Indigenous Policy (IPJ) publishes articles, commentary, reviews, news, and announcements concerning Native American and international Indigenous affairs, issues, events, nations, groups and media. We invite commentary and dialogue in and between issues.

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Advisory Council

Our thanks to all the members of the advisory council who review article submissions:
David Armstrong, Emily Acevedo, Joseph Bauerkemper, Phil Bellfy, Dr. Cheryl Bennett, JoLee Blackbear, Arnold Blackstar, Bennis Blue, Thomas Bradefer, Stephen Brandon, Thomas Britten, Marcelle Burns, Heather M. Burton, Patricia Campbell, Ward Churchill, Sarah Cline, David Close, Thaddieus (Tad) Conner, Renee Ann Cramer, Shane Day, Dr. Karla, Denise del Carpio, Dr. Robert Nicholas Diotavlevi, Harvey Dumarce, Adam Dunstan, Jonathan Erlen, Maureen Enoonce, Anne FB Flaherty, Dr. Laurence Armand French, Dr. Lily George, Nathan Goetting, Susan Grogan, Meegan Hall, Dr. Charles F. Harrington, Burke Hendrix, Bill Hipwell, Sheree Hukill, Lilias Jarding, Leo Killsback, Ambelin Kwaymullina, Professor Lloyd Lance Lee, Che-Wei Lee, Jon'a Meyer, Dylan Miner, Erica Neegan, Ignacio Ochoa, Robert Patrick, Nicholas Peroff, Geoffrey D. Peterson, Kenneth L. Poff, Seppy Pour, Dr. Prebble Q Ramswell, Ezra Rosser, Jolee Saskamoose, Reddog Sina, Navin Singh, Dr. Makere Stewart Marawira, Jay Toth, Margaret Vaughn, Irene Watson, David Weska Wanbli Welden, Mark Welch, Rick Wheelock, and Stefanie Wickstrom.

IPJ IS SEEKING TO BUILD AN EDITORIAL COMMITTEE TO WORK WITH THE NEW EDITOR IN RUNNING THE ARTICLE REFEREEING PROCESS

IPJ is seeking volunteers to join the Editorial Committee to collaborate with Rick Wheelock, our new Editor in coordinating the refereeing process for submitted articles, sending submissions round to advisory committee members for review, and making final decisions on articles based on reviewers' advice. If you are interested in on the Editorial Committee, please contact Rick Wheelock, WHEELOCK_R@fortlewis.edu.

Eileen Luna-Firebaugh, eluna@email.arizona.edu and Anne Luna-Gordinier Assistant lunagordinier@csus.edu will become the New IPJ Editors coordinating the article refereeing process and special issues beginning April 2018.

IPJ INVITES VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE ON ITS ADVISORY COUNCIL, REFEREEING SUBMITTED ARTICLES. If you are interested in being a reviewer of submitted articles in the IPJ refereeing process, please contact Rick Wheelock, WHEELOCK_R@fortlewis.edu.

Book Review Committee:
IPJ has a book review committee. People wishing to review books, often receiving a free copy to review, and those wishing to have a book review should send a copy, to David Weiden, Assistant
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS December 8

INDIGENOUS POLICY PLANS FOR 2017-18 - WE INVITE YOUR HELP AND INPUT

We wish you a fine fall season. Indigenous Policy journal is available on the web with e-mail notification of new issues at no charge. Indigenous Policy puts out two regular issues a year (Summer and Winter), and since summer 2006, what is now a fall issue serving as the Proceedings of the Western Social Science Association Meeting American Indian Studies Section. We are seeking additional editors, columnists and commentators for regular issues, and editors or editorial groups for special issues, and short articles for each issue. We have via our web site, a regularly updated and searchable data base of Ph.D. Dissertations from Universities Around the World on Topics Relating to Indians in the Americas, compiled by Jonathon Erlen and Jay Toth from Dissertation Abstracts, with recent dissertations also listed separately in each of our regular Summer and Winter issues. IPJ is on facebook, including some important updates since the last issue, at: https://www.facebook.com/indigenouspolicyjournal.

As IPJ is a refereed journal, articles may be posted on a different schedule from the rest of the journal. New articles may go up either at the same time as regular issues, or be added to already posted issues, and may or may not remain up when issues change, until replaced by new articles. Notices go out to our list serve when new issues are posted, and when new articles are posted. To be added to the list to receive e-mail notice of new postings of issues, and new postings of articles, send an e-mail to Steve Sachs: ssachs@earthlink.net.

IPJ has been publishing special issues from time to time since winter 2002 and will continue to do so. These are usually on specific issues. In addition, the Fall issues of IPJ are devoted to carrying the Proceedings of the American Indian Studies Section of the Western Social Science Association Meeting held the preceding April. We invite articles, reports, announcements and reviews of meetings, and media, programs and events, and short reports of news, commentary and exchange of views, as well as willingness to put together special issues.

Send us your thoughts and queries about issues and interests and replies can be printed in the next issue and/or made by e-mail. In addition, we will carry Indigenous Studies Network (ISN) news and business so that these pages can be a source of ISN communication and dialoging in addition to circular letters and annual meetings at APSA. In addition to being the newsletter/journal of the Indigenous Studies Network, we collaborate with the Native American Studies Section of the Western Social Science Association (WSSA) and provide a dialoguing vehicle for all our readers. This is your publication. Please let us know if you would like to see more, additional, different, or less coverage of certain topics, or a different approach or format.

IPJ is a refereed journal. Submissions of articles should go to Rick Wheelock, WHEELOCK_R@fortlewis.edu, who will send them out for review. Our process is for non-article submissions to go to Steve Sachs, who drafts each regular issue. Unsigned items are by Steve. Other editors then make editing suggestions to Steve. Thomas Brasdefer posts this Journal on the IPJ web site: http://www.indigenouspolicy.org.

Statement of Purpose

Indigenous Policy Journal Standards and Philosophy of Publication of Scholarly Articles
In its publication of double-blind, peer-reviewed scholarly articles, the Indigenous Policy Journal aspires the highest standards of scholarly edification and discourse on policy issues facing Indigenous peoples. In doing so, the IPJ is informed by the important national and international policy goals of self-determination and continuance of cultural values of indigenous people. We advise those submitting their articles to be aware of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provides useful guidelines for scholarly inquiry and study of practically any policy issue that contributes to the continuance of indigenous peoples.

GUIDE TO SUBMITTING WRITINGS TO IPJ

We most welcome submissions of articles, commentary, news, media notes and announcements in some way relating to American Indian or international Indigenous policy issues, broadly defined. Please send article submissions electronically attached to e-mail to Rick Wheelock, WHEELOCK_R@fortlewis.edu, who will send them out for review. All non-article submissions (including Research Notes, which usually are non-refereed articles) go via e-mail to Steve Sachs: ssachs@earthlink.net, or on disk, at: 1916 San Pedro, NE, Albuquerque, NM, 87110. If you send writings in Word format, we know we can work with them. We can translate some, but not all other formats into word. If you have notes in your submission, please put them in manually, as end notes as part of the text. Do not use an automated footnote/end note system that numbers the notes as you go and put them in a footer such automated notes are often lost, and if not, may appear elsewhere in the journal, and not in your article, as several writings are posted together in the same file. If you use any tables in a submission, please send a separate file(s) for them, as it is impossible to work with them to put on the web when they are an integral part of a Word text. Some other format/style things are helpful to us, and appreciated, but not an absolute requirement. As we publish in 12 point Times font, with single spacing, and a space between paragraphs, it saves us work if we receive writings that way. Many thanks. We look forward to seeing what you send us.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

ISN PROGRAM AT APSA 2018 in Boston, MA, August 30 - September 2, 2018

The Indigenous Studies Network (ISN) plans to put on one or more panels and a business meeting/networking session at the 2018 American Political Science Association (APSA) Meeting, in Boston, MA, August 30 - September 2, 2018. For more information, or to propose a paper, poster or panel, contact ISN Chair Richard Witmer, Creighton University, RichardWitmer@creighton.edu. "ISN welcomes all proposals including those that address the conference theme “Democracy and Its Discontent”. We encourage submission that address individual Indigenous communities as well as comparative analysis across Indigenous groups or Indigenous relations with non-Indigenous governments. As in the past, we are looking for research from all regions of the world that address issues important to Indigenous communities." More information about the APSA meeting is available, and by June 2018 the program and abstracts of papers will become available, at: http://www.apsanet.org/. The deadline for paper and panel proposals may be December 1, 2017, but check with APSA or the ISN program coordinators to be certain.

In addition, there are ususally a large number of other Indigenous panels, papersand posersat APSA.

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WSSA 2018 AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES SECTION PROGRAM, April 4-7, 2018

The American Indian Studies Section of the Western Social Science Association, at its 60th meeting, expects to again have a full program of panels at the association's meeting at the 2018 conference in San Antonio, TX, at the
Hyatt Regency, April 4-7, 2018. Paper/panel proposals for the American Indian Studies Section can either be submitted on line by going to: http://www.wssaweb.com, or by sending them (preferably by E-mail) to AIS section coordinators: Michelle Hale: michelle.hale@asu.edu and Tennille Marley: tennille.marley@asu.edu. Deadline for proposals, including abstracts, is December 1, 2017. Information, which will eventually include the preliminary program, can be accessed on line at: http://www.wssaweb.com.

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A list of Indigenous Language Conferences is kept at the Teaching Indigenous Languages web site at Northern Arizona University: http://www2.nau.edu and among a large number of linguistic conferences of all types at: http://linguistlist.org/callconf/browse-current.cfm?type=Conf, and for bilingual education in the U.S. (and some beyond) at Dual Language Education of New Mexico: http://www.dlenm.org.

The D'Arcy McNickle Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the Newberry Library, in Chicago, has an on-going Newberry Library Seminar in American Indian Studies on Wednesdays from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at the Newberry, 60 West Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois with a meal included. “We will pre-circulate papers to those planning to attend. If you cannot attend and want to read a paper, please contact the author directly. To receive a copy of a paper, email mcnickle@newberry.org or call (312) 255-3552. Papers are available for request two weeks prior to the seminar date. Please include your email address in all correspondence.” There are other occasional events. E-mail: mcnickle@newberry.org or call (312)255-3564 to receive a copy of the paper via E-mail. For more on this and other events at the Newberry Library go to: http://www.newberry.org/mcnickle/AISSeminar.html.

National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture, Inc. P O Box 1063 Portland, IN 47371 Home: 4950 North 750 East Attica, IN 47918 765-426-3022, www.ncglnac.org, kay.neumayr@ncglnac.org, holds events throughout the year, including: 2018 NCGLNAC Academic Conference: Great Principal Peacetime Chiefs, April 21, 2018, in the Bubp Building, Jay County Fairgrounds, Portland, Indiana.

The University of North Carolina Pembroke, Pembroke, NC runs an on going Native American Speakers Series, usually announced shortly ahead of time, and often at the Museum of the Southeast American Indian, University of North Carolina Pembroke, Pembroke, NC. For more information, email ais@uncp.edu, or call 910.521.6266. Admission to the series is free, and it is open to the public.

4th Language and Language Teaching Conference (LLTC) 2017 may be in September 2017. For details visit: https://sites.google.com/site/usdlltc/.

46th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Association of the Southwest will be held at the New Mexico State University in fall 2017. For details go to: http://clas.ucdenver.edu/lasso/index.html.

The World Sustainability Forum, organized by the MDPI AG will take place from 15th September 2017 at the University of Basel in Basel, Switzerland. The conference will cover areas like the globe, extreme poverty and hunger have been reduced, and infant, child, and maternal mortality have decreased. For details, visit: https://10times.com/world-sustainability-forum.


1st Annual National Native Health Research Training Conference, IHS, AIHEC, AISES, NRN, is September 18-20, 2017 at Colorado Convention Center, Denver, CO. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.
Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), *Climate Change and the Growing Risk of Nuclear War: An Agenda for Action*: A one-day symposium brought to you by Pioneer Valley PSR, featuring Dr. Ira Helfand, Bill McKibben, and more. - is September 23, 2017, in Hadley, MA. For more information go to: http://www.psr.org/news-events/events/.


**INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONAL REPATRIATION CONFERENCE** is September 25-26, 2017, at Isleta Resort & Casino in Albuquerque, NM. For details go to: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events.

**Fourth International CREA Conference** is September 27-29, 2017 in Chicago at the Palmer House, 17 E Monroe St, Chicago, IL 60603. For details go to: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events.

**9th Annual Tusweca Tiospaye 2016 Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Summit and FirstNations Education Summit** may be in October 2017. For details visit: http://tuswecatospaye.org/.


**7th International Conference on Language Immersion Education** may be in October 2017. For details visit: http://www.carla.umn.edu/conferences/LTE2015/.

**USET SPF Annual**, hosted by Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, may be in October 2017. For details go to: http://www.usetinc.org

**NAAS 2017 International Research Conference** may be in October 2017. For details visit: https://www.naaas.org.

**NAFOA 2017 Fall Finance & Tribal Economies Conference** is October 2-3, 2017, at River Spirit Casino Resort, Tulsa, OK. For details go to: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events.

**National Food Sovereignty Summit** is at the Radisson Hotel, Green Bay, WI, October 2-5, 2017. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm or https://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?EventID=1927890&. 

**NIEA Annual Conference** is October 4-7, 2017 in Orlando, FL. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

**American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)** is October 4-6, 2017 in Orlando, FL. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

**14th Language is Life Biennial Conference** is October 6-8, 2017, at Wonder Valley Resort, Sanger, CA. For details, visit: http://www.aicls.org/.

**Community-Based Heritage Language Schools meeting is Saturday: Promoting Collaboration and Advocacy Among Educators, Families, and Researchers** is at American University in Washington, DC, October 7, 2017. For information go to: http://www.international.ucla.edu/institute/event/12505.
13th Language is Life Gathering is in Sanger, California, USA, October 6-8, 2017. For More Information on this Conference Contact Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival: https://aicls.org.

AIHEC-ACCT GISS-TCU 3.0, in conjunction with NIEA, is October 7-8, 2017 in Orlando, FL. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

Annual, Sunrise Gathering on Alcatraz Island: Day of Solidarity with Indigenous People is October 9, 2017. For details go to: http://www.iitc.org/conferences-events/community-events/.

The 2017 International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums is October 9-12, 2017 (Conference dates are October 11-12) at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya, Santa Ana Pueblo, outside Albuquerque, NM. For information, visit: http://www.atalm.org. Please direct questions to atalminfo@gmail.com.

2017 Southwest Conference on Disability is October 11-13, 2017, in Albuquerque, NM. For details go to: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events.

14th Annual ALAS Education Summit is October 11-14, in Houston, TX. For details go to: http://www.dlenm.org/index.php/resources/calendar/23-alas-education-summit.

NCAI 74th Annual Convention and Marketplace is October 15-20, 2017, in Milwaukee, WI. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.


The Indigenous Studies Area of the Midwest Popular Culture Association at the annual Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association conference is, October 18-22, 2017 in St. Louis, MO. For more information about the conference please visit the conference website at www.m pcaaca.org/conference.


SACNAS Conference, is October 19-20, 2017 in Salt Lake City, UT. For information visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.

American Indigenous Research Association Meeting is October 20-21, 20117 in Joseph McDonald Health and Fitness Center, Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Montana. Preconference workshop is October 19. For details go to: http://americanindigenousresearchassociation.org/meeting/.

The annual Friends of Uto-Aztecan Conference (FUAC) in Boise, Idaho, on the Boise State University campus in conjunction with the Western Conference on Linguistics (WECOL), October 20-22. FUAC itself will take place on Friday, October 20. For details visit: http://www.ssila.org.

SGAC/TSGAC Self Governance 4th Quarter Advisory Committee Meeting is Oct 24-26, 2017. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

2017 World Indigenous Business Forum is October 24-26, 2017 in Santiago, Chile. For details go to:
http://wibf.ca/.

The 13th International MEDCOAST Congress on Coastal and Marine Sciences, Engineering, Management & Conservation is October 31–November 4, 2017, at Paradise Bay Resort Hotel (All-inclusive), Mellieha - Malta. For details go to: conference.medcoast.net, or medcoast@medcoast.net, http://www.medcoast.net/.

6th International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity (LED 2017) may be in November 2017. For details visit: https://led.education.auckland.ac.nz.

2017 Collins Lecture, "Wounded Earth, Wounded Humanity: God’s Call for Climate Justice." Seminar, November 2, 2017, from 1 to 5:15 p.m. and lecture from 7 to 9:15 p.m. at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 147 NW 19th Ave, Portland. For details go to: http://www.emoregon.org/2017_collins_lecture.php.

FALCON Annual Conference is November 3-6, 2017, in Arlington,VA. For information go to: http://falcon.aihec.org/Pages/FALCONHome.aspx

The 9th Annual Honoring Native Foodways may be in November 2017 in the University Center Annex, University of North Carolina, Pembroke. For information go to: https://uncpphoto.smugmug.com/Events/2015/Native-Foodways/.

First Nations Language Keepers Conference may be in November 2017 at the Saskatoon Inn and Conference Centre in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. Details area available at: http://www.sicc.sk.ca/.


Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) November 2, 2017, 2017 Collins Lecture. At Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, 147 NW 19th Ave, Portland. We will explore how climate change disproportionately affects the world’s most vulnerable people, triggering the loss of livelihoods, insecurity, forced migration and poor health. For information visit: http://www.emoregon.org/emo_events.php.

