Fort Erie, the Friendship Centre is a place where Indigenous youth spend a lot of time and where they are welcomed.

Capital infrastructure is an issue in many Friendship Centres across Ontario. Friendship Centres require a range of spaces to meet the needs of urban Indigenous people, including office space, larger social spaces for group programming, and private spaces for one-on-one programming. In many

Friendship Centres, including Fort Erie, space is at a premium. Friendship Centres have identified that an absence of space or a lack of available resources to upgrade spaces can be a barrier in terms of expanding programming or serving more community members. Like many other Friendship Centres, the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre makes use of its space efficiently and effectively in order to mitigate this issue. With these infrastructure constraints, creating youth-centred spaces is more challenging since there are competing needs.

Research activities with Fort Erie consisted of ongoing conversations with Friendship Centre staff on the role of youth within the Friendship Centre and the function youth have in contributing to the prosperity of the community. These conversations generated a common understanding that the entire Friendship Centre valued the youth space highly. Furthermore, it was decided that an appropriate use of project resources would be to collaboratively reimagine and improve the youth space to honour the light and energy that youth bring to the Centre.

5.7 SPACES FOR YOUTH TO VISION: N'SWAKAMOK NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE (SUDBURY)

At N'Swakamok, youth were a large part of informing what prosperity means for the project. The youth self-voiced that for them prosperity was not related to material possessions, but richness in cultural knowledge. Knowing their language and being connected to their culture was the central aspect in being prosperous. The image here was created using the seven Grandfather Teachings surrounding a medicine circle. The turtle represents Truth / Dewewin, the eagle represents Love / Zaagidwin, the buffalo represents Respect / Mnaadendimowin, the wolf represents Humility / Dbaadendiziwin, the bear represents Bravery / Aakwa'ode'win, the raven represents Honesty / Gwekwaadziwin, and the beaver represents Wisdom / Nbwaakaawin. The medicine circle represents the spiritual,

emotional, mental and physical aspects of a person. When both of these teachings are applied in life it represents individual balance and a prosperous community. The animals in combination with the Seven Grandfather Teachings highlight the generosity and sharing that comes from the natural world.

Community Profile

The NNFC was first established in 1967 through the efforts of the Nickel Belt Indian Club. By that time, the Directors and some of the Members of the Club were already involved in voluntary work such as court work and referral work. In 1972, the NNFC was officially incorporated under the name “Indian-Eskimo Friendship Centre” and, after a few different locations, it now exists at its present location on Elm Street in Sudbury. The NNFC purchased its current building in 1982 which now provides adequate space to efficiently serve the Indigenous community. In 1983, the NNFC officially changed its name to N’Swakamok Native Friendship Centre which translates into “where the three roads meet”. The purpose of the NNFC is to assist Indigenous people traveling to, or already living in, Sudbury. The NNFC has developed and implemented programs and activities that serve the social, cultural and recreational needs of the local Indigenous community. In addition, the centre provides a medium for the meeting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people where they can aim to develop mutual understanding though common activities.

Thematic Analysis

At N'Swakamok Native Friendship Centre, the early stages of the project consisted of many conversations with Friendship Centre staff around the purpose of the Prosperity project and how to ensure that the project was most useful to community members. After many deep and fruitful discussions, it was agreed that research activities should focus on how Indigenous youth in the community envision prosperity and providing youth with spaces to share these visions. The most important finding from the thematic analysis is resultant of the way that participating youth answered two questions in different stages of the project:

- What does a wealthy life mean to me; and
- What does prosperity look like to me?

Whether or not it was 'wealth' or 'prosperity' being talked about, all youth we spoke with decentralized attaining more in the materialistic sense and centralized the wholistic integrity of traditional Indigenous value systems.

"What does a wealthy life mean to me?"

In the summer of 2016, N'Swakamok in collaboration with the OFIFC Research Team held a youth contest for National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) on the topic of "what does a wealthy life mean to me?" Youth wrote their answers to this question, and gift cards were provided to all participants as a thanks for their contribution. One youth answered:

> *"When I think of 'wealthy' I don't think of money or six cars in my driveway. I think of me and how much stuff I learned so far in life. I also think of the Seven Grandfather teachings and I work very hard to follow those teachings. It makes me feel like I am wealthy because I am blessed and grateful for what I have. Sometimes after a powwow I get a little bit of money then I would give a bit of it away to someone who might need it more than I do. When I do this it makes me feel happy that I can help someone in need. I don't want to be better than anyone else…We are all wealthy because we all have something to give."*

Another youth offered their interpretation on the differences between wealth and money:

> *"The reason people think that wealth revolves around money is because they can spend money and feel the fake happiness is giving them pleasure. Pleasure is a short-term high that makes you feel low once it's over, pleasure is alright every once in a while, but it is not a substitute for happiness."*

In other submissions, a common answer from youth was that a wealthy life means living out the Seven Grandfather Teachings and having cultural knowledge that one knows how to use in everyday life. Drumming, attending ceremonies, learning and speaking one's Indigenous language, and leading a drug-free life were other common answers from youth. Youth submissions also focused heavily on family, with many youth saying that "being around family", "knowing that you have family who love and care for you", and being a positive teacher and mentor to other family members were key parts of a good life. Finally, youth talked about the importance of being able to participate in healthy, fun activities to achieve wholistic well-being and create healthy communities.