TribalNet 18th Annual Conference and Tradeshows is November 6-9, 2017, in Glendale, Arizona. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

Tribal Interior Budget Council, November 7-9, 2017 is November 7-9, 2017 at Washington Plaza, 10 Thomas Circle NW, Washington, DC. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

Keres Children’s Learning Center (KCLC), Native Language Symposium: A Cross-Generational Model of Indigenous Education—Reclaiming the Education of Our Children: November 15-16, 2017, at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico. ere will be presentations and discussions surrounding various models of education, with the hope of connecting participants, providing resources, and furthering the movement toward educational sovereignty by redefining achievement within Indian Education. For questions or more information, please contact tracordero@gmail.com or trisha@kclcmontessori.org, or go to: http://www.dlenm.org/index.php/homepage/news.
The 6th National Closing the Gap Indigenous Health Conference will be held at the Pullman Cairns International Hotel, Cairns, Australia, the 27 - 29 November 2017. For details visit: https://adminics.wixsite.com/indigenousconference/our-products.

The 2017 National Indigenous Mental Health & Wellbeing: Out of the Shadows will be held at the Pullman Cairns International Hotel, Cairns, Australia, the 27 - 29 November 2017. For details visit: https://adminics.wixsite.com/indigenousconference/2017-indigenous-mental-health-confe.

USHRN Bi-annual Human Rights Conference may be in December 2017. See more at: http://www.ushrnetwork.org/. For more information and registration: http://www.ushrnetwork.org/.


The 2017 National Indigenous Employment: Building A Future Conference is scheduled to be held in Canberra on the 13th - 15th December at the Rex Hotel, Canberra, Australia, For details visit: https://adminics.wixsite.com/indigenousconference/2017-national-indigenous-employment.

XVII International Conference on Minority Languages may be in 2018. For details go to: http://linguistlist.org/.

The 9th Annual Earth Care Summit may be in January 2018. For details visit: http://www.psr.org/news-events/events/.

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) Winter Convention 2018 may be in January. For details go to: http://www.atnitribes.org.

WSF2018 The 7th World Sustainability Forum may be in January 2018. For details go to: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/6th-world-sustainability-forum-matthias-burkhalter?articleId=6059646020671807488.

Fourteenth International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability": 2018 Special Focus: Forging Solidarity—Collective Sustainability Solutions in a Fragmenting World is January 17-19, 2018 at the Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns, Australia. The On Sustainability knowledge community is brought together by a common concern for sustainability in a holistic perspective, where environmental, cultural, economic, and social concerns intersect. For details visit: http://onsustainability.com/.

The 9th Annual Earth Care Summit may be in January 2018. For details visit: http://www.psr.org/news-events/events/.

Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas: SSILA annual winter meeting will be held jointly with the annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America in Salt Lake City, Utah, at the Grand America in Salt Lake City, January 4-7, 2018. For details visit: http://www.ssila.org/.

The 13th International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic, and Social Sustainability January 17–19 2018, at The Cairns Institute, James Cook University, Cairns, Australia. The On Sustainability knowledge community is brought together by a common concern for sustainability in a holistic perspective,
where environmental, cultural, economic, and social concerns intersect. For details visit: http://onsustainability.com.


**Heritage Language Research Institute 10th International Conference on Language Teacher Education** may be in February 2018 at UCLA Covel Commons, in Los Angeles, CA. For details go to: http://nhlrc.ucla.edu/

**NAAS & Affiliates 26th Annual Conference** is February 12-17, 2018, at the Westin Dalls Park Central, in Dalls, TX. For details go to: http://www.naaas.org.

**Colorado Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) Professional Development Conference** is February 1-2, 2018. For details visit: http://www.cocabe.org.

The **Native American-Indigenous Section of the Southwest Popular/American Culture Association 39th Annual Conference** is as usual in Albuquerque, NM, February 7-10, 2018. For details go to: http://southwestpca.org/conference/call-for-papers/.

**19th Annual American Indian Tourism Conference** is September 11-14, 2017 at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin. For details go to: http://clas.ucdenver.edu/lasso/index.html.


**2018 NATIONAL INDIGENOUS WOMEN’S WELLBEING CONFERENCE** is 7th - 9th February 2018 at Pullman Cairns International Hotel, Cairnw, Australia. For details visit: https://adminics.wixsite.com/indigenousconference/2018-indigenous-womens-conference.

**NAAAS & Affiliates (including the National Association of Native American Studies) 2018 Joint National Conference** is February 12-1, 2018 in7 in Dallas, TX. For details visit: https://www.naaas.org.


**American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) 2018 Winter Board Meeting** is February 12-15, 2018 in Washington, DC. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

**SWCOLT (Conference on Language Teaching)** is February 22-24, 2018 in Santa Fe, NM. For information go to: http://www.swcolt.org/.

**30th Far West PCA/ACA (Popular and American Culture associations)**, which likely has at least one American Indian section, is February 23-25, 2018, at the Los Vegas, NV Palace Station Hotel. For information go to: http://www.fwpca.org/.

The 41st Annual California Conference on American Indian Education may be in March 2018. For more information, contact: Achel McBride: (530)895-4212 x 110, Irma Amaro: (707)464-3512, or Judy Delgado at 916-319-0506, judelgado@cde.ca.gov, or go to: http://www.ccaie.org/.

National Association for Bilingual Education Annual Conference is at the Albuquerque Convention Center, Albuquerque, NM, USA, March 1-3, 2018. For details go to: http://www.nabe-conference.com/index.html.

National RES Las Vegas is March 5-8, 2018, in Las Vegas, NV. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) 2018 Spring Board Meeting is March 9-10, 2018 in Rapid City, SD. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) 2018 Student Conference is March 11-14, 2018 in Rapid City, SD. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.


The Western Political Science Association (WPSA) 2017, March 29-31, 2018, is at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero, San Francisco, CA, and will likely include one or more Race, Ethnicity and Politics panels that could include Indigenous issues. For details go to: http://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/

Workshop on Structure and Constituency in the Languages of the Americas (WSCLA 2016) may be in April 2017. For details go to: https://sites.google.com/site/wscla2016/.

Alaska Native Studies Conference 2017 may be in April 2018 at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. For information go to: http://alaskanativestudies.org.

Washington Association of Bilingual Education: Annual Conference may be in April 2018. For details go to: http://wabewa.org/.

46th Annual Symposium on the American Indian may be at Northeastern State University, University Center, Tahlequah, OK, may be in April 2018. For details visit: http://www.cts.nsuok.edu/NSUSymposium.aspx.

American Indian Cultures and Literatures area of the PCA/ACA (Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association) National Conference 2017 may be in April 2018. For details Visit: http://www.pcaaca.org/conference/national.php

Federal Bar Association’s Indian Law Conference is April 5-6, 2018, at Talking Stick Resort, 9800 E. Indian Bend Road, Scottsdale, AZ 85256. http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

Fourteenth Annual Southeast Indian Studies Conference is being held on campus at the University of

The 12th Giving the Gift of Language: A Teacher Training Workshop for Native Language Instruction and Acquisition, SILC: Strengthening Indigenous Languages and Cultures: A Teacher Training Workshop for Native Language Instruction and Acquisition is April 14-16, 2016, at Missoula, MT. For information visit: http://www.nsilc.org/index.htm

NICWA Annual Conference is April 15-18, 2018 in Anchorage, AK. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

NAFOA - 36th Annual Conference is April 16-17, 2018, at The Roosevelt, New Orleans, LA. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.


The 10th International Conference on Climate: Impacts and Responses is April 20–21 April 2018 at University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA. The Climate Change Conference is for any person with an interest in, and concern for, scientific, policy and strategic perspectives in climate change. It will address a range of critically important themes relating to the vexing question of climate change. Plenary speakers will include some of the world’s leading thinkers in the fields of climatology and environmental science, as well as numerous paper, workshop and colloquium presentations by researchers and practitioners. For details go to: http://on-climate.com/the-conference.

National Center for Great Lakes Native American Culture, 2018 NCGLNAC Academic Conference: Great Principal Peacetme Chiefs is April 21, 2018, in the Bubp Building, Jay County Fairgrounds, Portland, Indiana. For details visit: www.ncglnac.org.

The University of Valladolid, in Valladolid, Spain will host the 4th International Conference on Multilingual Language Theories and Practices (MLTP2018), April 25-27, 2018. For more information go to: https://mltp18.wordpress.com.

The 13th Annual Conference on Endangered Languages and Cultures of the Americas may be in May 2018. For details go to: http://www.cail.utah.edu, or contact Jennifer Mitchell: cail.utah@gmail.com.

22nd Navajo Studies Conference may be at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, may be in May 2018. For details go to: http://www.navajostudies.org.

Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) Mid Year Convention 2018 may be in May 2018. For details go to: http://www.atnitribes.org.


The 8th Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Annual Conference may be in May, 2018, in Tucson, AZ. For more information go to: http://naisa.ais.arizona.edu/.
20th Annual Workshop on American Indigenous Languages (WAIL2016) may be in May 2018, at UCSB Department of Linguistics. For information visit: http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu or http://osl.sa.ucsb.edu/org/nail/WAIL.


Breath of Life / Workshop for California Indian Languages may be in June 2018, For details visit: http://www.aicls.org.

24th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium may be at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, in June 2018. Information will become available at www.uhh.hawaii.edu.

AsiaLex 2018 may be in June 2018. For information go to: http://www.adelaide.edu.au/australalex/.

The Native American Student Advocacy Institute may be in June 2018. For details visit: http://nasai.collegeboard.org/.


Fostering Indigenous Business and Entrepreneurship in the Americas Conference: FIBEA 2018 may be in June 2018. For information and to make submissions contact fibea@mgt.unm.edu, or visit http://conferences.mgt.unm.edu/fibea/ or http://fibeamaanaus.mgt.unm.edu/defaultEng.asp.

4th Annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference and 6th Western Symposium on Language Issues (WeSLI) may be in June 2018. For details go to: http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/AIE/conf.html.


The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is a national non-profit organization that advocates for American Indian and Alaska Native federal employees. SAIGE 15th Annual National Training Program may be in June 2018. Information is available from the Society of American Indian Government Employees, P.O. Box 7715, Washington, D.C. 20044, www.saige.org.

UCLA American Indian Studies Center Summer in Montana may be in June 2018. For details see: www.aisc.ucla.edu/news/.../Summer%20in%20Montana%20flyer.pdf.

Dene Languages Conference may be in June 2017, and will likely be held in the Southwest, in Apache country. For information go to: http://www.uaf.edu/alc/.
SYLAP 2018 (Shoshonian language summer program) may be in June and July 2018 on the campus of the University of Utah. For details go to: http://shoshoniproject.utah.edu/2015/12/sylap-2017-application/.

The Northwest Indian Language Institute Summer 2018 may be in June 2018, at the University of Oregon, Eugene, OR. For details go to: http://pages.uoregon.edu/nwili/.

8th International Conference on Bantu may be in June 2018. For details go to: http://linguistlist.org/callconf/browse-conf-action.cfm?ConflID=190196.


The 2018 Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) may be in June and July 2018. For information about SSILA go to: www.ssila.org.

8th American Indian and Indigenous Education Conference may be at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, in June 2018. To get updated information on this conference visit: http://nau.edu/AIE.

The 2018 Institute on Collaborative Language Research (CoLang) may be at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks may be in June 2018. For details go to: http://www.ssila.org.

2018 International Stolen Generations Conference, may be in June 2018, in Sidney, Australia. For details go to: http://www.indigenousconferences.com/2017-conferences.

2018 Dene / Athabaskan Language Conference & Workshop may be in June or July 2018. For details go to: https://2017denelanguageconference.weebly.com

13th Lancaster Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching (LAEDG 2018) may be in June or July 2018. For details go to: http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/index.htm.

SYLAP 2018 (Shoshonian language summer program) may be in June and July 2018 on the campus of the University of Utah. For details go to: http://shoshoniproject.utah.edu/.

NCAI 2018 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace is June 3 - 6, 2018, in Kansas City, MO. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.


CARLA - Center for Advanced Research and Language Acquisition - run a series of summer institutes for language and immersion teachers in July 2017." For details, go to: http://carla.umn.edu/.

9th International 3L Summer School: Endangered Languages: From Documentation to Revitalization may be in July 2018. For details visit: http://www.ddl.ish-lyon.cnrs.fr/.

NCAIS Graduate Student Conference at the Newberry Library in Chicago may be in July 2018. “The Consortium offers graduate students from NCAIS member institutions an opportunity to present papers in any academic field relating to American Indian Studies at the Graduate Student Conference. We encourage the submission of proposals for papers that examine a wide variety of subjects relating to American Indian and Indigenous history and culture broadly conceived. For details go to http://www.newberry.org/.
NCAIS Summer Institute, may be in July and August 2018. For more information go to: www.newberry.org/mcnickle.

9th Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment: 'Language Endangerment: Language Contact and Language Change', may be in July 2018, at the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK. For information go to: http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/.

2018 UNITY National Conference may be in July 2018. For details go to: http://unityinc.org/events/.

CARLA: The Center for Advanced Research in Language Acquisition has a series of Summer Institutes of different lengths on a variety of topics beginning in July 2018. The schedule will be available at: http://carla.umn.edu/institutes/2017/schedule.html.

Duel Language Education of New Mexico: Bueno Center 2018 Summer Institute, Two-day summer institute about the education of culturally and linguistically diverse learners, May be in July 2018. For information go to: http://www.dlenm.org/.

2017 WINHEC Annual Meeting may be in July 2018. For information visit: http://winhec.org.

ACCESS Conference (formerly SKC TCU Summer Meeting) may be in July 2018 at Salish Kootenai College, Pabo, MT. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.

New Mexico Language Education of New Mexico: Paridad - Oaxaca (Language Arts Education) may be in July and August 2018. For details go to: http://www.dlenm.org/index.php/resources/calendar/21-paridad-oaxaca-language-arts-education.

The 2018 annual meeting of the Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States, the 45th LACUS Forum is July 23-27, 2018, at Boston College in Boston, Massachusetts, in conjunction with the 2018 International Systemic Functional Congress. For details visit: http://lacus.weebly.com.

NAAAS (including The National Association of Native American Studies) International Research Forum may be in August 2018. For details visit: https://www.naaas.org/view-calendar/.

Syntax of the World's Languages VIII (SWL VIII) may be in August 2018. For details visit: http://swl-7.weebly.com/.

3rd Indigenous People's International Gathering to Honor, Defend, and Protect the Salomon may be in August 2018. For information contact: Chicaloon Native Village (907)745-0749.


35th Summer School and Conference of Applied Language Studies may be in August, 2018. For details go to: http://www.aila.info.


2018 CHRONIC DISEASE CONFERENCE is at PULLMANS CAIRNS INTERNATIONAL Hotel, Cairns, Australia, 3-5 JULY 2018. For details go to: https://adminics.wixsite.com/indigenousconference/2018-international-chronic-disease.

AIHEC 2018 Summer Board Meetings is July 9-11, 2018. For details go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.

ACCESS Conference is July 30-August 2, 2018. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.

TCU Summer Meeting at SKC: Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, MT, is July 30-August 2, 2018. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.


CARLA - Center for Advanced Research and Language Acquisition - run a series of summer institutes for language and immersion teachers in July 2017." For details, go to: http://carla.umn.edu/.

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NCAIS Summer Institute, may be in July and August 2018. For more information go to: www.newberry.org/mcnickle.

9th Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment: 'Language Endangerment: Language Contact and Language Change', may be in July 2018, at the University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK. For information go to: http://www.mml.cam.ac.uk/.

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New Mexico Language Education of New Mexico: Paridad - Oaxaca (Language Arts Education) may be in July and August 2018. For details go to: http://www.dlenm.org/index.php/resources/calendar/21-paridad-oaxaca-language-arts-education.

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35th Summer School and Conference of Applied Language Studies may be in August, 2018. For details go to: http://www.aila.info.

NAFOA 2018 Fall Finance & Tribal Economies Conference is Oct 1, 2018 - Oct 2, 2018 at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa, Santa Ana Pueblo, NM. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) 2018 Fall Board Meeting is October 9-10, 2018 in Hartford, CT. For information go to: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.cfm.

NIEA National Convention is in Hartford, CT, October 10-14, 2018. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

NCAI 75th Annual Convention & Marketplace is October 21-26, 2018 in Denver, CO. For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

Seventh International Conference on Immersion and Dual Language Education is February 6–9, 2019 in Charlotte, North Carolina. For details visit: http://carla.umn.edu/conferences/index.html.

ICLDC 6: Connecting Communities, Languages, and Technology is February 28 - March 3, 2019 at International Conference Center, Honolulu, HI. For details visit: http://icldc-hawaii.org

AIHEC 2019 Winter Board Meeting is February 11-14, 2019 at Holiday Inn Capitol (tentative), at Washington, D.C. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.

AustraLex Conference 2019 May be in August 28-29, 2019. For information visit:

**2019 Mid Year Conference & Marketplace** is June 23-26, 2019, in Reno, NV (Contracts pending). For details visit: http://www.ncai.org/conferences-events/ncai-events.

**TCU Summer Meeting at SKC** is July 22-26, 2019, at Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, MT. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.


**AIHEC 2020 Spring Student Conference** is spring 2020. AIHEC 2020 Spring Student Conference. For details visit: http://www.aihec.org/who-we-are/calendar.htm.


**AILA (Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquee) World Congress** will take August 9-14, 2020, at The University of Groningen, in Groningen, The Netherlands. Visit the Congress website <aila2017.com.br> for more detailed information about the venue and the conference, or go to: http://www.aila.info.