"What does prosperity look like to me?"

As a follow-up activity to further understand how youth envision prosperity, N'Swakamok decided to engage students of the Alternative Secondary School Program in an arts-based activity through which students would consider the question, "What does prosperity look like to me?" (instead of 'wealth'). OFIFC Researchers visited the Alternative Secondary School Program (ASSP) within the Friendship Centre for two days and sat with students to discuss the project and have round table discussions about what prosperity looked like in their own lives. In the ASSP classroom, two large pieces of moose hide were spread over two tables and ASSP students broke into two groups. At each table, paints were provided and students were asked to paint out their own ideas of the meaning of prosperity onto the hide.

Students' paintings focused on ideas of achieving balance, spending time with family and community, being on the land and connecting with the natural world, feeling a sense of freedom, peace, feeling a sense of achievement or personal progress, and mentoring younger generations.

5.8 URBAN INDIGENOUS PROSPERITY: A SYNTHESIS OF PARTICIPANT COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

We learned that communities wanted to participate in innovative, community designed culture-based research activities that 'actioned' prosperity instead of just talking about the concept in more standardized ways (i.e.: individual interviews and focus groups). As such, participant communities discussed a wide variety of concepts and 'actioned' activities which represented prosperity to them. Connecting to the land, safety, sharing of Indigenous knowledge, participation in ceremony, feasting, fasting, maintaining traditional structures of the extended family, raising up the youth, mino bimaadisawin and health were

some of the topics related to prosperity that were discussed and/or revealed through conducting the thematic analysis. While many distinct themes were discussed within each of the seven urban Indigenous communities, four salient notions of prosperity emerged:

- Restoration of identity;
- Indigenous ways of knowing;
- Sense of belonging; and
- Every day good living.

Restoration of Identity

Within the prosperity project, one key outcome was related to a restoration of identity. It is important that communities feel that they can freely express their cultural values and practice their traditions. For many communities involved in this research project connection to land, culture, and language were viewed as interconnected aspects of Indigenous identity. For Council Fire in particular, restoring Indigenous notions of identity was a key component for achieving prosperity. The development of identity is an integral aspect of Indigenous cultures and societies. Identity allows for Indigenous peoples to connect to their surroundings, and their cultures in ways that promote and validate: Indigenous knowledge; a sense of belonging; and everyday good living.

An antecedent to the free practice of identity has been the intergenerational trauma and impacts of colonialism mentioned by Council Fire, Ne-Chee and United Friendship Centres. As an organization, OFIFC also approaches and conducts projects from a trauma-informed lens because it recognizes that for many Indigenous peoples, identity was historically suppressed in violent ways. In contemporary times, restoration of Indigenous cultural identity serves as an integral aspect in building and maintaining collective and individual resiliency. Restoring identity also overlaps with the unique expression of a particular community's and/or Nation's worldview. It should be acknowledged that although Indigenous peoples carry many commonalities in beliefs and experiences, there are still unique worldviews and teachings within Indigenous nations and communities. As we learned in the literature review, painting very broad strokes across polities with respect to Indigenous prosperity can render the specificity of each community invisible.

This diversity is represented in our research findings through the perspectives offered by various Friendship Centers. Not only do the partnering Friendship

Centers of this project range geographically from southwestern Ontario to the Lake of the Woods, they also contain unique and distinct beliefs about what it means to restore cultural identity. For example, at Ne-Chee participants voiced that participating in land-based activities and canoeing throughout the lakes created space for self-development. In addition to the unique landscape, these activities were supported through existing relationships with local knowledge keepers that could help facilitate these processes of self-development. At Council Fire, restoration of identity was facilitated through the youth powwow. Although Toronto is the largest urban center in the province and country, youth were able to connect to culture and create a place-based activity to connect to Indigenous knowledge. The youth powwow preparation and closing included a cleanup of Regent Park. This was an expression of respecting and giving thanks (Ganohonyohk) for the land that was used for the gathering. In such a large urban centre it was wonderful to see Indigenous youth and the community come together to celebrate their identity.