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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESTERN SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION 2017 MEETING**

**AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES SECTION**

**INTERTRIBAL COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION:**

**IS CONSENSUS POSSIBLE?**

Richard M. Wheelock, © April 12, 2017

**Abstract:**

This paper will draw upon scholarship in Indigenous Studies and the experiences of the author in considering the serious challenges of fracturing of tribal identities and communities after generations of economic, social, cultural and political crises brought on by global colonial forces.(1) In seeking creative responses based upon timeless tribal conceptualizations, and in forging strong principles of group cohesion for the future, tribal nations are forced to consider how they may balance the forces of seemingly stark individualism of the mass society that surrounds them with those of cooperative tribal values that have proven resilient over the generations. In the precarious arena of tribal self-determination, support among tribal members for cohesive approaches to unpredictable challenges to their own peoplehood remains the basis for tribal survival into the future.

**Chaos in Intratribal Dialogue: Considering one’s Stake in the Crisis**

In 1984, the famed Vine Deloria, Jr., in a book he co-authored with Clifford Lytle, pointed out that few tribal communities can be as cohesive as those that once existed before contact with European colonizers. He was also quick to point out that appeals to tribal religious traditions sometimes run counter to the current experience of Native people within today’s tribal communities, since so many have been influenced by Christian and even other
spiritual traditions for many generations. Finally, he was careful to note that in most tribal traditional form of
government, “...most Indian groups did not exceed several hundred people, and a good deal were less than a
hundred people.” His observations remind us that when we consider the current, often chaotic atmosphere of
internal debates over policy issues within tribal communities, we must remember to factor in generations of change
in tribal governance. We must also consider the experiences of generations of our tribal members with
colonization and human adaptation as we look for solutions to the sometimes discouraging and divisive nature of
internal dialogue in tribal governance. For those tribal nations who have maintained a common identity as
“Unkwe hu weh, Onu yote a’ka, Haudenosaunee” or as people carrying on the transformed and continuously
adapting identities of their People, though, the challenges of finding ways to improve the processes of reaching
consensus, or at least finding common purpose as tribal citizens, can probably best be framed within the idea of
their continued shared peoplehood. That challenge of finding some common ground for serving the common
good in tribal internal policy-making in times of continued rapid change is the one this paper will focus upon.

I believe it is crucial that in such a discussion as this, that individuals maintain a clear sense of one’s own
position in supporting her/his nation’s peoplehood. The author of this paper, for instance, must remain aware of
his own experiences and his own limitations in maintaining not only “citizenship” in the Oneida Nation in
Wisconsin, but his understanding of the evolving nature of the self-concepts and tribal identity of other members
of the Oneida community. For me, as a half-blood, off-reservation person with only a few years’ experience in
living within the exterior boundaries of the Oneida Reservation, the chances for significantly improving the
atmosphere of internal debate seem slight. Yet as has our traditions tell us, important contributions can be
conveyed by people who would seem to have little opportunity or desire to become great tribal leaders. My long
education in indigenous studies and my work as in higher education, coupled with my brief, sporadic, but
significant personal experience within the community, provide some compelling determination within me to
continue my personal struggle to discover ways to contribute what I can to strengthening Oneida’s quest to remain
a people in the maelstrom of today’s broad political and intercultural world.

Beyond the long story of our Oneida side of the family, I often cite my teaching experience beginning with the
very first year of the Oneida Tribal School, the Onu uh yote aka tsi tu wah dili hun ya nit’ ha, in 1979. I also
worked as editor of our tribe’s newspaper, the Kalihwisaks for several years before leaving the community again
to begin my graduate school education. That graduate school portion of my knowledge quest was preceded by my
undergraduate studies at Fort Lewis College, where I would eventually return to teach for nearly 30 years, ending
with my retirement in 2013. As of the writing of this paper, I am a two-year volunteer review editor of the
Indigenous Policy Journal, an emerging media voice in the now global dialogues about the continuance and
strengthening of indigenous peoples. I often provide this thumbnail sketch of my personal “stake” in the survival
of our tribe because it speaks of the variety of backgrounds people bring to the struggle for cohesion in our now
diverse and sometimes fragmented tribal community.

But there is more to a person’s background that formulates one’s perception of things. One’s career
experiences reveal some interesting clues for finding both the supportive environment and the mutual support of
peers in overcoming debilitating colonization. In the 1970’s, for instance, this author was involved as coordinator
in creating a public school Indian education program in Oregon, using the complex tool of an advisory board of
intertribal people, including some Native parents, administrators and teachers in concert with non-Indians of
similar social and professional standing. I’ve already mentioned working briefly as a teacher within the high-
morale community surrounding the creation of the Oneida Tribal School in the later 1970’s. Then, in the 1980’s I
experienced the art of local journalism as a community-building function for the tribe as editor of the Kalihwisaks,
the tribal newspaper I have also mentioned above. I then began my graduate studies in the mid-1980’s at the
University of Arizona’s MA program in American Indian Studies, meeting peers and an unusually influential
Native faculty in the environment of high expectations in one of the nation’s premier university settings. For the
students in the American Indian Studies program at that time, it was a chance to meet and study with the likes of
Vine Deloria, Jr., Robert K. Thomas and Tom Holm.
The graduate experience for me was extended some years later in the 1990’s at the University of New Mexico, as I eventually received my PhD in American Studies, being forced in the long effort to produce a dissertation to synthesize much of the experience and scholarship I had received by then in Indian country. My dissertation was entitled “Indian Self-Determination: Implications for Tribal Communications Policies.” Finally, my faculty career at Fort Lewis College that ended in 2013 gave me the opportunity to work closely with Native American students of many tribes at a college where a tuition-waiver assured that a sufficient number of Native students from throughout the West and elsewhere would attend my classes in Native American and Indigenous Studies, which I had the pleasure to coordinate during its creation. NAIS became a Bachelor’s Degree-granting department at Fort Lewis College in 2011 after several years of concerted efforts by an advisory board consisting of staff, faculty, students of Fort Lewis College and higher education professionals from the Jicarilla Apache, Southern Ute and Navajo Nations. It was another experience in working with inspired people to create what we all hoped will always be a unique opportunity for students interested in tribal self-determination.

From all that experience working toward a common goal in self-determination and scholarship aimed at the same goals, it has occurred to me lately that some surprising dynamics emerged when people came together, shared empowering goals and achieved outstanding success. I believe there is substantial evidence here that the shared sense of working for a “common good” is a powerful part of human nature, one that lives almost as an entity of itself, striving to survive as would any being. Once it feels the surge of its members’ efforts, as a body feels the surge of energy in its motions, the impetus for the common good can produce amazing results, beyond those intended or even imagined by people designing programs that brought the people together in the first place. One can tell when that process had been successful when the sense of peoplehood continues after the supposed leaders move on. I’ve even seen that unity of purpose among a local population continue when the programs that brought the people together have ended. I suppose many people who worked successful projects during the heady early years of the Self-Determination policy could tell similar stories.

There are, of course, both positive and negative outcomes of our experiences with overcoming elements of colonialism in our careers and experiences since the 1970’s, and of our personal, limited understandings of the tribal traditions and identity we hope can provide a bridge to cohesiveness among us today. Not everyone in Indian country had such heady experiences as I’ve described above. Poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, diabetes and other maladies still haunt our communities, both in reservation and in intertribal urban communities. And, in many communities, we seem to have lost the capacity for reasoned, well-informed debate on the issues we face as self-governing peoples. Yet I believe it is clear from my own experience that it may be useful to consider the problems of finding effective dialogue among tribal members as a “communications problem,” one that demands that we consider and even honor the actual dimensions of the tribal community, in both its positive and negative aspects. Such an analysis requires a demographic analysis in a deep, experiential sense. It seems we need to look deeply and with empathy, given the impacts of colonialism and continued social crisis, at how and why some of our people seem to periodically act out rage and frustration by blindly attacking their own tribal government without first checking the available facts in an issue. Of course, we also need to continue to seek the kinds of experience among us that can help resolve the factors that contribute to the continuing crisis of alienated tribal members as we take on the complexity of tribal sovereignty. Tribal nations still face consequences of intergenerational trauma(5) consequences we seem to experience when broad, inclusive processes of decision-making are attempted in tribal communities today.

In crucial debates on policies that require expedient decision-making, we live with those consequences. They seem to arise when we become impatient with our own people and suddenly express our personal, deeply held, yet unexplainable frustration during debate among others similarly saddled with personal trauma. It is then that we speak from the personal frustration of generations of poverty, family breakdown and generalized feelings of isolation and hostility. These intergenerational consequences of powerlessness that accompany colonial oppression cannot be easily overcome just because we hope they will be. To move beyond them takes personal confidence and a willingness to tolerate compromise, virtues and skills not easily awakened even in those who believe they have become successful economically or socially, since those successes have often come in another
arena, that of outside society, not within one’s own tribal nation. That is changing in Oneida as it is elsewhere. Successes of many kinds in the Self-Determination era has offered new hope, especially when the revitalization of traditional activities help to reorient people to the common good. For some, reciprocal systems of trust seem to be emerging even as others continue to feel left out of the economic benefits of tribal self-determination. It seems the tools for solving our internal crisis are poised. What is needed is wide participation and commitment among tribal members to tribal identity beyond the simple demands for services. Let us see how we might marshal our tools for the task of community development in the positive sense of seeking the common good. But first, let’s look at our adversary, the exclusively individualist, self-seeking spirit that divides our efforts.

Competing Paradigms of Tribal Traditions and Mass Society’s Values

Tribal survival today, it would seem, requires tribal members to consider the natural and human forces that brought them together in the first place. While one could consider many factors in such an analysis, one helpful model of tribalism continues to provide some useful food for thought in framing the question of what tribal peoples, in all their incredible variety, share as organizing principles of community. A model developed by Robert K. Thomas, whom I met in his classes at the University of Arizona, has always helped this writer think deeply about how our tribal ancestors saw the world around them in terms of their relationships and assumptions about the proper way to live an ethical life. I will only develop a few of the five elements of that model here, but the entire model can be utilized when needed for other discussions beyond this one about finding ways to improve internal dialogues. I have used this model in my classes and in many of my writings, so I apologize if the reader has heard this before. Here is the five-element model of pre-contact tribalism, almost entirely as I reiterated it in my dissertation in 1995:

1. Kinship structuring of the society: Practically all community activities rely upon kinship organization. “Institutions” are almost entirely made up of relatives taking personal responsibility for the tending of social obligations. A person’s status in the community is a function of one’s maturity and standing as a relative, in addition to, or even in spite of, one’s achievements.

2. A sacred, oral tradition: Instructions and ceremonies are “given” at the time of creation, defining the People’s responsibilities and place in the cosmos. Participation by both clan and individual is a major ethic in maintaining the proper balances among humans and with other beings. Relationships of respect are defined and the people’s responsibilities in maintain those relationships are defined. Violations of the proper behaviors can bring about dire consequences, often in the form of illness or other suffering of the individual or among one’s kinfolk.

3. A sacred society: Oral tradition also provides instruction for fulfilling the responsibilities within the communities of humans. A person learns the respect necessary for living in harmony with community members from kinfolk in an oral, face-to-face environment. Again, violation of the respectful relationships can bring on dire consequences. Both the participation in ceremonies and the meeting of kinship obligations are necessary to maintain the sacred order of things. Social controls include teasing, shame and, in severe cases, ostracism.

4. Responsiveness to the natural environment: There are many living, conscious “beings” in the natural environment, each requiring proper respect so that mutually beneficial relationships may continue. Omens and signs from the natural world are taken seriously, often requiring specific human actin to maintain balanced relationships. Ceremonies and other recognition of sacred places cement those relationships. The People have a sacred homeland, where they will fare well. Specific places carry special, sacred significance, as places of devotion, prayer and sacrifice for individual and community renewal.

5. A closed and bounded society: Since individuals are defined largely by the obligations to relatives, membership and participation in the group is necessary. “New” members must be adopted into the kinship structure so that order and structure can be maintained.

This remarkable model is important background for any indigenous person who hopes to understand the conflicts their ancestors faced in assimilation programs and those conflicts that still exist in modern tribal nations.
today. This model is especially helpful if the reader compares elements of this model with one of the “mass society” that has imposed its lifestyle upon the peoples of the world via colonial and neo-colonial and now, neo-liberal economic policies still faced by indigenous peoples. Here is a model of that mass society, intentionally condensed into five elements for easier comparison to the model Thomas provides:

1. Bureaucratic structuring of the society: Since this is a large, intercultural society, the distribution of services, opportunities and responsibilities cannot be accomplished via a kinship system. A less personal organization is required and people are ranked as individuals in categories or roles in order to gain fair shares of the goods and services mass society provides. Corporations greatly spread the system of bureaucracy to many areas of human interaction.

2. Traditions subordinated to innovation: Mass society greatly values innovation, frequently ignoring even Western concepts of sacredness in the interest of efficiency and progress. Traditional wisdom is deemed far less important, since it is often considered obsolete. The manifest power of human technology leads to a more anthropocentric relationship with the cosmos. Literacy and electronic media of information dominate thought patterns, providing a greatly expanded system of telecommunications at the expense of face-to-face conversations.

3. An impersonal society governed by laws passed by humans: Society is seen as a secular process. One’s responsibilities to other humans often requires formal law, since individuals must cooperate with many strangers daily. Neighbors rarely need to interact and even relationships within nuclear families are partially superseded by bureaucratic agencies as children spend their days in schools and adults take on work and career roles. Individuals are frequently anonymous as they pass through many “public” places.

4. Nature seen as controlled by humans: Objective and mechanical theories about natural process dominate. Real estate value of lands and “resources” displace most sacred values involved. Easy transportation and interchangeability of personnel qualified for specific categories of labor lead to a highly mobile portion of the mass society, reducing ties to specific homelands. Few people are directly involved in the now bureaucratic food production process, further reducing human interaction with natural processes.

5. An “open society”: People can become “residents” simply by moving to a locale and living there for a specific, legally defined length of time. Insistence upon “civil rights” for each individual is an important basis of social interaction, reducing the need for membership in a geographically defined community. Other types of groups, based upon similar interests and backgrounds are important. As Lowery and De Fleur note, solidarity among these groups is difficult to achieve because of “…social differentiation, impersonality and distrust due to psychological alienation, the breakdown of meaningful social ties, and increasing anomie among members.”(7)

These models of tribal and mass societies are offered here as a basis for the analysis of the roots of conflicts among tribal members today. The continued demands of the mass society that surrounds originally tribal peoples are part of the reason that people involved in internal debates crucial to tribal continuance face frequently unrecognized problems in basic communications. When they base their arguments in essential values of their shared cultural identity, for instance, both the speaker and the listener must bridge the gaps between understandings rooted in entirely different social and legal paradigms. In Oneida, as the history of the tribe reveals, assimilation policies and the nearby urban mass society of Wisconsin complicate conversations and behavior expectations to a relatively major degree. Of course, Oneidas have adapted to those conflicts in many ways, but as tribal governance demands expedient action to the timelines required in a mass society, the time and energy needed to decode and recode communications between individuals can become overwhelming if tribal people aren’t aware of the problems the continued interaction between these two paradigms create. With the two paradigms in mind, we can consider the pressing need for effective internal conversations and communications on the issues tribes face.

As indigenous peoples work together to maintain their sovereignty and to serve the needs of their communities in the Self-Determination era, some troubling challenges persist that force them to consider how they can act with
unity to maintain their sovereignty. Their efforts in economic development, for instance, are under constant attack from outsiders. In Oneida, Wisconsin, for instance, a long-standing challenge to tribal existence continues in the form of on-going challenges to practically any tribal action, even social gatherings, by the Town of Hobart, a township of the State of Wisconsin, created within tribal boundaries during the Allotment Policy during the early 1900’s. That township attempts to exert its jurisdiction over tribal lands and tribal members at every opportunity. With its connections to an organization called Citizens Equal Rights Alliance (CERA) which lobbies for termination of tribal sovereignty, the township’s almost daily incursions over tribal authority are irritating in the extreme, yet the real challenge tribes like the Oneidas of Wisconsin faces is not the continual court cases brought on by such non-Native forces, but their relative inability to successfully debate issues that might help demonstrate the responsible exercise of tribal sovereignty that would quickly disprove many the arguments of anti-tribal sovereignty organizations by doing so. Intratribal, internal struggles among tribal members over the direction of tribal policies and distribution of “benefits” instead are the focus of many interminable tribal debates. As is evident in many tribes, the body politic of indigenous nations in the United States continue to experience a kind of life-threatening lack of internal cohesion when unified decision-making seems most crucial. Since the recent U.S national and state elections, an even more uncertain political climate emanates from U.S. governing systems.

The crisis today is most evident among members of the Oneida General Tribal Council, defined as all tribal members of voting age, as constant bickering continues over per capita distributions and tribally-operated economic ventures. The tribal employment arena, too, has presented some alarming controversy as a number of tribal employees resist work discipline processes carefully crafted for the many tribal human services jobs and even in tribal business venture careers. Though the tribal Business Committee has worked diligently with its work force agency to assure fairness in employment, frequent cases concerning workplace tensions are reported in the tribe’s bi-weekly newspaper, the Kalihwisaks. The woes of self-determination, one might say, seem to have become almost overwhelming at times.