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

In reality, Indigenous ways of knowing is a vast area of inquiry which describes a path of life-long learning. However, what is significant about Indigenous ways of knowing in this particular context is the way in which communities consistently voiced how important it was to provide urban Indigenous communities with access to safe and culturally grounded spaces that promote prosperity. Accommodation of Indigenous population growth, attitudes of sharing, trust and a deeper appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing that grew through millennia is needed from the dominant mainstream society instead of 'othering' Indigenous ways of life in urban contexts.

During this project, many conversations occurred about the relationship between 'knowing' and prosperity. For community members involved in this project, this entailed that educative spaces contain positive role models and a welcoming environment with appropriate supports and resources. In addition, such prosperous spaces that include Indigenous ways of knowing should also promote balanced life-styles that reflect physical, mental and spiritual well-being. An example mentioned by the United Native Friendship Centre community included the notion of intergenerational Indigenous knowledge transfer. For many youth at this Friendship Centre as well as others, learning from Elders and knowledge keepers was identified as an important aspect of education. In addition, creating safe spaces for intergenerational learning and knowledge

transfer is an important aspect of Indigenous cultures and societies. Safe spaces entail that ways of knowing can be retained and carried forward. In another example, Can-Am staff specifically linked their understanding of prosperity to the amount of Indigenous knowledge that they could access in their community. Finally, having culturally grounded spaces means learning on the land. At the Ininew Friendship Centre participants described their Cultural Grounds outside of the city as a place where culture-based education occurred for the urban Indigenous community of Cochrane.

In the context of Indigenous culturally-grounded perspectives, promoting Indigenous ways of knowing in contemporary times does not necessarily entail the rejection of mainstream methods of education. For example, Elders at Ininew shared that a successful traditional education and success in the Western education system were not mutually exclusive and could be combined for the benefit of the community. One Elder mentioned the powerful potential of Indigenous people who can engage with both systems.

In an ideal environment, having the best of both worlds can provide a much richer experience and prosperous learning atmosphere. In reality, this would entail students having culturally competent teachers and schools while being able to access Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders. Current difficulties arise through a general failure in mainstream society to recognize the non-universality of the underlying patterns of thought contained in Euro-centric educational worldviews. From an Indigenous ways of knowing perspective, the environment in and around 'education' is dynamic whereas if we were to view education from a Western binary perspective you would have to have one education system with the exclusion and/or assimilation of the 'other'. From an Indigenous ways of knowing perspective, differences are allowed to exist and education models do not have to be mutually exclusive.

Sense of Belonging

The breakdown of Indigenous roles and responsibilities within traditional extended family structures is a significant factor in current social and health disparities that we see in Indigenous communities (Indigenous and Northern Affairs, RCAP Highlights, 1996). It is therefore noteworthy that participants at Can-Am spoke about good relationships within their families and extended families as an expression of prosperity. Prosperity was linked to the idea of having loving relationships with children and grandchildren and the existence

of an extended community family that showed respect to older members through supporting them in their senior years. In addition, a sense of belonging becomes a vehicle for knowledge as stories and traditional values to be passed on through human kinship relationships. Community members at United Friendship Centre in Fort Frances shared the importance of having a sense of belonging for themselves, their families, their communities, and for urban Indigenous people in general. Access to sustainable and safe housing, positive support systems, culturally grounded places like the Friendship Centre and feeling connected to community were important signposts that indicated a healthy sense of belonging.

In all participant communities, a sense of belonging and its relationship to prosperity revolved around concern for the inclusion of youth. The youth powwow at Council Fire, the back to school powwow at Ne Chee, the moose hide activity at N'Swakamok (Sudbury) and the work that Fort Erie Friendship Centre did to provide more youth spaces, are all indicative of this. In turn, it was evident that youth engaged in the project also gauged prosperity through a cohesive sense of belonging with family, extended family, ceremony and culture-based programming.

Importantly, this sense of belonging or feeling the connection to family and extended family also reaches into relationships with the natural world. The Cree concept wâhkôtowin explains how this occurs. While wâhkôtowin is used to describe kinship bonds amongst people, it also continues to extend outwards into the natural world where one also acknowledges those relationships as extended family (Robbins, et. al. 2017, pp. 18-19). As an example, several Friendship Centres involved in this research study decided to access land outside of their particular urban centre when they conducted activities representative of prosperity. Participants at Can-Am mentioned fasting, feasting, sweat-lodges and the utilization of fire, prayer, pipes and drums in ceremony as vehicles to bring greater understanding with regard to the relationships between people and the natural world. At Ininew in Cochrane, participants described their Cultural Grounds as an important place that facilitated a strong sense of belonging through healing, connecting with the land, practicing ceremony, learning from the land, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. It was noted in the thematic analysis section for Ininew how one community member explained how coming back to nature and participating in cultural activities outside of an urban area was very important to their learning and healing process.