Another example of this lack of cohesion in Oneida is that disaffected tribal members of the Oneidas of Wisconsin exhibit a discouraging level of obstinacy at General Tribal Council meetings that is expressed as disrespect for policies and people with which they disagree, including their own elected officials. They seem to be both consciously resistant to what they see as lack of transparency in government, unfairness in distribution of benefits and abuse of power among tribal officials and administrators. Their actions at times seem to indicate that they have grown resistant to authority in a generalized way, which some attribute to generations of oppression, neglect and poverty. Since stipends are paid to tribal members for attending these GTC meetings, some opine that it is in the interest of this minority of tribal members to petition for as many meetings as possible, then vote for a time limit on meetings, where they delay discussions with many unrelated comments and call for many amendments to any resolution, thereby forcing another meeting to be scheduled to complete the agenda. There, they expect to again collect stipends. Since a normal meeting of the GTC can attract nearly 2,000 members, the cost to tribal coffers is substantial. Clearly, they have mastered the process of petitioning for meetings of the GTC, processes that were enacted with the high ideal of empowering a traditional tribal value of direct democracy. Those not involved with this method of expensive obstructionism know that they must attend these tedious meetings, lest the obstructionists gain a majority in open voting on often damaging resolutions the obstructionists propose. Meanwhile, crucial issues and the constitutional duties of the General Tribal Council languish.

Despite a long history of oppression and resulting community divisiveness, the ingredients of cooperative, mutually supportive movements have emerged over the generations, sometimes without much fanfare and even surreptitiously and in the nick of time, as was the case during the threes of military-style colonialism experienced by our ancestors. Those movements of self-generating peoplehood have been targeted almost in a cyclic fashion by the entity that is colonialism, itself seemingly embedded within the complex federal policies resulting from neocolonialism’s continuing destructive tendencies. The results have left us with tribal lands and waters and scarred social relationships, relationships that our enemies continue to attack in the many termination and assimilation forces we still deal with across Indian country. It is easy to see why metaphors in myth and prophesy have arisen
to describe the struggles between peoplehood and colonialism! It is an on-going story whose roots need to be considered in any analysis of today’s crisis in internal dialogue among tribal peoples.

Interestingly, some possible solutions to today’s crisis arise from the historical crises such as those the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin has experienced over the generations. That story may provide some insights into ways the tribal nation has survived, if researchers can discover the strategies each generation employed as they overcame the threat the policies posed to tribal identity. That means refocusing historical studies through the lens of tribal survivals and from the perspective of the Oneida people themselves, when necessary. Of course, several historical studies already have that focus, such as *The Oneida Experience: Two Perspectives.* (8) The historical responses of unity among tribal members in the face of crisis illustrate some unique capacities of the Oneida community, seemingly forged from intergenerational experiences gained from continual challenges to its existence over the years. As the tribal nation matures under the Self-Determination policy, the strength of Oneida identity among its membership in times of stress remain its salvation. The following are some examples of threats and some of the responses of the tribal nation over the years. Perhaps greater familiarity with the story of tribal survival since “contact” will bring today’s Oneida people to consider strategies for greater unity as some inspirational and courageous tribal members took on the challenge to tribal identity in their times.

**Attacks on Internal Cohesion that Arose from Contradictory Federal Policies**

Appeals to our tribal identities as a call to action have often been used over our long history of resistance to colonialism. And we have risen to the challenge many times over many generations, as is the case in Oneida. With approximately 17,000 members today, the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin has survived the Removal Policy beginning before the 1830’s, the Allotment Policy in the early 1900’s, threats of Termination in the 1950’s and, very recently, court challenges to its very existence as a legal entity. In contrast to those explicitly assimilationist and even genocidal policies, the Oneida people also experienced the Indian Reorganization Act Policies in the 1930’s and the Self-Determination Act and its associated policies beginning in the 1970’s. Since the Self-Determination policies began, the Oneida nation’s dynamic members have rallied to create a tribal school, a tribal language program, agricultural businesses, a diverse economic portfolio based upon its successful gaming operation, and a wide range of services to its members. Tribal language programs and even the regeneration of the Long House religion among tribal members reveal a strong commitment to tribal identity as a basis of peoplehood for the Oneidas. At every step of the way, Oneidas have relied upon their shared identity to overcome divisions among themselves brought on by the elemental forces of colonialism at every turn. Divisions based upon religion, lost land allotments, even long-standing feuds between factions created as long ago as removal from the original homelands in what is now New York have somehow been bridged, sometimes temporarily, as tribal members resisted threats to their peoplehood. Many more divisive events and forces could be listed here, but the roots of factionalism are clearly deep and persistent, even when Oneidas sometimes find ways to succeed in their search for consensus today on specific issues.

Today’s divisiveness seems unusually dangerous to tribal self-determination, though. Many members of the nation are now generations removed from life in the homelands in Wisconsin, scattered by allotment policies and the resulting poverty, which drove many to nearby cities and beyond. More recent economic and social opportunities, too, have attracted members away to even more distant job and career opportunities as the reservation economy continued to stagnate and local racism made social life difficult for Oneidas. Yet the community at Oneida often reached out to its distant family members, maintaining cultural ties despite the ensuing cultural shifts felt at many levels. Though the tribal language is among those considered threatened and for many years, the traditional ceremonies of the tribe were nearly absent, a truly Oneida identity has experienced a bit of a renaissance in the years since the Self-Determination policy began. The establishment of the Tribal Historian’s office and the publishing of tribal historical and cultural materials reveal a strong impetus in the community for understanding tribe’s story of survival. (9) Thus, the tribe has some powerful experience to draw upon as it now faces what might appear to outsiders as a debilitating crisis in its internal dialogues so crucial to survival in this era of tribal community development.
Conflicts between members and entities of the Business Committee and the General Tribal Council have resulted partially because of the nature of the tribe’s constitution and by-laws, created in 1936. That constitution was forged amid considerable controversy, as with many tribes in that era. Yet the two governing bodies retain some interesting elements of governance from Oneida and Haudenosaunee traditions. That may not have been accidental, since the Bureau of Indian Affairs Commissioner at the time, John Collier, professed a kind of reverence for Native peoples and their social and political achievements. Collier stated many times that tribal traditions should be regenerated, if necessary, to become the basis for what were to become the new governmental institutions imposed under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Collier was controversial in his approach, even among many Native people across the United States, partly because his proposals were necessarily rushed and because of the wide variety of situations the many tribal peoples faced at the time.

Whether the form of government chosen by the Oneida people under that law was intended to match aspects of Haudenosaunee and Oneida governance or not, the creation of the General Tribal Council as the ultimate authority in tribal governance mirrors pre-contact structures to a limited but important degree. In fact, one might consider at this point that in 1986, the US Congress recognized the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) confederacy as the source for several elements of the US Constitution, which might lead today’s Haudenosaunee and Oneida scholars to consider how mangled their model of governance had become by the time it was returned to them in the 1930’s. At the time, though, the idea of reorganizing under the colonial version of governance offered under the IRA was controversial, though the take-it-or-leave-it conditions of negotiation under the IRA allowed little time for internal deliberations.

Though the 1936 constitution wasn’t perfect, it did offer an escape from the disaster that had been the Allotment Policy for the Oneidas. The IRA also empowered the tribe to manage its own small, federally-sponsored budget and allowed it to also direct its own New Deal programs for community regeneration and economic development experiences, most notably the Works Progress Administration program. Though the Termination Policy of the 1950’s nearly undermined the nascent tribal government’s small, but significant successes, a tribal oral history recording project begun by the Works Progress Administration in 1939, provided a crucial record of tribal traditions and family histories. Several more cultural heritage projects continued the momentum of language preservation by producing Oneida language dictionaries and recorded oral versions of tribal lore by tribal elders who were still fluent in Oneida. That historical process has turned out to be a significant link to the traditions for Oneida people today, a link that clearly offers a key to solving the problems the nation faces.

Thus, two key elements of Oneida traditions survived those difficult times in Oneida history. In the transitions from the serious brush with cultural genocide under the Allotment Policy in the beginning in the late 1890’s, to the determination to maintain the Oneida identity under the Reorganization Policy of the 1930’s, to the reemergence of the threat of tribal atomization under the Termination Policy of the 1950’s, Oneida generations can share the story of their own survival as a people in inspiring terms. It is easy to see in retrospect why the Tribal school, which emerged amidst the efforts of determined tribal members as the Self-Determination Policy reached Oneida in the 1970’s, has been so vital for Oneida identity. Its curriculum was immediately built around those Oneida language materials and the surviving elders who could help convey them to tribal members. Tribal members have relied upon the preservation of portions of their culture from the Oneida oral histories; and they now had a governmental system that featured a form of direct democracy in the General Tribal Council, so vital to Haudenosaunee heritage, which was again a priority for federal policy-makers, many of whom were Native people. In fact, Oneida people, like Robert L. Bennett and Ernest Stevens, Sr. were instrumental in the early stages of the Self-Determination Policy, working from different angles in Washington, DC. Their efforts to empower tribal nations show the character of rushed policy-making that seems endemic in Indian policy at the federal level, yet their clear intentions to get practical governmental processes that reflected at least some traditional concepts into operation for Native nations cannot be denied. It’s difficult to imagine, in fact, the pressure to quickly establish key footholds for tribal sovereignty in terms Native people could understand and use in those times. Their stories, and
the work of many Native people from many tribes in those days remain another source of inspiration, suitable for
telling today as tribes forge ahead in pursuit of their own destinies as indigenous nations. Championing the
struggles to establish beachheads of tribal sovereignty as a part of tribal history is an important strategy, since
finding conceptual frameworks to rally people to a more unified position on the issues that confront them are
crucial in these times of fractionalization and populist tendencies that seem to be widespread in Indian country.

Is a Wave of Populism Sweeping Through Native American communities?

Besides the devastating story of contradictory federal policies and their impacts and tribal internal struggles to
survive, another conceptual frame one might employ in evaluating the forces that have created current chaotic and
destructive dialogues among many tribal peoples is the idea of populism as a dynamic force that frequently arises
in human populations. Again, populism seems to not only pose a threat to the internal functioning of tribal nations,
but also provides some interesting opportunities for tribal survival, if the positive aspects of this dynamic process
can be harnessed.

Populism seems to arise when prolonged economic uncertainty and seemingly unequal opportunities appear
under regimes, especially where “transparency” is perceived by the people as lacking. Populism is defined as the
rise of politically active sectors of common people, the “folk,” as one scholar calls them, who perceive that
government and the economic structure is controlled by a privileged elite. While the concept arises from analyses
of American and European democratic systems and is applied to cyclic changes in large systems of purportedly
democratic government, it appears that this dynamic process could well apply to movements among tribal
communities, as well.

Descriptions of populist movements show that they are not restricted to right-wing or left-wing policies, but are
rather easily channeled by leadership that can identify themselves with the perceived economic injuries suffered by
the righteous folk and articulate demands for fairness in the distribution of economic benefits within a society.
Sometimes, self-aggrandizing leaders find easily isolated scapegoats as those responsible for the suffering of the
two, and propose simplistic solutions in emotional appeals that can create hysterical responses among those who
feel threatened by the status quo. Those appeals can sometimes circulate among the folk and attract more people
to the now emotionally charged movement, whose adherents become more and more resistant to reason in the rush
to act quickly to end the perceived threat to the folk. The movement that results is a dynamo at this point, one
which seems to take on a life of its own, often moving its adherents to political action outside the normal channels
of government. One may notice, of course, that any movement among people is subject to some of these
tendencies and that not all populist movements follow the seemingly mindless denial of reasoned dialogue and
chauvinism that sometimes results when populist actions take an ugly turn. Some scholars think that while
populist movements can eventually result in positive corrective innovations within democratic systems, leadership
that arises in this cycle is crucial to the overall level of destructive outcomes. It is a dynamic, sometimes rapid
process that certainly creates a situation where demagoguery can become rampant, revealing some of the more
troubling aspects of human nature and group behaviors.

Seeking Solutions: Building Positive Dialogue Processes

One needs to take special care when applying such analytical terminology as populism to the internal politics
of Native nations, since the history of colonialism has required resistant strategies among Native people for many
generations. Yet the observable elements of populism seem present across Native America and among other
indigenous peoples, especially in the informal arena of public dialogue and debate. In Oneida and elsewhere
across Native America, research into a tribe’s traumatic experiences with policies of oppression and cultural and
social assimilation, and such group movements as populism, may be helpful in evaluating the roots and possible
solution to intratribal schisms.
A suggestion that might be fruitful in this research might include study of attitudes and backgrounds of tribal members in the processes a long-range project, such as has emerged in the Sustain Oneida project of the Oneida Nation’s Trust and Enrollment Office, which includes meetings and appeals for online responses from tribal members. The initiative is intended to gather opinions and begin an intra-tribal discussion about the tribe’s looming problem of membership under the tribe’s current constitution. Blood quantum requirements will soon, in the next two generations some say, cause the end of tribal membership, since intermarriage with other tribes and with non-Indian people steadily reduces the quantum of Oneida of Wisconsin genetics in each generation. Unless some form of eugenics is instituted, an unimaginable course of action, the tribal community of this generation will have to modify blood quantum requirements if the tribal nation is to survive. This is a sci-fi sort of situation taking place right now. Interestingly, the Sustain Oneida project has described this looming problem in the Kalihwisaks and on the tribal webpage in very provocative terms, asking for interested people to help define some very challenging courses of action.

Maybe the blood quantum issue isn’t an identity issue after all. If the blood quantum concept were removed as a requirement of tribal citizenship, wouldn’t you still be Oneida? It seems our identity is rooted in the same place as our sovereignty. Whatever new definition we develop of what it means to be Oneida should support and strengthen the concepts of our sovereignty.

It is a call to Oneidas to consider their own identities and the identities of their descendants into the future, raising the possibility that a new solidarity might arise in this process of averting a very serious threat to tribal survival. Perhaps such projects as Sustain Oneida, that occur in the course tribal development, will help resolve some of the issues that disaffected tribal members now face if they are willing to help resolve difficult issues such as this one.

**Traditional Values: Compelling Force for Unity and Civility among Tribal Members**

As we watch the threats to tribal unity mount from frequent divisive obstruction and self-serving ranting now so common in dialogue on tribal issue we can ask ourselves: Can Oneidas and the members of other tribal peoples find approaches to resolving the problems of confused perspectives that can result from the conflicting paradigms of tribalism and mass society? What can be done to regenerate what many believe were the once cohesive, egalitarian communities tribal peoples enjoyed long ago? Is our tribal memory of such conditions accurate or have we always dealt with factionalism and the desire for individual aggrandizement as elements of human nature? If so, can we find in structures in traditions of the Gayeneshagowa, or the Kayanla? Kówa as the Oneidas say it, that helped minimize these human tendencies and somehow encourage people to seek the common good? If we do have traditions and identity-reinforcing values among us we can rely upon at this precarious moment in our peoples’ histories, can we make use of those values to re-instill confidence in community relations and accountability in our tribal governments? Or are we ready to allow ourselves to be terminated or allow “mob rule” to destroy any hopes of effective community development and tribal governance? Clearly, answering these questions will take some personal commitment from us all if we hope to maintain any sense of ourselves as peoples into the future. After thousands of years, the crisis for this generation of Native people remains to renew the common identity we’ve always shared so that we work together to meet the many challenges we face as peoples.

In Oneida, an on-going strategy to encourage civil discourse within the Oneida General Tribal Council is the printing of tribal language concepts in announcements and agendas prepared for their meetings. That approach places traditional values in compelling terms directly in the hands of GTC members at the very moment of participating in oral discussions that lead to voting. Recently, the following guidelines were published not only with the meeting materials, but in other venues like the Kalihwisaks and in many other publicly accessible locations.

Here is a copy of those values: (please see next page)
tsiʔ niyukwalihó:ta
Jeet nee yoon gwea lee hoe’duh

“Our ways” includes our beliefs, our customs, and how we view things (past, present, and future). It also includes our history, language, and things in our environment (man-made and natural) that make us distinct from others as a people.

Vision
A Nation of strong families built on Tsiʔ niyukwalihó:ta and a strong economy.

Mission
To strengthen and protect our people, reclaim our land, and enhance the environment by exercising our sovereignty.

Values
To establish positive behaviors upon which we will conduct our daily activities. The extent to which we dedicate ourselves to the implementation of these values will determine our success.

Kahletsyalúsla
gah lay ja loose’la
The heart felt encouragement of the best in each of us

Kanolukhwásla
ga no loonk wass’la
Compassion, caring, identity and joy of being

Kaʔnikuhli-yo
gat knee goo leee’ (yo)
The openness of the good spirit and mind

Twahwahtsilayá
dwah wah jee lie (uh’)
All of us are Family

Kalihwi-yá
gally we’ (yo)
The use of good words about ourselves, our Nation and our future

Yukwatsístayá
yoon gwa jeesta’ (yuh)
Our fire, our spirit within each one of us

Kaqshatstásla
gat chot stews’la
The strength of belief and vision as a people
these values so close at hand during meetings, members of the GTC who might wish to obstruct the day’s business would reconsider, based upon the power of generations-long experience.

Traditional concepts and values are available from several sources and can be used to educate and provide social controls as part of the environment of discourse in intratribal dialogues on issues. The Haudenosaunee Gayaneshagowa, the Great Law of Peace, as many know it, and the Kali wi’o, the Good Word, are basic oral documents of Haudenosaunee and Oneida identity. When referring to those oral documents, Oneidas again evoke reverence for their shared rights and responsibilities as members of the nation. It should be noted, though, that since these powerful sources of Oneida identity were displaced as working guides of Oneida lifeways by assimilation and missionization policies, many Oneidas know them only as historic, albeit highly respected documents. Other systems have taken over the political and religious commitments of many. Still, Oneidas can benefit from learning more about these powerful guides for Oneida life, especially as the Long House continues to gain influence in the lives of tribal members. Since about 1980, the Long House has attracted participants across the nation, even those who also continue to regularly attend Christian services. One can hope that personal commitment to the values these many-generations-old understandings will help to improve the quality of dialogues among tribal members on the pressing issues they face as a people.