While connection to land outside of urban centres can help facilitate a sense of belonging in the greater scheme of things, we also learned that it was by no means necessary to get outside of the city to feel these kinds of connections. We learned from Council Fire that connection to the land occurred in an urban public space during the youth powwow at Regent Park. Before and after the powwow, community members cleaned up the park which helped facilitate respect through a sense of connecting with the land.

Through participating in activities that facilitate a sense of belonging, participants indicated that they became aware of the necessary changes they needed to make in order to live a good life. Connection to family, other community members and to the land were key components to urban Indigenous communities understanding of prosperity.

Everyday Good Living

Many Indigenous traditions believe that the Creator gives us, as human beings, access to the things we need to strive towards a prosperous and good life. Every day good living is a social norm and a cultural imperative that calls for mindfulness in everyday life and a deeply rooted respect for all the wâhkôtowin relationships that we have in life. The Anishinaabe express everyday good living as mino bimaadizawin. Mino bimaadizawin is more than just a concept, because it involves practices that reinforce the importance of identity, Indigenous ways of knowing, and a cohesive sense of belonging in the world. As an underpinning of urban Indigenous prosperity, all participant communities demonstrated an awareness of this notion because by the third round of research activities, they all decided they wanted to engage in activities that demonstrated what prosperity meant to them. It was therefore important to link a conceptual understanding of prosperity with culturally grounded behaviours that actualized prosperity. This occurred through powwows, activities centred around youth, time spent doing educational activities on the land (urban and rural) and time spent learning with traditional knowledge keepers and Elders. One might say that since all communities decided to spend their research time in a sphere which centralized culture and traditions that this is what was of vital importance to them. At the same time, it may be possible to hypothesize that funding available for existing programs and services in Friendship Centres is falling short of meeting this strong demand for more culture centred programs within communities.

With respect to a definition of prosperity, we learned that it is important to be clear in the differences between Indigenous notions and those that are more likely to be found in the mainstream. At Ne-Chee in Kenora, it was stated by most participants that using the terminology of 'prosperity' carries strong connotations of financial wealth which was not their reality. After realizing that the term itself was the issue in preventing people from thinking about their lives in a balanced way, one participant suggested that mino bimaadiziwin would be a more appropriate descriptor. From that point forward, participants in Kenora used the idea of every day good living to talk about prosperity in terms of the importance of family and youth, positive support networks, safety, connection to the land, wisdom and knowledge, healthy lifestyles, the importance of nutritious food, the importance of gratitude (Ganohonyohk), overcoming intergenerational trauma and the application of Indigenous value systems. Although not every community specifically used the term mino bimaadiziwin or every day good living to describe prosperity, all of the elements described above that combine to make up mino bimaadiziwin practice were in some respect identified across all participant communities. For urban Indigenous communities involved in this research project, it was clear that prosperity equating to a good life had to be lived to be fully understood.

6

CONCLUSION

6. CONCLUSION

The project explored how seven Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario understood the concept of prosperity. Through utilizing the USAI community driven research framework, the guiding research question of "**How do urban Indigenous Friendship Centre communities in Ontario view a prosperous/wealthy life**", explored the meaning of prosperity through engaging with these communities. After several rounds of research activities, and self-voicing from the various communities involved, it became apparent that they identified components that provide a foundation for everyday good living. Such components prove to be essential in redefining prosperity from an urban Indigenous perspective. Pending differences in cultural practice, Ganohonyohk (Giving Thanks) is a somewhat parallel concept and practice to mino bimaadiziwin (every day good living) in that it is a social norm that calls for mindfulness in everyday life in addition to causing one to reflect on and respect one's relationships in the broadest sense of the word. The Cree peoples refer to this relationship network that even extends into the natural world as *wâhkôtowin*.

Conflict with respect to how prosperity should be defined caused issues with respect to trying to develop a measurement metrics on this subject. A review of the literature, supported by a 'real-time' case study that occurred during the research project, substantiated why developing a metrics to 'measure' Indigenous prosperity was not palatable to communities. Five themes emerged from the literature reviewed. The literature found that: centralization of economic development theory that is underpinned by Eurocentric value systems renders racism, unilateral resource extraction, environmental degradation invisible; current measurement models that are not informed by Indigenous epistemologies result in faulty data generation; in funding models, Indigenous polities need to become accountable to themselves rather than the state-in ways that incorporate the relevant components of Indigenous knowledge that action traditional modalities of wealth redistribution; equating mainstream nuanced definitions of 'prosperity' with wellness in Indigenous contexts is incorrect; and homogenizing experiences and voices through such metrics makes the abundant diversity within Indigenous communities difficult to see. In our opinion, the case study in Appendix A only exemplifies the deep engraining of Western cultural norms and value systems. As an epistemological approach,

these norms and value systems continue to underpin understandings of contemporary measurement and metric systems where they are mistakenly assumed to be universal truths applicable to all.

Since amendments to the Indian Act in 1951 made it no longer illegal for Indigenous people to gather in groups of more than three outside of reserve lands, Friendship Centre communities have been catalysts for positive change in urban communities. Friendship Centre culture-based programs and services serve as a vehicle towards a more prosperous life for many urban Indigenous people. It was in this spirit that this project partnership development tool was developed. That is, perhaps a better orientation towards 'measurement' would be to have a tool that can help assess the accountability of settler states to Indigenous, community defined prosperity –rather than one that, once again, focuses primarily on assessing the accountability of Indigenous polities.

Communities were interested in designing research activities demonstrative of prosperity rather than just dialoguing about it as a concept. For the most part, our thematic analysis indicated that community expressions of prosperity, had to do with assessing overall quality of one's life through using, oral tradition, Indigenous value systems and cultural knowledge as a baseline to 'measure' their individual or collective prosperity against. For instance, when community members talked about prosperity, there was more of a focus on the ability to remain true to Indigenous teachings around wholistic well-being rather than to accumulate wealth in an individualistic and materialistic sense –even amongst younger community members. That is, an absolute focus on the relationship between excess in the materialistic sense was decentralized and the maintenance of the integrity of traditional Indigenous value systems in a modern world was made central.

The most interesting question that still remains is, "Why do Indigenous notions of prosperity look different from more mainstream definitions?" The most basic answer to this question has to do with the role played by Indigenous knowledge. In this particular research project, it is critical to recognize the role that an underlying attitude of Ganohonyohk (Giving Thanks) played in the tempering of mainstream perceptions of prosperity with Indigenous ones. In starting from a place of giving thanks for life (one's own and other life on the planet), one begins to realize the depth and magnitude present in the diverse perspectives on prosperity offered to us from the communities. In the context of being

thankful, one begins to appreciate and deepen one's relationships within the web of life. This appreciation begins with one's self and starts to extend to the family, the extended family, plants, animals, the land and beyond. Through a more heartfelt appreciation we begin to see how lifeforms are, at the same time, connected while being uniquely diverse. Ni'knaaganaa (Anishinaabe), Kahkiyaw niwahkomâkanak (Nêhiyaw), Msit No'kmaq (Mi'kmaq), Mitákuye Oyás'in (Lakota) are few examples of how different Indigenous Nations express their acknowledgement and/or gratitude to 'all my relations' that exist within the natural world. What results from an attitude of Ganohonyohk is a concept –accompanied by a deep rooted feeling–of reciprocity in relationships. These memories are contained within community Indigenous knowledge relatable to prosperity. Furthermore, it is these concepts and feelings that are passed on through oral tradition from one generation to the next. Similarly Mino bimadizaawin, or every day good living, may not always be an easy path to follow, but it does mean that there is an effort to be mindful and respectful of our relationships with life.

In an economic sense, it remains important for urban Indigenous communities to have 'enough' to drive both existing and newly created programs in a self-determined way. The fact that all participant communities in this research project decided to centre culture based activities as an expression of prosperity could be seen as not only important, but also as an indication that such self-determination in current available programs is lacking. In contemporary urban contexts, Indigenous communities require resources to offer programs and services to a demographic that continues to grow. Indigenous people have been in urban centers now for several generations and others continue to arrive. In order for economic decisions to be more equitable, attitudes of sharing, trust, and a deeper appreciation for what is often seen as 'other' needs to be further cultivated and understood. Traditional Indigenous methods of wealth-redistribution are still guided by strong principles contained within a Ganohonyohk prosperity framework. However, there is still often a 'disconnect' in trying to maintain these principles when interfacing with more mainstream models of prosperity and wealth distribution. In the literature review for this report it was noted that "examining prosperity from a perspective that centralizes economic development theory renders structures of dispossession, racism, unilateral resource extraction, and environmental degradation invisible, while offering interventions that place responsibility squarely within the Indigenous community, family, or individual".

In his book "*What has Nature Ever Done for Us?: How Money Really Does Grow on Trees*" Tony Juniper (2013) indicates that one of the greatest misconceptions of our time is the idea that there is a choice between economic development and sustaining nature. However, the reality we inhabit is somewhat different. One hundred per cent of economic activity is dependent on the services and benefits provided by nature (2013). One might say that the Haudenosaunee teaching of Ganohonyohk is something that continues to acknowledge this reality and, as such, would hope to see economic growth occur in a more balanced way in which people view the earth as a source of life rather than just a resource (Looking Horse, 2009). As far as communities are concerned, instead of trying to measure the achievement of individuals and communities towards a common goal of 'prosperity' as measured in mainstream contexts, the focus should be to choose a path towards prosperity and fulfillment.