Since the 1970’s in Oneida, the regeneration of the Long House, called a “religion” by some, engenders hope that many of the elements of tribalism that were dormant or lost during the years of assimilation policies can also be regenerated. Kinship structures, for instance, are vital to that system of beliefs and ceremonies that reinforce virtues of communal responsibility and offer some powerful solutions to the internal bickering that has become a problem in tribal policy debates. The entire range of tribal values documented in Thomas’ description of tribalism are essential elements of the traditional spiritual beliefs of many tribes, of course, and as Oneidas become more aware of the opportunities to participate in the Long House, one can hope greater tribal unity and better attitudes about internal debate will result.

Another interesting development in Oneida that may help with internal relationships is the regeneration of the ka’lahse, or lacrosse, as the game has come to be known around the world. When played in its traditional surroundings, the game reinforces many of the values of meeting challenges on the field of play as upstanding Oneidas. When the game is played in a traditional way, it is thought to be played for the enjoyment of the Creator, giving it a spiritual nature that reinforces traditional identity.(16) Such athletic games that attract the interest of young people as players and other tribal members as fans can reinforce a significant set of virtues like teamwork, mutual support, informal interaction among generations, and sacrifice for the good of others. Oneida sports in general bring people together in elemental ways, making the tribe’s on-going dedication to fitness and health a community-building character. Since the game as a tradition has always been important among the several Haudenosaunee communities that still survive in Canada and in what is now New York State, it is also one of several bridges to the greater Haudenosaunee complex of communities, including the three major Oneida ones, in North America. Teams from many tribal nations will compete in lacrosse in the World Indigenous Games this year in Toronto,(17) in fact. It is a powerful dynamo for intertribal and even interethnic interaction, as people around the world play versions of this powerful sport and a few other games that have traditional connections to indigenous peoples. It seems to be one of many compelling, symbolic tools in the Oneida Nation’s kit for resolving the problems of divisiveness.

A Word on Tribal Communications Policies

Finally, for the purposes of this paper, it is important for Oneida people interested in improving the nature of debate within the community to review tribal government communications policies. There has always been a need to “caucus” among members, apart from the possible interference that might come from non-members who always seem to have an axe to grind in the formulation of tribal policy and even in cultural and social development necessary for tribal self-determination. That interference may come from people who believe they are being
helpful and encouraging, but the influence of outside models has always irked tribal people hoping to build internal capacities and the self-sufficiency of tribal institutions. Of course, strategic policy and economic information as well as personnel records, have been withheld from public disclosure for fear of interference in the tribe’s sovereign rights, the need to protect tribal citizens from harassment, or loss of market position, in the case of economic ventures. The concern that outside forces will try to manipulate tribal members directly in ways that threaten tribal sovereignty is certainly a valid one, given the threats of nearby groups like the Town of Hobart with its support from the Citizens Equal Rights Alliance, a national lobbying group that advocates termination of tribal sovereignty and treaty-based rights in general.

Yet the broad membership, including Oneidas who don’t live near the reservation, need information upon which to act with intelligence in their position as the sovereign people of the Oneida. The Oneida Business Committee has responded admirably to this need by not only providing reliable funding for its newspaper, the Kalihwisaks, but shielding it from undue influence by tribal government via some explicit editorial policies. It has also created a cutting-edge webpage in order to provide specific information to tribal membership, with a “members only” link that is conscientiously kept up-to-date. Local meetings and even hearings in off-reservation locations, such as in Milwaukee, have helped tribal members participate meaningfully as members of the sovereign nation. Tribal government has worked hard on this issue, but a review of how information is classified that educates tribal members who advocate greater transparency might help those members understand the need for security on some information, while reminding tribal information managers of their responsibility of finding efficient was to inform membership meaningfully about tribal issues. Communications media present an on-going challenge for tribal government in the self-determination era, one that needs continuous attention. While most tribal members seem satisfied with the transparency they experience within tribal government, a concerted effort to satisfy those members not happy with the quality of information they receive may help with internal debates on inherently controversial issues.

Conclusions: A time of Beginning for Improved Intratribal Dialogues

The author hopes this essay will be helpful as people evaluate the problems of divisive dialogues among tribal members involved in policy debates. In calling for reliance upon the wisdom available from tribal history and within tribal traditions, it may not offer much beyond the realization that in resolving internal issues, it is probably best to search first among a tribal nation’s experiences for solutions. Many “conflict resolution” methods are available from outside sources, too, and should not automatically be rejected, but in the view of this author, finding solutions to this problem should help build the capacity of the community, relying upon people familiar with that history and committed to those traditions. Tribal scholars can help by providing the information necessary for important decisions based upon an emic, internal perspective. In the long run, though, a community-wide effort in resolving long-term internal conflicts must take place. That may seem like an obvious conclusion, but finding ways to engage the community in efforts that result in consensus over the rules of debate will take genius of the kind our ancestors were able to summon. It seems to demand a spiritual approach, one which can reach across generations to engage the group consciousness of the People.

Though one must admit that factionalism among Oneidas is not likely to disappear soon, the basis for reaching consensus in tribal internal dialogue is emerging, in the opinion of this optimistic author. The many aspects of Onu yote a’ka identity and the strategies already being implemented for building strong community values would seem to warrant the conclusion that it is only a matter of time before the respect necessary for overcoming discord among tribal members will emerge. The environment for consensus processes to take place is strengthening even as some individuals may not wish to end the divisiveness. Resolving the specific issues that have caused disaffection for some Oneidas will probably be necessary, where that can be done. As Vine Deloria, Jr. and Clifford Lytle did in their book The Nations Within: The Past and Future of Tribal Sovereignty as they made some potent recommendations for development of tribal communities back in 1984, “…these recommendations will identify problem areas and suggest possible alternatives that might be considered, providing the consideration is done in good faith by people determined to find a solution to pressing problems.”(19) Perhaps this author’s
observations can also be part of that effort among Oneidas themselves, so long as they proceed in good faith with great determination in their quest to creatively draw upon the experiences and traditions that are the roots of their identity. It will take personal responsibility and community consciousness, of course. The rights of the individual will have to continually be re-balanced with the responsibilities to the community and to the spiritual and natural environment. Such values must always be foremost in the clear, rational thinking of the People! One can hope that as internal dialogues improve, and the People aspire more diligently to end abuse among ourselves, the abuse of other beings and forces that provide for human survival will also come under greater scrutiny. That is not a utopian dream, but a practical goal to strive for. It is a goal that will require excellent communications among people determined to find a consensus on how to proceed effectively in policy debates.

Endnotes

1 Author’s statement: This brief research essay is not intended to be an exhaustive research project. Instead, it is written as support for a round table discussion and is an informal writing for discussion purposes in a conversational character. Readers are encouraged to conduct their own research on the topics raised in this paper. The round table is entitled “Returning the People to the Circle: A Roundtable Discussion on Overcoming the Fracturing of Indian Communities,” moderated by Stephen M. Sachs. American Indian Studies Section, Western Social Sciences Association 59th Annual Conference. Hyatt Regency Embarcadero Hotel, San Francisco, CA. April 13, 2017.


3 Deloria, Lytle, 247.

4 The concept of “peoplehood” has been explored by many scholars. This author’s first scholarly exposure to that term was from Robert K. Thomas. “Mental Health: American Indian Tribal Societies,” In American Indian Families: Development Strategies and Community Health, ed. Wayne Mitchell. Tempe: American Projects, Arizona State University, 1982, p. 1-16.

5 For more on this concept, see Eduardo Duran, Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and Other Native Peoples. New York: Teachers College Press, 2006.


11 The WPA collection and many subsequent documents concerning Oneida Language preservation may be found at “Wisconsin Oneida Language Preservation Project,” Univ. of Wisconsin – Madison Libraries. https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/Oneida/. Accessed 4 April, 2017


18 The Kalihwisaks has published these policies in a very public way several times in recent years. An example of the two full-page, detailed publication of the policies is “Kalihwisaks Updated Policies and Procedures,” Kalihwisaks, 12 Dec. 2013. Pp 11A-12A.

19 Deloria, Lytle, p. 248.

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Numerous American Indian Communities, today, remain fractured as a result of physical and cultural genocide. In the midst of a renewal, many Native communities are taking steps toward overcoming these divisions. This paper presents a holistic overview of what might be done to overcome the fracturing, with references to more detailed discussions of the particulars. The issues involved and what to do about them are complex, and vary with each community, subgroup, and individual. They are made more difficult by the fact that to differing degrees contemporary Indigenous American communities are more diverse and function differently than they traditionally did, while now some two thirds of tribal members live off reservation. The basic problem is to return numerous Indian people to feeling good about themselves and their communities. Generally, this involves several interrelated areas.

The first, is reinstating traditional inclusiveness. This has two dimensions. One is returning to traditional participatory practice so that everyone concerned is informed and has input into dialogue on community issues and decision making. The other is overcoming what in many cases are inappropriate forms of government imposed on Indian nations by the U.S. government. Depending on the individual case, this may involve changing governmental structures and processes to be culturally appropriate and fully effective, and/or to provide an inclusive participatory process of input into tribal government.

Second, is facilitating the healing of tribal members from unresolved historical trauma and destructive behaviors. Many of these resulted from abusive treatment in boarding schools. This requires culturally and personally appropriate assistance, often supported by ceremony.

Third, is preserving and renewing traditional knowledge. This needs to be linked to education broadly conceived from childhood upbringing through schooling to lifelong learning.

Fourth, supportive tribal development is needed, to begin with to provide the economic base to supply sufficient support and supportive service to members. Holistic tribal success can provide a reason for members to feel good about their community. To be appropriate, economic development needs to be conceived broadly as tribal and member development. Providing income and jobs are important means, but not the ends.

Fifth, a major element of all of the above aspects of individual and community healing is adequate and inclusive communication. This involves providing appropriate and adequate media, such as newspapers, and the internet. However, mutually respectful and supportive personal interaction is essential. It also concerns making communication participatory, giving everyone in the community input and promoting dialogue.

I: Reinstating Traditional Inclusiveness

A major set of reasons for the fracturing of American Indian communities surrounds the actions of the United States government. The government first attempted to destroy traditional ways, including not allowing many Indian nations to govern themselves. Then, when tribes were allowed to have their own governments, inappropriate forms of government were the only ones permitted, in many instances. This occurred initially during the Indian New Deal, under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 and the Alaska Reorganization Act of 1936.

Traditionally, almost all American Indian nations functioned under the same basic principles, though they operated with them in their own unique ways that varied over time. Tribal and band decision making was
undertaken through some form of inclusive participatory democracy. Everyone who was effected by a decision had a say about it. This was done in a consensus building process that attempted to include everyone's concerns and interests in the final decision. Leaders acted as facilitators, who had no power to make decisions, except in a few instances. Leaders were usually respected elders, chosen by consensus. Thus, they had influence, but only remained leaders as long as people supported them. In addition, participatory democracy was fortified by power being widely dispersed.

The tribal governments imposed under the IRA were corporate forms of representative democracy, in which tribal members voted for a council that would make decisions for the community. Quite often power was centralized in the tribal council (as in a corporate board of directors). Often there was no tribal court, or if there was, frequently, it was not independent. In many instances tribal courts could be over ruled by the council, and/or its judges removed by it. The War on poverty brought some dispersion of authority in tribal government. Indian Nations began to run a variety of their own programs, with their own staffs. This educated a great many Native people in contemporary government. In many cases, however, these programs were independent of the tribal council. The resulting lack of coordination often created conflicts in policy and among people.

Under such governments, people who were used to making decisions, felt left out and unrepresented, no matter how representative the council actually was. And often the council, and at least some its decisions, were not representative. Further, with little or no public discussion to build consensus on issues, many council decisions had little public support. Without consensus building dialogue, factions developed in communities who felt the councils and their decisions (even many they agreed with) were not legitimate. In this situation many tribal councils, often called business committees, had difficulty making decisions. Additionally, people who traditionally valued themselves by what they contributed to the community, felt further alienated, and badly about themselves, by their lack of participation and by the dysfunction that inappropriate government inflicted on the community. The problems of inappropriate government often combined with the other aspects of physical and cultural genocide, including unresolved historical trauma, to create bitter factionalism accompanied by infighting and name calling. Where traditionally factions were strengths in communities, contributing to unifying and healing dialogue, under inappropriate governments, they became disruptive of life in the community.

Therefore, an important aspect of returning Native communities to harmony is restoring inclusiveness. As with everything else, the idea is not to put back the details of past practices, but to apply the traditional principles according to the current situation with an eye to moving well into the future. Moreover, inclusiveness, focusing on respect for difference, is even more essential today than in traditional times with the increased diversity of views and groups with in communities, both on and off reservations. There are a variety of actions that a number of Indian nations have taken to return traditional principles to governance that are suggestive of what might be might be useful to undertake in specific settings.

Reviving Inclusiveness at Southern Ute

The Southern Ute Tribe of Colorado, consistent with the inclusive participatory decision making of their traditional bands, have at different times instituted a number of innovations aimed at increasing tribal member involvement in tribal governance. First, in the late 1990's, the tribal council increased the number of general tribal meetings from quarterly to once a month. Shortly thereafter, they instituted monthly sessions for members with concerns or complaints about tribal government and services, to meet individually with the Tribal Council. On April 30, 2004, the Southern Ute Tribe held its first "open forum" general meeting, with no prior agenda, to allow tribal members to raise concerns with the tribal council as the members saw fit.²

The Tribe has also involved tribal members in having input into individual areas of decision making and on specific decisions. This has often included sending out surveys to tribal members. In 2011, The Southern Ute Tribal Council sent out a survey to tribal members to sound out their views on the tribe’s proposed natural resources plan. When only 83 responses of almost 1000 sent out surveys came back, the council, in January 2012,
made a second request in order to try to have a representative opinion. The Utes have also used focus groups to discover tribal opinion. This was expanded on in 2009. All tribal members, of whom there were around 1500, were invited to come to one of a number of meetings followed by small focus group sessions to review the nation’s financial plan and the current tribal government structure, to review how well they are meeting the needs of tribal members. Each meeting began with a presentation on the issues by tribal council members, who did not attend the focus group sessions that followed, in order not to bias the discussion by tribal members. Multiple ways of involving tribal members have some times been employed on single questions. In moving to develop an improved tribal healthcare system, 2013, the tribe undertook a survey of tribal members, as well as interviewing healthcare staff, and discussing the matter in general tribal meetings.

Meetings have often been held in specific areas of concern. On February 16, 2012, the Southern Ute’s Sky Ute Casino Resort Management Team held an open community meeting to invite tribal member input into the future development and enhancement of the Casino. In the spirit of community policing, in October 2016, members of the Southern Ute Community Police Department and Tribal Rangers met informally with community members in a "neutral space to discuss community issues, build relationships and drink coffee.

In 2001, when there was a heated dispute over who should lead the Southern Ute nation’s most important spiritual ceremony, the annual Sun Dance, when it should be held, and how it should be undertaken, the tribal chairman, for the first time, called for the Sun Dancers, and any other interested community members, to meet to resolve the problem. After three contentious meetings, the issues were worked out. The previous Sun Dance Chief resigned. Another experienced Sun Dance chief agreed to run the ceremony according to the wishes of the assembled Sun Dance community, for one year, until a new Sun Dance Chief could be chosen. After the meetings, some of those on each side of the major set of issues that had been talked out in the sessions went to some of those who had been on the other side. They expressed their concern with those with whom they had disagreed, that they had been too hard on them. Thus, some significant reconciliation occurred before the year's Sun Dance, which took place smoothly. At the end of the ceremony a new Sun Dance Chief was announced, who ran the 2002 ceremony, which ended with more harmony than the community had experienced in several years. Having general community involvement over time on a major set of issues has also been undertaken. In October 2016, the tribe, with the assistance and facilitation of a consultant, undertook the first of a series of meetings to be held around the reservation to develop an updated comprehensive land use plan for the tribe.

Applying inclusive participation is not only a matter of involving tribal members in decision making, and having them involved in dialogue with tribal government and its agencies. It also applies to the operation of public agencies and the interaction between them. In 1999, the Southern Útes became the first Indian nation to participate in a project, funded by the U.S. Children’s Bureau, to build coordination among social services that effected children, with ongoing community input. At the request of the tribal chair and council, a consulting team from the Social Research Institute at the University of Utah was brought in to help facilitate a Design Team. The team included administrators from a wide range of tribal services, since, at least indirectly, all services and the community members they interact with, have an impact on children. Community consultants, including former social service recipients and elders, collaborated in building team work among social services, with responsiveness to community needs and input. The goal was to provide culturally relevant, supportive and integrated services to ensure that all Southern Ute children are successful in school and in life. The Southern Ute Indian Tribal Information Services Department, building upon inter-agency cooperation and coordination begun under the Design Program, in 2000, called a meeting of Southern Ute and La Plata County, CO social service agencies, in February 2006, to renew and expand a 2003 memorandum of understanding, which included bringing in the Mental Health Center as a collaborator. The meeting focused on working together as a consistent policy, the need to create a service directory, and the desire of non-tribal entities to increase tribal awareness of efforts to create a La Plata County Health District. Thus inclusiveness and cooperation among tribal agencies continued to foster collaboration with outside entities for more appropriate and effective delivery of services to Southern Útes.
One widely experienced problem in instituting processes for reapplying traditional inclusive participatory values, that arose at Southern Ute, is that even though increased community involvement may bring tribal governance more into agreement with the basic mores of the culture, it takes time to firmly establish the new ways of doing so. Until that occurs, a new tribal chair or council majority may not appreciate them, and may eliminate them. That occurred at Southern Ute, when, even while initiating the Design Team, a new tribal chair led the council to discontinue monthly general meetings. However, that chairman was recalled by a vote of the tribe because he was seen as too unresponsive to the membership. His replacement returned momentum to expanding community participation by initiating the meetings to resolve the Sun Dance issues. That momentum continued with the initiation of focus groups, ‘open forum’ general meetings, and other methods expanding member involvement in Southern Ute affairs.