APPENDIX A

CASE STUDY: ATTEMPTING TO PILOT A PROSPERITY METRICS IN ONE OF THE PARTICIPANT COMMUNITIES

A CASE STUDY: ATTEMPTING TO PILOT A PROSPERITY METRICS IN ONE OF THE PARTICIPANT COMMUNITIES

One participant community involved with the project sought to formalize an agreement with external researchers in a pilot initiative to develop an Indigenous Prosperity Metrics computer program. In a localized context, the computer program was intended to support this particular Friendship Centre in advancing its understanding of prosperity from their own community-driven perspective, the outcomes of having that kind of prosperity, and the measurements for determining prosperity.

The success of collaborative Indigenous research projects that include Indigenous knowledge and/or culture-based perspectives especially depend on the quality of the relationship and the cultural awareness level of external parties. In this particular case, quality relationships and an acceptable cultural awareness level to achieve this goal were fundamentally lacking. The external parties that intended to help the community with the metrics program refused to collaborate on and sign a Research Collaboration Agreement (RCA). The OFIFC uses RCA's in all projects so that the research relationship can be negotiated. The particular RCA for this project intended to protect the community's knowledge about prosperity from being used by the external researchers for purposes of superfluous self-benefit. Therefore, for us and the community, an RCA that clarified the relationship, intellectual property concerns and potential benefits from the research was a necessary component in the research process.

Several attempts were made with the external partners to reach an agreement about the components necessary to collaborate and share intellectual property rights associated with the research. Unfortunately, a consensus could not be reached and the idea to create the computer program that could be used as a measurement tool to assess the community's prosperity had to be abandoned. In particular, unclarified issues around intellectual property and data analysis meant that proceeding with the proposed project was too risky. While the OFIFC research team felt it important to inform the community of these potential risks, Friendship Centres' are at the same time autonomous entities that ultimately make decisions about their own research trajectories. Therefore, the community was informed that no matter the outcome/decision about moving forward with this research project, the OFIFC research team, as needed, would continue

to fully support them in all their research endeavours. The OFIFC team also encouraged the community to seek feedback from other relevant sources (e.g.: the local university) that were aware of similar intellectual property issues that arise in research with Indigenous Peoples and communities.

As mentioned, there were two key areas of concern in proceeding with this research collaboration: Intellectual property and Data Analysis.

Intellectual Property

As outlined in the RCA, a computer program produced by the external Research Collaborators would unquestionably be their property. However, any raw data going into the program, any metric or tool established by the program, and any results that the program yields should be co-owned by community and OFIFC. This is in line with both the OFIFC's USAI Research Framework and, in a broader sense, current understanding about ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when engaging in research with Indigenous Peoples in the Canadian context (Tri-Council Policy Statement, Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, Chapter 9, 2014).

Based on the OFIFC's community-driven USAI Framework, Research Collaborators cannot develop an 'Indigenous prosperity metric' -or any kind of metric that uses either data from this project -and use it elsewhere. The research question: "what does prosperity mean for urban Indigenous communities in Ontario?" is itself intellectual property of the OFIFC and Friendship Centres. This complicates the idea that Research Collaborators could develop a computer program to assess Indigenous prosperity and simultaneously have it be separate from the data itself. That is, if the computer program is designed to assess Indigenous prosperity, then the program is interwoven with the intellectual property of the OFIFC and Friendship Centres and, therefore, cannot be used elsewhere without first reaching a consensus.

The Research Collaborators did not appear to comprehend the point about how intellectual property that would result from this project could be intertwined. Instead they interpreted the request for a shared vison of intellectual property as 'censorship'. They stated that:

> *No one will agree to this censorship [and that] any programming will be open source which makes it available to anyone. [The external researchers] will not give up their copyright. [One of the researchers]*

may wish to use it in Mexico or elsewhere. (OFIFC, Draft RCA Research Collaborators comments, 2018).

Data Analysis

The Research Collaborators expressed resistance to the idea that community, the OFIFC, and research participants could be involved in analyzing the data generated from the potential computer program. However, community's interpretation and analysis is an essential part of self-voicing and access elements included in the USAI Framework used by the OFIFC and adopted by Friendship Centre Communities:

Self-Voicing

Research, knowledge, and practice are authored by communities that are fully recognized as knowledge Creators and Knowledge Keepers.

- All community voices frame research reality; all research activities are self-determined; all research findings are authored by communities
- Research goes beyond "inclusion" and "engagement"; communities construct and author their knowledge and define their own actions (USAI, 2016, 2nd Edition).