Some of these methods of increasing membership involvement are also being employed by other Indian nations. The Yurok Tribe, in 2005, for example, undertook a comprehensive, long range Tribal Transportation Plan, “Taking Back a Traditional Trail,” through an inclusive discussion process. This involved tribal members, community residents and other relevant stakeholders identifying community priorities, unmet needs, and the unique circumstances relating to tribal transportation. The process was carried out under a grant from the California Department of Transportation. Navajo Nation, has long used focus groups to sample community opinion, among other methods of increasing inclusiveness, discussed below.

Alaska-British Columbia Inclusiveness

Some Indian nations have returned to involving the community more directly in governmental decisions. It was reported in May, 1996, that a few Native nations in Alaska and in Western British Columbia have adopted the Baha’I “consultation” method of decision making, which is essentially a consensus decision making process. This consultation method involves an elected council which is trained to listen respectfully to all sides and views on an issue as expressed by community members, either in open community forums, or by representatives of different ways of approaching an issue. Only after carefully hearing the full range of concerns on a question, will the council move to crafting a policy. It attempts to do so as inclusively as possible, balancing the full range of concerns in any decision. Policies can later be reviewed by the same process, to take into account changing circumstances, and/or difficulties created, or inadequately addressed, by the earlier action.

Applying the Indigenous Leadership Interactive System (ILIS)
at the Comanche and Three Other Nations

An especially interesting attempt at overcoming problems of culturally unsuitable government by using contemporarily relevant means for applying traditional values, is the implementation, beginning in February 1990, of the Indigenous Leadership Interactive System (ILIS) [previously called Tribal Issues Management System (TIMS)], a participatory strategic planning process by the Comanche in Oklahoma in order to recreate traditional ways of building consensus and maintaining harmony in the community. This experience with the use of a particular dialoguing method in a single setting, has implications for tribal people, elsewhere, renewing inclusive participatory democracy in forms that fit their particular traditions and circumstances.

Typical of most tribes in the United States, the Comanches felt themselves divided and often paralyzed in deciding major issues because of the clash in values between their traditional culture and the premises of their contemporary government processes, based upon modern Euro-American understandings. In order to overcome the problems caused by that cultural dissonance, the Comanche community, with the assistance of Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity (OIO), the Department of Communication at George Mason University, and Christakis & Associates, decided to utilize a collaborative process for tribal decision making by applying the Tribal Issues Management System. So long as the Comanche used ILIS to create consensus on community issues, the process made significant contributions in overcoming gridlock in tribal decision making and in initiating a beginning in restoring tribal harmony. Where neither ILIS, or any other method
of broadly inclusive decision making, was used, the nation continued to have difficulty in reaching decisions, and when the Comanche stopped using the process at the tribal level, considerable disharmony returned to the community. The Comanche experience with ILIS suggests that a process of inclusive participatory decision making, if appropriately designed and applied for a specific tribe or group and its unique circumstances, may be useful for other tribes in overcoming many of the remaining problems of colonialism, if the process is used long enough to firmly establish it. The Comanche are one of four Tribes in Oklahoma that initially applied the ILIS process, and have gone considerably further with it than any of the others.

At the time of the implementation of ISIL, the Comanche were concentrated in four communities in Oklahoma: Lawton, Apache, Cache and Walters. There were also sizable concentrations of Comanche in Texas and California. After being placed on a later dissolved reservation in 1875 with their allies, the Kiowa and Apache, the three tribes were legally a unit, officially led by the Kiowa-Comanche-Apache (KCA) Business Committee. The Comanches withdrew in 1966 to form their own Comanche Nation. The Comanche Nation was formally established in 1969, under the constitution in force at the time ILIS was being applied, to provide a way for the Comanches to manage their own funds and programs, allowing them to participate more actively in the politics of Indian affairs and in the Anglo economy. At that time, the Comanches largely adopted the previous, BIA style, KCA Constitution to their own situation. To be a member of the Comanche Tribe (as of 1991), a person had to be a direct descendent of a Comanche receiving an original allotment of reservation land and was required to possess 25% Comanche blood. The Comanche population of 8,690, in 1991, with a majority under 40, was divided geographically. Approximately 4500 lived in South West Oklahoma, primarily in four communities: Lawton, Apache, Cache and Walters. There were also sizable concentrations of Comanche in Texas and California.

The governing body of the Comanche was the Tribal Council, which consisted of all tribal members 18 years old or older. In 1991 there were approximately 6100 eligible voters. The Tribal Council elected seven members at large to staggered terms on the Comanche Business Committee. These include a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary Treasurer, who also served as officers of the Tribal Council. Terms were for three years, and an individual might serve only two consecutive terms. Nominations for officers and other members of the Business Committee were made at the annual Tribal Council Meeting in April. Polling places were provided for primary and run off elections in the four communities and absentee ballots were made available upon request for tribal members living outside the tribal area. The members of the Business Committee could be removed by vote of any officially called Comanche meeting (such as a Business Committee meeting) at which 250 or more tribal members were present, and the Business Committee was required to receive approval of a Tribal Council Meeting to make a long term commitment of tribal resources.

The Business Committee's primary role was to regulate some important aspects of Anglo-Comanche economic relations, but it did not play a major part in directly regulating Comanche to Comanche relations. The Committee was a combination executive and legislative body that oversaw a staff, headed by an appointed tribal administrator, who managed the daily operation of tribal programs. The tribe had an annual budget of over $3 million in fiscal year 1990, from a number of federal programs and tribal sources, including a bingo operation. The nation operated a number of social service programs (including a jobs program, a family violence program, aid to the elderly, and burial assistance), The Indian Child Welfare Program (offering counseling, crisis intervention and recruiting of foster homes), a food distribution program (providing USDA Commodities), the Home Improvement Program, The Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Program, a senior citizens center, the Community Health Representative Program, a non-emergency transport system and a substance abuse program. The nation did not have sole ownership of any business in 1991, but shared ownership of two businesses with the Kiowas and the Apaches: The Native Sun Winter Park and KCA Apparel, a clothing manufacturer.

The Business Committee's main problem in carrying out economic projects, aside from difficulty in arranging adequate financing, was resistance to forming and maintaining enough consensus to support long term development. This was partly because of continuing difficulties many Comanches had in acquiring sufficient resources for everyday life, but it was also because of the inappropriateness of the BIA style governmental form.
The primary problem was the elected nature of the Council, as a body working separately from the various Comanche communities. This difficulty was compounded by having all the council members elected at large, so there was no direct representation of the geographically dispersed communities. Foster reports, "there is considerable alienation among Comanches with respect to taking an active part in tribal government (as opposed to talking about tribal politics). Rumors of scandal and wrong doing by tribal officials are common. In a recent election for chairman, less than one forth of the eligible voters cast ballots." Moreover, because the use of elections with winners and losers runs counter to traditional Comanche culture, "there is a tendency for tribal leaders voted out of office to spend the rest of their lives being obstructive to leaders in power, no matter who the current leaders are....These dynamics are not unique to Comanches, but are present in every tribal community attempting to make these imposed institutional structures work for them."  

The Indigenous Leadership Management System (ILIS)

The ILIS was developed over two years in a collaboration among Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO), Oklahomans for Indian Opportunity (OIO) and the Department of Communication of George Mason University, in the course of meetings involving Native Americans from a number of Tribes. ILIS is based on "Interactive Management" (IM), which is a computer-assisted group design process aimed at identifying and resolving complex issues through consensus. The collaborators worked during 1989 and 1990 to adapt IM for use with tribes, calling the resulting product ILIS. The decision to develop ILIS was made after several successful experiences from 1987-1989 in applying IM with other tribes on issues such as economic development and long range planning.

Following the initial development of ILIS, the Comanche Business Committee invited AIO and OIO to assist the tribe in setting up an ILIS process as a complement to its normal governance procedures. The invitation from the Business Committee and the active support from the tribal chairman were extremely important for legitimizing the process. The institution of a design process of this kind is likely to be seen as a threat to the status quo and opposed by the tribal leadership, unless the leadership understands the advantages of introducing the process and is actively involved with it as it is carried out. If the process develops successfully with the support of the Council, it can strengthen the position of the members. As harmony and consensus are created in the Nation, and tribal members no longer are, or feel, left out of the political process, complaints about tribal government and officials can be reduced even as they gain positive support. Moreover, as tribal members become empowered by participation to take charge of creating their own future and to focus less on receiving services, they tend to expand tribal resources. Infighting on the part of tribal members tends to give way to a return to focusing upon how each person can contribute to their community and make the tribe strong again. Evidence supporting the above analysis is given by the Comanche experience with ILIS and is well supported by the extensive experience with workplace participation.

There are, of course, risks as well as opportunities for business committee or tribal council members in deciding to initiate a process like ILIS, just as there are with the making of any political decision (or non-decision). If the process works badly, its supporters may be blamed. If it works well, it might give rise to new leaders who challenge and even replace members of the committee or council, even if they support the new process. However, supporting a politically successful program usually enhances one's position. In the Comanche case, three members of the Business Committee who were not involved in the ILIS process were replaced by tribal members who were involved and had become active advocates for it, particularly at the local level where they built strong bases of support as representatives of their local communities. (One of these Committee members later resigned for health reasons, leaving two ILIS active participants on the business committee.) In addition, the more harmonious atmosphere created by the ILIS process was a major factor in the next tribal chair elected after its initiation being the first in a decade to be reelected for a second term.

A related point is that both the principle of inclusion upon which ILIS is based, and the necessity for developing broad support for it throughout the nation, make it essential that all identifiable groups within the tribe be represented in the process from the beginning. Failure to be inclusive destroys the integrity of the process, and if
this is not corrected will usually undermine its legitimacy and lead to its demise (as can be seen in numerous workplace cases where improperly executed employee participation has been short-lived). Just how to insure that the process is and remains inclusive needs to be decided according to the particular situation. Inclusiveness was provided for in the Comanche case by inviting to the first session representatives from: the four traditional rural Comanche communities (Lawton, Apache, Cache and Walters), the newer urban Comanche Communities, members of each living generation, tribal staff and employees, former council members, members of old political divisions (e.g. those who voted "yes" and "no" on whether to establish a tribal government separate from the Kiowas and Apaches), etc.

The Stages of ILIS

In general terms, the ILIS process begins with a problem definition phase that enables the nation to develop a deeper understanding of its current situation. It then moves on to a second design phase that provides the tribe with a clearer vision of its direction for the future. In a third phase, participants proceed to define activities to bridge the gap between current reality and the desired future. This is followed by the assignment of roles and responsibilities for carrying out those activities. In this way the tribe can create a vision of its own future and then empower itself to become that vision. The process is an ongoing one, in a sizable nation moving back and forth between general meetings, usually involving members of the tribal council (or Business Committee in the Comanche case) and selected community representatives, and local meetings in each participating community, so that the results of all the forums are aggregated into a common vision statement and program. Once the first round of planning is completed, the tribe begins a new cycle to update its vision and program, or to extend planning to new areas of concern.

ILIS is based on facilitated group interaction, guided by trained group facilitators and supported by computer assistance. The process is designed to aid group participants with diverse viewpoints to get below the surface of discussion to explore the deeper logic of issues. During each of the phases of group work, ILIS takes the group through several stages, beginning with an idea generation session in which responses are provided to a triggering question. The triggering question, which is carefully worded to stimulate ideas about the primary issue of the participants' concern, is chosen prior to the beginning of the design sessions by the participants with the help of the facilitators. It is important that the participants develop the triggering question themselves so that the process is truly theirs, and does not result in their being intentionally or accidentally manipulated by others in directions different from the collective will of the group.

In the opening stage, and all of those that follow, the group sits in a circle, and each person in turn has the opportunity to respond, or to pass, until everyone feels that they have contributed all that they wish at this stage. With this process, each person becomes the center of the circle in turn, so that all have an equal chance to participate without having to fight to be heard, and all statements are valued as a contribution to the overall discussion. All of the ideas presented are recorded on butcher block paper and posted on the wall for everyone to see.

Idea generation is followed by a round for people to clarify their responses. In order to select the most important ideas for further group work, unit voting by secret ballot takes place, in which each participant votes for the 5 ideas they perceive as most important. In the final stage, a computer-assisted methodology, called Interprettive Structural Modeling (ISM), is used to help the group explore the relationship among those ideas that received the most votes. In both the problem definition phase and the vision phase of group work a structural "map" is developed that shows how the ideas influence one another. In the options phase, a "field" of possible activities is produced, consisting of categories of options, from which participants are asked to select those actions that are most appropriate for the purposes they have defined. Finally, key actors are identified and assigned responsibility for carrying out the options which have been selected by the group.
Before this kind of consensus decision making process can be undertaken successfully with any group, sufficient team building needs to take place in order that participants feel adequately connected to the group and its purpose, so that they will trust each other and the process enough to participate openly and freely. Thus, as the opening part of an ILIS session with tribal people, a locally appropriate ceremony is carried out. This is the first of several mechanisms that recognize the critical role tribal identity and values can play in discovering new ways out of complex and deeply rooted problems. Gift giving and public recognition of service in the interest of the tribe are appropriate additions that add to strengthening tribal identity. Blessings, pipe ceremonies and/or prayers go much deeper than the typical greeting or statement of welcome. For tribal participants, attention is drawn to their common bond and all that it means. If outsiders are involved, the ceremony tends to elevate the status of tribal identity and values and places participants in a mode of mutual respect for one another.

The bonding necessary for a successful process can also be enhanced by calling on each participant to track their kinship ties to the rest of the group. Cross-links between individuals and their inherent relational obligations immediately begin drawing the group together and help make tribal values and tribal identity the focus of the group's attention. Often the strongest component of the tribal vision statement developed by the process is the continuation of "the people" (the Numuhnuh for the Comanche). Group identity is synonymous with being tribal, and where it is strong, preservation of the group and its value system become all important. The reiteration of kinship terms calls forth those values and practices that set the group apart and immediately bonds the group around a common cause.

In addition, asking participants to express what being a member of the nation means to them brings forth a deep affirmation of cultural values, often expressed subliminally. These values, if captured and clarified, become a useful reference point during all the subsequent steps of the process. In ILIS sessions, as much as one third of the time spent together has been absorbed with these preliminary activities whose chief function is to bind the participants together into a single collaborative group. This is far greater than is the practice with other issue management models, but it provides extremely crucial groundwork where participants have suffered from alienation and cultural dissonance. It tends to create a spirit of optimism about the potential for overcoming the immediate set of problems, given all the participants and the tribe have overcome in the past. It is important to implement these bonding activities at the beginning of the work, but it is especially important before the period of generating options for dealing with problems that the group has identified.

Key Roles in the Process

In many nations, much of the discussion that takes place during the early stages of public meetings involves a strategy by various participants to position themselves and establish a role in the group. This is partly a reflection of the importance of honor and of the relational sense of identity of traditional tribal cultures. It is also a reflection of the importance of feeling in Native American cultures and the fact that many people feel strongly about the issues under consideration (or background issues related to the discussion). Until they have the opportunity to vent their feelings, many participants will not be able to engage in open discussion and consensus building. Since ILIS forums separate the generation of issues from the generation of new options for dealing with those issues, and since each participant is awarded an opportunity to address the group in turn, posturing and venting become integrated with issue generation and become acceptable parts of the process without interfering with the more difficult generation of alternatives that takes place later on in the forum.

Two supporting roles are extremely important in ILIS forums. First, a tribal elder or visionary leader interjects statements, such as a historical overview, from time to time. This keeps the sights of the group high as the participants deal with a myriad of complex local problems that are very close to their every day life. These vision statements provide periodic reminders of the achievements and perseverance of the tribe and the meaning of tribal membership and tradition. They work to maintain the momentum of the session, and are particularly helpful in preserving a sense of unity and purpose immediately before voting on prioritized issues or proposed activities.
Second, the facilitators play a key role in empowering the participants to take ownership of the process, for the success of ILIS in developing consensus and harmony rests on the ability of the participants to fully and actively come together as a unity, with full respect for the diversity of views, experiences, etc. of the members of the group. This is a delicate task, for the facilitators need to be active enough to make sure the participants are clear about how the process works and to provide adequate guidance to keep the process proper, and in balanced motion, without ever being perceived as controlling it or as partial to any person, position or outcome. This means, especially, that outside facilitators, who serve initially as consultants to begin the process, truly act as empowerers and quickly let go of the work, training local people to replace them so that the process fully belongs to the tribe. Similarly, the outside facilitators, while requiring the invitation of the tribal council or its equivalent, need to be clear that they are acting as consultants to the nation as a whole (and the participants as a group) and not to the members of the council as individuals.

The underlying point is that the dialoguing system must be established and operated in a way that gives ownership of it to the participants. There are numerous cases of supposedly participatory decision making which have failed to meet their potential because inappropriate forms or personnel were used, or because appropriate participatory attitudes and skills were not developed. Even worse are instances in which sudo-participatory processes have been applied in deliberate attempts to manipulate people. However, appropriate care in establishing and maintaining the discussion system can lead to very positive results in empowering the group and the larger community to meet issues in ways that are extremely representative of all who are involved. Because the process is based upon mutual respect, with each participant being given a chance to be truly heard and to have their concerns included in the deliberations in very supportive ways, the tendency of this kind of interaction is to promote increasing levels of discussion, and generates greater numbers of views in an extremely civil discourse that tends to reduce antagonism and infighting. Moreover, since the focus of the dialogue is upon mutual problem solving, rather than fighting for position, the process tends to be extremely creative as it encourages participants to react positively to, and build upon, each other's ideas (i.e. to produce synergy). Such a process tends to build community harmony, not in the sense of limiting the range of expression or of channeling discourse along narrow lines. To the contrary, it tends to produce a polyphony of many diverse voices by working positively and creatively with conflict to harmonize the interests of each, so far as is possible, for the wellbeing of all.

The Comanche Experience with the Indigenous Leadership Management System

The first Comanche ILIS session was held at Lawton, OK in February of 1990. A broadly representative group of fifteen active participants supported by fourteen observers and nine staff members took part in the two and a half day meeting. The deliberations began by focusing upon the question, "What critical issues do you anticipate for the Comanche Tribe during the next decade." The initial idea generation session produced 52 ideas, from which 21 were selected in the unit voting process. Discussion about the relationship among these issues resulted in a critical issues map. The item of most concern, "the trust period," involved a complex of problems created by the structures and arrangements, including governmental form, imposed upon the nation by the U.S. government beginning prior to the termination of the reservation and extending into the 1960's. The next two items of importance followed largely from the first: problems with the current Comanche constitutional structure and difficulty of the leadership in defining their governmental role. The critical issues map revealed that many of the issues which are often points of conflict in the community are primarily, symptoms of the first difficulties (which the ILIS process had been initiated to overcome).

The meeting went on to generate 39 proposed options and initiatives for dealing with the issues. Those which were perceived by the participants to be most important were superimposed on the critical issues map to indicate the objectives of each of the initiatives. Finally, 16 key organizations and individuals were identified for carrying out the initiatives.

As the closing comments of the participants make clear, the first Comanche experience with the ILIS process was extremely successful in building a spirit of collaboration and harmony: a unity based upon mutual
respect. As one of the tribal elders said, "we managed to disagree without being disagreeable," and it was generally appreciated that the disagreements, the differences in perspective, contributed significantly to the generation of better ideas. The session created a sense of vision among the participants as to the future of the tribe and produced a set of concrete plans to begin to realize that vision.

The process served as a vehicle for reestablishing Comanche values in several ways. This was accomplished first, by the fact that ILIS consensus decision making expresses traditional values about discourse and governance. "We rediscovered the joy of working together and valuing everyone's contribution... We discovered the Comanche version of demosophia, or collective wisdom, the wisdom of kinsmen, which for us has always been the locus of true leadership, as expressed in persons who manifest that wisdom in their words and behavior." Second, the enthusiasm for the renewal of traditional ways experienced in ILIS generated proposals to incorporate the process more widely in the discussion of community affairs and to revise the Comanche constitution. Thirdly, it became clear that the preserving of traditional culture, including the Comanche language, was a function of tribal governance. A number of projects were initiated to work towards that end including the establishment of a program for youth and elders to exchange ideas and the creation of a Comanche Historical Society.

The February ILIS session revealed an underlying circle of concern, composed of three main areas, intimately related to all the important issues in Comanche communities. First, is the question of identity. Who are we and what will it mean to be a Comanche by the 21st Century? How does the blood quantum requirement for tribal membership relate to who we are? Second is the issue of government and constitution. How do we institutionally structure ourselves so that our institutions make sense in Comanche terms? Third, is the problem of communication/participation/contribution. How can we enable every person in our community to make a positive contribution to the life of the tribe by being both responsive and responsible? Not being able to do so makes tribal people crazy and circles back around to negatively affect their self-esteem and identity. ILIS has given the Comanches a way to address these central issues both in terms of process and concrete initiatives that has extended from the first through the entire unfolding of ILIS meetings that have taken place to date.

The March and May 1991 Meetings

Following the February 1990 planning session, OIO, in collaboration with AIO, worked with the Comanche Tribe to obtain funding from the Administration of Native Americans (ANA) to train a Comanche Facilitation Team, over 17 months, to conduct community meetings and tribal forums using the ILIS process. That training was commenced at a pair of meetings, March 26-28 and May 13-15 1991. The Spring 1991 sessions focused upon the tribal governance issues raised at the first planning session. The objective of these follow up sessions was to identify major barriers to community participation in Comanche tribal governance and to develop a plan for overcoming these barriers. A broadly representative group of 16 active participants and 10 supportive observers representing the various Comanche communities and the Business Committee took part in these discussions. Often at ILIS sessions, once the process is in motion, the supportive observers are brought into the dialoguing as participants, expanding the session's inclusiveness and the synergy it produces.

These meetings followed the pattern of the initial Comanche ILIS session. The March and May meetings generated a list of 99 options to deal with the problems, from which they selected 29 actions for which specific groups and individuals were given responsibility in order to begin the first steps in revising the process of tribal governance. Some of these were simple actions, such as "posting the tribal agenda" and encouraging tribal members "to read the Constitution." Others were more complex, including "form a committee to get feedback on the constitution" and "developing a tribal vision statement." All but two of the options selected were objectives to be accomplished within a year. In general, the planning sessions identified ten major areas for action to be developed in three stages.
The initial stage was to focus upon "problem solving." This entailed expanding the ILIS discussions through several measures: inviting "known" faction leaders to small group problem-solving sessions, requesting the Business Committee to organize a "Comanche vision commission" to develop a community based vision statement, set goals and objectives for the tribe, have Business Committee members participate at all levels of the issues management process, including having community members invite the tribal council to an open issues workshops.

Once sufficient community involvement was attained, the second stage of more particular projects was to be inaugurated. This involved a number of projects in the areas of constitutional education and discussion, development of internal and external media, co-generational outreach, cultural enrichment, staff development, development of enhanced ability to tap external resources and continued development of tribal involvement. After the process of constitutional education and discussion (and related second stage projects) was sufficiently developed, the Comanches were to move to the third stage consisting of constitutional revision.

The closing remarks of the participants in this second run of the ILIS process, as with those of the first session, exhibited considerable enthusiasm for the process and strong optimism for its role in enhancing tribal development. A few excerpts are revealing. "I'd like to say that I'm really impressed. I really feel honored to be here because these are the concerns that I've had for a long time and they're not even voiced by most of us because you're not always able to say something for fear of stepping on someone's toe or saying something that's not reflecting something that you really feel, and someone misinterprets what you say a lot of times. And I just really appreciate being able to deal with these things. I just feel the oneness that I've always wanted to feel about my culture."

"I am impressed by all of the things that went on here the last few days. I'm surprised that we got as much done as we did. I've learned more about the way things are in the last few days....and I understand more about the way things work now. This is a very exciting time because we have the opportunity with this group to turn the corner and turn things in a different way. While it'll take a lot of work and a lot of time if we use the right effort and perseverance we have a chance to make things a lot better for the tribe."

"Taking our skills and applying them back to the tribe and all these things are real good in that to me it's like some of the traditions that our tribe held like the Seven Arrows and the Four Directions. In the last few days we heard views with a lot of directions.... Sometimes like Roland, you know, he sees some things so big and can't do anything but with all of us working together coming from different directions like that, we all begin to see things from this point of view, things from that point of view....This kind of helps us experience those kind of other things, like we might not of been able to see things in that kind of way. When I expressed myself, he was able to see it from a different point of view and accept it and see it in a different light. And with this, we're able to bring that back to our culture and we're not stuck in society's frame in going about things. We're getting back to the way our forefathers did things, processed out ideas and things. And I'm real glad to be able to be a part of this and I think we can conduct these meeting like Ben can and I think we can really do a great success with this program, with this process, out there in the communities and corporate it in our governments and it can really help our communities and our tribal members...."

Broadening the Process, July and September ILIS

The broadening of the Tribal discussion process decided upon by the Spring 1991 ILIS meetings was initiated shortly after that pair of meetings. An ongoing series of discussions and planning sessions was commenced in each of the four primary Comanche communities. These meetings generally simplified the consensus discussion process, eliminating the computer assisted mapping. In conjunction with the community sessions, a pair of tribal ILIS meetings were held in Lawton, July 12-13 and September 27-28, 1991, with three representatives of each the four communities reporting the findings of their local deliberations. The objective of the Lawton sessions was to continue designing the future of the Comanche Tribe. This consisted in further
consideration of barriers to community participation, developing a tribal vision statement and additional options for the future of the nation ("What actions and initiatives can make the Comanche vision a reality?"). The process at the July and September meetings was essentially the same as that of the first two Comanche ILIS sessions, except that now the tribal level discussions were directly linked to the deliberations in the local communities. Some of the decision making process took place at each level, as discussion shifted back and forth between local and tribal meetings.

The consideration of barriers to community participation essentially ratified what had been decided at the previous sessions, and with this delineation of the structure of the barriers to effective tribal governance as a foundation, the process shifted to developing a tribal vision statement in the form of a set of objectives developed from considering the question, "What are your hopes, goals and objectives for the Comanche Tribe of the future?" The two level discussion produced a vision statement containing 20 goals organized in a map of seven support levels. The "Collective Vision Statement for Design of the Comanche Future" is depicted in Figure 4. In general terms, the first level focuses upon the goal of improving communications throughout the tribe. The second level consists of two items, each of which is the initiation point for goals in the following levels, but the two separate tracks largely come together as sources for all the goals at the fifth level. One of the second level goals is to strengthen tribal government. This supports, directly, a set of third level goals aimed at improving the operation of tribal government, and these in turn contribute to the forth level goal of providing services to all Comanches.

The other goal at the second level is "To promote co-generational learning to teach respect and Comanche values." This supports, directly, a set of cultural goals at the third level as well as the goal "To change the enrollment qualification" (by change in the blood quantum requirement for membership, with the feeling being that it should be made less restrictive). At the fifth level the two tracks largely converge producing a list of five goals: "To again become 'Lords of the Plains,'" "To eliminate favoritism," "To achieve more unity," "To prepare youth for leadership" and "To ensure equal access for Comanche services." These forth level goals lead to two at the fifth level, "To improve medical care" and "To improve educational services." This last goal was seen as providing significant support for the seventh level goal: "To contribute to national and global issues." The last is important, for the sense of wholeness that is central to the Comanche (and other tribal people) includes first the individual's place in and contribution to the tribe, and then the tribe's place in and contribution to the nation and the world.

The process of identifying action options was begun at meetings in the four communities, each of which generated its own list of proposals. These were then shared at the September 27-28 session which produced an extensive list from which each community and the tribal group might choose for implementation. The list was defined as being open for further additions, and would serve as a basis for choosing concrete actions at future meetings.

Once again, the closing statements by participants were extremely positive. These included affirmation that the process for the meetings and the mapping methodology and visual display were extremely appropriate and helpful. A number of constructive criticisms were produced from this first attempt at combined community-tribal process. One of these was procedural. It was felt that it was important to involve the Business Committee in all of the tribal level sessions, and that in future tribal level meetings the Business Committee, like each of the communities, should have three representatives.

The other suggestions were primarily technical. For example, it was decided that relevant cultural values need to be affirmed before vision statements, like the one proposed concerning favoritism, are addressed by the group. The group was reluctant to deal with kinship obligations in the context of management problems due to favoritism, but likely could have examined the problem in depth if the positive value of respect for kinship obligations had been discussed in more detail at an earlier stage.

Also noted, were several problems in assuring that everyone's contributions were equally valued. For example, when the communities reported their lists of alternative actions, each community, in turn, presented its
entire list. This created two problems. First, as some communities generated longer lists than others, this method of presentation had some tendency to make some communities appear to be contributing more than others, and hence to be more valued. More important, as there naturally was considerable duplication in the proposals, as each group followed those before, it appeared that groups presenting later were contributing less that was new to the meeting then those who spoke earlier. Thus, the last community to present had some feeling that its ideas were not considered seriously and were treated as less important than those of the others. This problem could be eliminated by having ideas taken from each community in turn, noting where others have made the same finding (thus making duplication mutually supportive), and adding that idea to the growing general Comanche list.

Similarly, people not thoroughly used to this kind of strategic planning often confuse such things as what is a vision statement, a goal or an option for action. When this occurred in the process of visioning, action proposals were removed as not relevant at that moment, making the proposer feel that they had made a mistake. If the generated list were considered in more neutral terms (and neutral language used in the sorting process), then the group could consider which ideas should be considered at the moment, and which shifted to a different list for later consideration. This would avoid the problem of people feeling that their contributions were less valued.

Developments in the Communities

A number of the participants took considerable initiative in developing the process in their own communities, and one participant was quite innovative in developing his own computer model for grouping the ideas from his community. He mentioned that once the Comanches have made the process fully their own, they would become so innovative with it that an outsider, knowing only the original process, would not recognize it after five years.

Following the July to September dialoguing, the four local communities, through their own meetings, began to develop some of the proposals generated in the two level process. The Lawton community launched a process of constitutional review that quickly became tribal-wide. They also set up three tribal displays in libraries. The Cache community undertook the restoration of its cultural center, generating support from four agencies in the process. They also organized an evening of Comanche hymn-singing. The Walters community developed collaboration with the city, county and the tribe in planning an innovative community center for its area. They also organized several community dinners. The Apache community, after demonstrating grass roots support through a petition drive, succeeded in obtaining Comanche Business Committee approval for requesting an extension of the tribe's JTPA program into southern Caddo county (rather than relying upon the program from the Kiowa Tribe) and it appeared that this would meet Federal approval.

Impacts of ILIS at the Tribal Level

At the Tribal level, increased community participation led to a turnout of over 300 tribal members at the next General Council meeting, the largest attendance for a considerable time. Meanwhile, three of the community participants in the July-September 1991 ILIS sessions were elected to the Business Committee, strengthening the newly initiated process of liaison between the Business Committee and the communities, and amongst the communities (though resignation of one of these members reduced the ILIS supporters on the Committee to two). At the same time, the ILIS process was expanded to include Comanches living in Norman and Oklahoma City, and began to include those living in concentrated numbers in other urban locations around the United States.

In June of 1992 (at the completion of the pilot project funded by the Administration for Native Americans), the Four communities formalized the two level ILIS process in "Comanche Community Participation Units Articles of Voluntary Association" which was officially made part of the tribal governance process in a resolution of the Comanche Business Committee meeting of July 11 1992. A direct product of the on going process was the development of an internal list of tribal and community resources and a national external list of resources that can be drawn upon by the tribe. In general, issues that have been taken through the ILIS process have had broadly
supported action plans developed for their solution, which have easily gained approval of the Tribal Council. By contrast, issues that have not been considered in broad community discussions (which have been by the ILIS process) continue to be difficult to build a consensus around. This makes it hard for the Business Committee to take any action on them. This is illustrated by the Business Committee’s rejecting four successive proposals from the Tribal Council on economic development which appeared to be substantively strong, but for which there had not been broad participation in their development. This experience of the Business Committee, along with the fact that the calmer political climate resulting from the initiating of inclusive community dialogue contributed significantly to the next tribal chair being the first to be reelected to a second term in at least a decade, indicates the potential of the process to provide a means for ending deadlock in tribal decision making and to begin to lower the level of acrimony in the community, particularly relating to its political affairs.

Experience with participatory measures in other settings suggests that the full establishment of a process like ILIS requires considerable time. The building of trust in the community necessary to transform long existing bitterness and infighting into generally harmonious relations requires a long period in which there are consistent good experiences in dealing with community issues as a result of working successfully with the process. Clearly, the reactions of participants, the spread of support for working with ILIS, and the unfolding of events indicate that movement toward such a change in feelings and ways of relating was beginning to occur among the Comanche by the end of 1992.

Even under the most favorable of circumstances, the integration of an innovative process like ILIS into the mainstream of community affairs is never smooth or entirely certain. As the new participatory way of deciding begins to generate enthusiasm in the community, it naturally stimulates people not yet acculturated to its ways to inject their own proposals into community deliberations, outside the new discussion process. If this happens too early, or forcefully (as may happen where there are strong factions that are not included in the process from the beginning, or at least at a very early stage), it can derail, or at least delay, the growth of the new consensus decision making process. If the new process is being developed in a sufficiently effective way, such incidents are merely part of the growing pains of making the process more inclusive.

An example of this kind of difficulty arose with the process of constitutional revision. The ILIS process set in motion a long term discussion of the issues aimed at the building of consensus over time, before proposing a new document. In the midst of these deliberations, a former business committee member, who continued to feel alienated from the governmental process since his defeat in a reelection effort, proposed his own revision for the constitution, which did not include the ILIS process. He managed to obtain enough signatures on a petition so that a vote had to be taken on his proposal. His action, at first, created a great deal of confusion. Many people did not know whether or not the vote was on the revision that was being discussed in the community. However, the communication network and process, set in motion by the introduction of ILIS, had become sufficiently developed so that most of the confusion was eventually straightened out. The proposal first passed, but was quickly rescinded when people realized that what they had voted for was not the proposal being developed through the consensus building dialogues.

Although this episode caused some delay, it did add to the inclusiveness of the process of constitutional revision. By mid 1996, sessions on drafting a new constitution had been held in the four communities, and with Comanches in Norman and Oklahoma City, and in Albuquerque, Dallas and Washington D.C. A final tribal level drafting session was then held with representatives of each of the communities, and a referendum appeared to be on the horizon. However, failure of the Comanche to maintain inclusive dialogue at the tribal level soon derailed the promising effort.