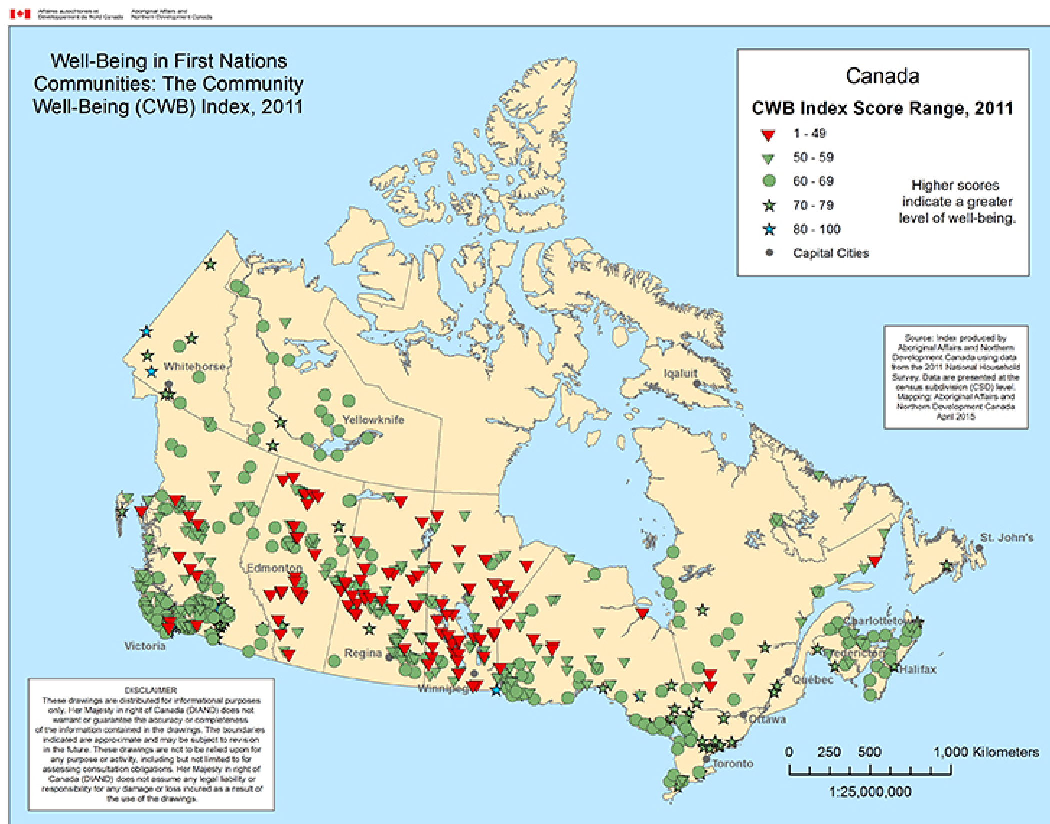
Access

Research fully recognizes all local knowledge, practice, and experience in all their cultural manifestations as accessible by all research authors and Knowledge Keepers.

- Local knowledge, lived experience, community narratives, personal stories, and spiritual expressions are reliable and valid forms of authored research, both as researched reality and methods to understand and relate to it
- Research is part of everyday life; it is never static or finished; it speaks everybody's language; it is situated in the present, supported by the past, and contemplates the future
- No mediators or cultural translators are needed to interpret or validate local knowledge, actions, and reflections (2016, 2nd Edition).

While the proposed computer program can produce data and statements based on the prosperity indicators gathered, a key piece would be missing if

community members that were consulted are not involved in some aspect of the analysis and/or fine tuning of indicators. It is, therefore, possible that the data could be misinterpreted and produce 'research findings' or' indicators' that do not resonate with stakeholders and/or research project participants. Surface analysis of data could also cause potential harm to Indigenous communities through the misinterpretation of their lived realities. There have been many attempts by external governments in the past to 'define' Indigenous people and we need to be careful that we do not recreate recolonizing structures that silence a self-determined voice in an attempt to 'help'.



As an example of this, the map above is an index (called the Community Well-Being Index or CWB) that Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development commissioned in order to measure the well-being of First Nations communities (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2011). The Evaluators that worked with us on the Ganohonyohk project expressed concern in that these types of models are not reliable, especially if the formulas used to make calculations of 'well-being' are not clearly outlined and the types of data collected are not clearly identified. This was not the case for the CWB. As mentioned in the literature review, indicators chosen for the CWB were workforce participation, income and education attainment –all of which can be situated in a Euro-centric settler ideology that establishes

non-First Nations population as the 'norm'. Furthermore, the literature review indicated that First Nations scholars were not engaged during the development of indicators, the design of the study or in the interpretation and analysis of data.

Evaluators for the Prosperity Research Project used this example as an indicator of what could potentially transpire in trying to create a similar metrics for 'prosperity'. That is, just because it is a computer generated metrics measurement system does not at all mean that there is not room for inaccuracy if contextual factors are not clearly understood through a community lens.

In our case study example, the Research Collaborators aiming to 'help' the community achieve a prosperity metrics were not able to grasp the importance of collective analysis with the community and in a rather condescending way stated that:

> *[Such a request is] dreaming in technicolour. Nobody but us [the Research Collaborators] are going to understand this shit without an explanation from us. The only thing that [others] who are not computer programmers are going to understand is a vague notion of what they are talking about. This is not about the number of snow days above average we had last year. This is about higher mathematical concepts like predictability coefficients, consistency coefficients, etc. The [computer programmer] will show us a bunch of meaningless numbers his analysis has produced and tell us what they mean….. The OFIFC will not be "sharing" anything. [The computer programmer] will be telling them what they are looking at. I don't think the OFIFC gets it. (OFIFC, Draft RCA Research Collaborators comments, 2018).*

From an Indigenous research perspective, there is always value added to all stages in the research process through including the experiential, locally grounded, understanding of those community members who are involved. Therefore, anyone involved in this research project is qualified to reflect on and analyze data that intends to tell their story. Therefore, before any publication or other decontextualized advancements of research findings occur, it is important in principle and practice to give the community an opportunity to reflect on and vet these findings. This practice is about upholding Indigenous research principles of reciprocity, responsibility and respect. In doing so, one begins to recognize that a single interpretation cannot possibly capture the whole picture. This process is also not a violation of what the external researchers

perceived to be their ‘academic freedom’. In order for research to be safe for Indigenous communities, ‘academic freedom’ must include accountability and responsibility. If ‘academic freedom’ means: publishing research without being held accountable to that community; or monopolizing control of data analysis, then it is our position that this understanding of ‘academic freedom’ is not useful to Friendship Centre communities or the Indigenous community at large.

Risks

Based on these observations, around intellectual property and data analysis, the OFIFC identified three potential scenarios that could occur if the Friendship Centre decided to proceed with the external collaborators. This risk assessment consists of potential scenarios that may arise, based on Collaborators’ resistance to signing a RCA.

1) **Collaborators may develop a computer program to assess ‘prosperity’ using the concept of Indigenous Prosperity, and use this Prosperity Metric elsewhere.** This would constitute an infringement on the community and OFIFC’s intellectual property rights, since the research question itself is a part of our intellectual property. If this occurred, the community and the OFIFC would have to contemplate at least two questions:
    - is it ok that this kind of activity happens; and
    - if it does happen, should the Friendship Centre community be entitled to any compensation involving the use of this idea?
2) **Collaborators may publish on the process of developing the Indigenous Prosperity Metric computer program, and include information that is potentially detrimental to the Friendship Centre.** An RCA that outlines dissemination and publication of research results is important in establishing processes that would allow the Friendship Centre and OFIFC to review, provide feedback on, and approve potential publications.
3) **Collaborators may devalue Indigenous Knowledge throughout the research process and privilege their own understandings about how the portrait of Indigenous prosperity was arrived at.** By denying the Friendship Centre community’s capacity to reflect on, analyze, and speak to research findings, the project would devalue any Indigenous Knowledge used. Furthermore, if this occurred then the project could no longer be said to be ‘community-driven’ in its process.

APPENDIX B

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TOOL QUESTIONS

Restoration of Identity

1. How do you support urban Indigenous self-determination in all planning and design stages?
2. How are the proposed activities trauma-informed?
3. How are the tools and processes that support the project/initiative developed?
4. How do the intended services impact Indigenous prosperity?

Indigenous Ways of Knowing

1. How are the approaches to evaluation culturally grounded?
2. What is the urban Indigenous community role in the transfer of knowledge?
3. How is the project/initiative grounded in culture?
4. How are the concepts of Indigenous prosperity reflected in the project/initiative?

Sense of Belonging

1. How is the local community infrastructure supported?
2. How is the diversity of local protocols reflected in the project/initiative?
3. How are the Friendship Centres in the area directly supported by the project/initiative?
4. How are the safe spaces for all genders created and held?

Everyday Good Living

1. How is the focus on Indigenous concepts of prosperity maintained through the project/initiative?
2. How is the intergenerational transfer of knowledge supported?
3. How is the explicit Indigenous control over data (including reporting) maintained through the project/initiative?
4. How is the project/initiative sustainable?

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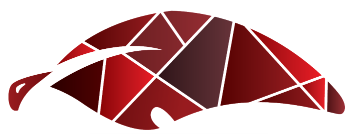

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