Failure to Fully Institutionalize ILIS

For community discussion to be maintained and to be ongoing in its development, it is necessary that the process be institutionalized sufficiently that it continue to be used consistently, regardless of changes in official
personnel. This is true, whether or not it continues to use the original format of its initiation, in this case ILIS, or be modified into some other form of inclusive participatory discussion. With the Comanche, that has happened in three of four communities, where local meetings to discuss community affairs were still a regular occurrence as of 2002. In the fourth community, participatory discussions continued at least until mid 1996. At the tribal level, that has not been the case.

The chair, who came into office after the initial tribal level work with ILIS had been completed, did not appreciate its importance in making the political climate favorable to his reelection. Thus he made no use of the process and did not replace the ILIS liaison person to the council when the position became vacant, or the tribal ILIS facilitators when they left the tribal staff. As the community at large was not yet sufficiently acculturated to returning to participatory dialogue of tribal issues, the chairman’s lack of action concerning ILIS did not draw a significant response from the community. During the chairman’s first term of office, no major controversial issues arose, so that the improved community climate resulting from the ILIS process remained, carrying the chair into a second term. Shortly after his reelection, however, two important issues surfaced that he believed required early action. When he undertook controversial initiatives concerning them, without putting them before the communities for broad consideration, the result was political uproar.

In the first instance the chair initiated plans for the building of a tribal casino. In the second, he attempted to create an HMO in the face of a possible closing of the tribe’s hospital. The latter action was threatening to some of the hospital’s employees, who began to complain to others that the chairman was attempting to kill the hospital. This ignited a round of gossiping, heavy with innuendo. Objection to being left out of the process was particularly voiced by those in the local communities who were now used to participating in the consideration of major issues in their local meetings.

Whatever the chair’s concern may have been about the necessity for quick action in the two cases, his initiating the projects without prior consultation with the Comanche community through ILIS, or an equivalent forum, created a great deal of stormy controversy and raised considerable suspicion of the motives of those involved in developing the proposals, as was typical of Comanche politics as usual prior to the launching of ILIS. Indeed, for some time community turmoil was even more tumultuous than prior to the initiation of ILIS, as many Comanches were now used to being involved in community affairs, and were angered at being left out of political decision making.

While three of the four Comanche communities continued to have local participatory meetings, at least into 1999, and there have been continued efforts to revise the nation’s constitution – sometimes with fairly inclusive invitations to tribal members – author LaDonna Harris, an involved tribal member, reports that as of the summer of 2008, the Comanche’s had not adopted a new constitution. In January of 1999, an attempt was made to improve tribal governance by restarting the ILIS process at the tribal level. However, the election of a new Tribal Chair, shortly after that, ended the effort, and while Comanche politics had become more congenial, as of fall 2008, a tribal level participatory process had not been reestablished.

Evidence for the Value of ILIS

Some may wonder if it is worth initiating a return to inclusive community discussion of issues in Indian communities, given that the Comanche community was even more disharmonious after its experience with ILIS then before its initiation. There is plenty of evidence, however, that ILIS was an appropriate and useful process. All of those who participated in it were moved by the experience and enthusiastically supported it. Whenever inclusive participation was used, over time, consensus was built for a plan of action, and a program was passed. It seems likely that a new constitution would have been enacted if community dialoguing had continued. The community became much more harmonious as long as many of its members were involved in meaningful consideration of community affairs, and many of them being angered at again being left out of policy making is an indication of the value of such participation. Over all, it would seem that as long as ILIS was used, it served as a
creative vehicle of empowerment. It has also provided a way to deal effectively with issues for the mutual advancement of the members, the communities, and the tribe as a whole, in a way that allows the Comanches to interact more effectively with the contemporary world through strengthening traditional values.

More recent applications of ILIS give further evidence that reinstitution of inclusive participatory consensus decision making processes, such as ILIS, are quite efficacious, when appropriately undertaken for the particular culture and situation, in bringing back a sense of identification with, and appreciation of, one's tribe, and a restoration of a feeling of individual dignity among the members through fostering mutual respect and providing a means for all members to contribute positively to the wellbeing of the community. Several members of other Tribes have participated in or observed the ILIS process and commented upon its broader applicability.

Former Winnebago Chairman Reuben Snake, a facilitator at the February 1990 ILIS meeting, commented that the process is a good match for traditional problem solving strategies. This is because traditional people remain, to this day, holistic, systems thinkers, favoring the inclusion of many ideas into solutions rather than one idea overpowering another. Stanley Paytiamo, former Governor of Acoma Pueblo, said that the ILIS process enables a group to accomplish in two and a half days what it takes traditional decision makers two and a half years to accomplish.

Other Experiences with ILIS

Since its first use by the Comanches, ILIS has been applied successfully in a number of other settings. AIO has used the process with a number of tribes and other organizations in Oklahoma, New Mexico and Alaska. ILIS was instituted as an issues management program for the Institute of American Indian Fine Arts. In addition, AIO has been using ILIS in its work in strengthening the government-to-government relationship between tribal and federal governments. The process opens a non-confrontational pathway for the interaction of government agencies and tribes. In several forums, beginning in 1993, including a session with the EPA Office of Solid Waste Management, AIO has brought together local, state, regional and national representatives to discuss issues facing tribal governments. ILIS has promoted full and frank discussion, building coalitions for stronger tribes and more effective policy coordination. AIO has also regularly makes use of ILIS in working with the young people participating in the American Indian Ambassadors Program of leadership training. The process has helped them to understand the barriers to effective leadership, the relationship of issues to each other and the roles that individuals can play in either creating or overcoming barriers. Americans for Indian Opportunity has also found TIMS an exceedingly useful format in a number of international Indigenous meetings. Overall, the record indicates that ILIS type processes can be extremely useful to tribes and tribal people in recreating who they have always been as they move into the Twenty First Century.

Some Conclusions on Renewing Tribal Participation

A central point is that most Indian nations are suffering from a clash of values between their present forms of government and surviving traditional values of the people, that generally are quite participatory and cooperative. ILIS, however modified for specific circumstances, is only one method for providing inclusive participatory decision making. Like all processes, ILIS has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, the computer mapping is helpful in quickly showing the relationship of the ideas or issues under consideration. But this requires expensive equipment and technically trained staff to operate and maintain, which may make it impractical to use. Partly because of this, in the Comanche case, the local communities usually did not use the computer equipment or the mapping. They simplified the procedures for their own needs, maintaining their inclusive participatory character.

Some Indian commentators have stated that they find consensus decision making too time consuming to be generally practical, especially in larger tribes. As the Ute and Alaskan, Baha'i style, decision making cases demonstrate, it is still possible to involve people inclusively, regularly and respectfully in tribal decision making.
without having everyone directly deciding by consensus. Indeed, a number of North American Native peoples, such as the Dine (Navajo – discussed below) traditionally used a brokering system to build consensus by representation, in many of their affairs. Just what form or method is used needs to vary with the circumstances. What is important is to find appropriate ways to involve tribal members so that they are, and feel, involved.

As we have seen above, even the best and most appropriate process of tribal decision making can not instantly overcome many years of inappropriate governance, and a host of other problems that have been exacerbated by lack of government commensurate with the culture and needs of the people. Properly initiating appropriate governance is an essential first step in beginning to return a community to harmony. Community involvement then has to be built in a good way, modifying the process as is necessary for community needs (but only on essential occasions in order not to undermine the confidence of the people in it), and maintained long enough to be come firmly established. Then, it can serve as a vehicle for developing policies to deal with the other issues that Indigenous communities must overcome to return to harmony and self-sufficiency.

The Continuing Process of Government Development at Navajo Nation

Traditional Navajo Governance

The longest, currently on going, process of tribal government development has been in progress for many years at Navajo Nation. The Dine, generally known as the Navajo, were a society governed largely at the band level with somewhat more complexity in their social organization owing to their strong clan structure. Clans (extended family units) were important in public affairs, in part, because they were responsible for the behavior of their own members (e.g., debts, torts and crimes). Since clans gave considerable emotional and economic support to their members, pressure from kinsmen, especially elders, was likely to have exerted a strong influence. In speaking of more contemporary local governance, Kluckhohn and Leighton describe what oral history says was true of the old band government and which was typical of traditional Native American government in general.11

Headmen have no powers of coercion, save possibly that some people fear them as potential witches, but they have responsibilities. They are often expected, for example, to look after the interests of the needy who are without close relatives or whose relatives neglect them [a rare occurrence in traditional times], but all they can do with the neglectful ones is talk to them. No program put forward by a headman is practicable unless it wins public endorsement or has the tacit backing of a high proportion of the influential men and women of the area.

The two authors go on to say that at meetings, "the Navaho pattern was for discussion to be continued until unanimity was reached, or at least until those in opposition felt it was useless or impolitic to express disagreement." They point out, however, that while public meetings provided an occasion for free voicing of sentiments and thrashing out of disagreements, the most important part of traditional Dine political decision making took place informally in negotiations among clan and other leaders representing their respective groups who regularly discussed community concerns face to face. These discussions included input from women, particularly elder women, so that everyone in the community was represented. Prior to U.S. government intervention, there was no national Dine government, beyond the clan and inter-band negotiating process. However, there is evidence in oral history that prior to the Dine territory becoming part of the United States, in 1846, traditionally there were meetings, called the Naachid, every two to four years of the war and peace leaders of many of the bands, at which issues of war and peace were discussed, but it is not clear if civil issues were also considered at the meetings. As with band government, the Naachid had no power to coerce compliance of its decisions.

From Colonial Imposition to Post MacDonald Reforms

Under U.S. colonialism, following 1868, imposed administration was initially undertaken from a single agency.
This was totally foreign to the Navajo, but over time both a Navajo Nation Council arose with a strong elected president and local administration expanded to become the current 110 chapters, with some limited governmental functions. The chapters had at least some connection to traditional local band government. However, until well after the post Mac Donald reforms, almost all political authority remained concentrated in the Navajo Nation Council in Window Rock, AZ. Moreover, under BIA rules, the chapters functioned in a western bureaucratic fashion that was quite foreign to traditional Dine governance.

After World War II, the Council became more active in developing policy, which expanded greatly with the growth of tribal decision making as a result of, first, the war on poverty, and then the growing federal Indian policy of self-determination, initiated under the Nixon Administration. Among those gaining leadership skills and experience as a result of the war on poverty Indian programs were Peter MacDonald and Peterson Zah. MacDonald was elected tribal chairman in 1970, and began doing a great deal to increase Navajo Nation tribal sovereignty and economic wellbeing, quite aggressively moving to extend tribal control over education and other programs, and over mineral leases. MacDonald took advantage of the concentration of power in the Navajo Nation’s IRA like government, which he expanded considerably. However, after serving three terms as Chair, he lost the election in 1982 to Zah. Typical of many tribal leaders who’s culture is collaborative, emphasizing consensus decisions making rather than elections, he took the election loss personally, as an attack on his honor, causing him to shift to a power seeking approach to politics. Building a strong political machine, he won the 1986 election for chairman, and ruled quite dictatorially, setting off a major political struggle which came to a head with a riot in Window rock, on July 20, 1989, that left two Dine dead and ten injured.

A substantial part of his political power was based upon his bringing needed money and jobs to the reservation by expanding mineral extraction and launching numerous Navajo owned enterprises, including the Navajo Nation Shopping Centers Enterprise and Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority. He clearly did a great deal to advance the sovereignty and economic wellbeing of Navajo Nation, though the damage to land and people from mining in the longer term have been considerable, and along with some other aspects of the development he launched, have violated some important Dine values. Moreover, MacDonald engaged in considerable favoritism, nepotism and misappropriation of moneys, which led to his suspension as chair, in 1988, and his conviction on federal charges of bribery, fraud and misuse of federal funds in 1990.

The Problems of Favoritism and Increased Diversity
Relating to Differing Degrees of Acculturation to A Variety of External Culture Groups

At least some of the favoritism and nepotism can be attributed to the traditional value of a leader supporting his relatives, which functioned very well in precontact times, when every member of a band was a relative. Then, assisting family members was helping the whole band, which is not the case in the modern context. Today, the narrower western view family as one's immediate relatives has entered much of Indigenous American culture. This is a difficulty that requires a new approach across Indian country. Perhaps some form of ceremony is necessary for leaders to be symbolically married to the whole tribe, or at least all of their constituents. There are a number of traditional tribal practices that may be suggestive of what contemporary communities might do to impart a sense of responsibility to act inclusively and participatively in tribal leaders, and to remind the members of the community to hold their leaders responsible for doing so.

Amongst the peoples of the Trobriand Islands in the Pacific, as in many other Indigenous cultures, a chief on assuming office would marry at least one woman from each village in the tribe’s territory, except his own, to solidify the mutual obligations which he facilitated as a leader. In a different way, among the Ashanti, in Africa, the tribe was unified in the office of its principle leader through family relationships, with the elected heads of all the lineages from throughout the national territory having a place on the principle leader’s council, and the principle chief elected in a process that all the people, from all the lineages, had a say (although he was always a member of the Sofoesofo lieage). The ceremony of the chief’s coming to office, similar to those of the heads of each lineage, included first a reminder by the leading elders, voiced by the Talking Chief (Okyeame) of the values...
the new leader must follow in his office in carrying out the duties to the people: his relatives in the family that composed the nation. Then, after paying the elders a token payment of acknowledgement, the new leader swore the most solemn oath to the Earth Goddess, promising in part, "If I do not listen to the advice of my elders [representing all the lineages]; if I make war on them; if I run away in battle; then I have violated the oath," which meant he was no longer worthy of continuing in office, and could be impeached – a not infrequent occurrence. Furthermore, emphasizing the separation of the office and the one who held it, on becoming principle chief, all of that man’s property became owned by the office, including his wives. So that if he were impeached, he became impoverished, his property remaining with the chieftainship.

While American Indians nations today will likely not wish to go so far as did the Ashanti, most have adoption rituals that could be adapted to making, or reminding, the ascending leader that he or she is a relative of all tribal (or of an office representing a portion of the tribe’s citizens, all jurisdictional) members, and oaths to serve the entire family properly could be taken. Such ceremonies as a nation might choose, when combined with the necessary steps to return the community actually to being a family, might well reindigenize the idea of kinship, assisting leaders to act inclusively as facilitators, helping their relatives to decide and to carry into effect their collective wishes.

MacDonald’s financial self-aggrandizement, however, is hardly traditional. Rather it is an offshoot of the creation of a new class of political leaders resulting from U.S. assimilation and government restructuring policies of the U.S. government. This has been a continuing major problem in Navajo Nation government, that in various ways and forms has been a difficulty elsewhere as well. The underlying phenomenon is the fracturing of what traditionally were fairly unified Native cultures because of external influences that have become internalized. To varying degrees tribal members have become assimilated to a variety of external cultures or subcultures. This has resulted from interaction with an American Society that is diverse, with many groups who have come from cultures all over the world, with numerous religious and spiritual traditions. With intermarriage, television and other national and international media, checkerboard reservations - often with churches of more than one denomination - and more than two-thirds of tribal members living off reservation, tribal cultures have been greatly diversified and often fractured. This is even more the case in urban Indian communities, where members of numerous tribes interact, often around an Indian center. These difficulties need to be transformed into advantages through inclusive interaction processes, such as those discussed above. Then currently dividing perspectives may contribute to a unifying community synergy.

The Post-MacDonald Reforms

As a result of the problems of the MacDonald government, the first effort to bring at least a modicum of traditional dispersion of power back into Dine government, though in a largely western format, was the creation of the current government structure, in 1989. The new government featured separating powers roughly following the model of the three branch U.S. federal government. The change was accomplished with leadership from Peterson Zah, who served as chairman of the Navajo Tribal Council at Window Rock from 1983 – 87, and who was elected first President of the Navajo Nation in 1990, under new Constitution.

The 1990 constitution established an 88 member elected council delegates representing 110 Navajo Nation chapters, an executive branch headed by a President, leading a sizable administrative bureaucracy and a court system. In contrast to the United States government, the legislature, as the direct representative of the people, has preponderant legal power over the other branches, making the Speaker the most powerful official in the government, followed by the President. The President's powers include a veto over legislation, that can be overridden by the Council. The constitution places governmental authority primarily in the national government, located at Window Rock, which can allocate authority to the chapters.

Concentrating decision making in Window Rock has long presented difficulties. Navajo nation has the largest population of any recognized Indian tribe in the United States, spread over an extremely large
reservation with poor roads and other infrastructure stretching across three states. The Navajo found that attempting to govern almost all tribal matters from the tribal capital had resulted in a cumbersome, bureaucratic tribal government. Many Navaho's have found the 1990 governmental system to be unrepresentative and too distant to act with an adequate understanding of conditions in its many varied local chapters, or to be in communication with local citizens. The geographic separation also tended to increase the psychological separation between the educated class, composing much of government and administration, and the rest of the population. Moreover, many aspects of the nation's three branch government, modeled on the U.S. Constitution, did not fit with traditional Navajo ways, even though some traditional governmental practices were retained, and the tribal courts incorporated a considerable amount of Navajo custom in tribal law.

Decentralization and Participation at Navajo Nation

Thus, in early 1998, the Navajo Nation acted to decentralize many aspects of government to its 110 local chapters, even as it was working to improve the quality of many chapter meetings by finding ways to incorporate relevant traditional values in contemporary governance. A sales tax was established so that chapters certified in self-governing competence could obtain funding for for local governance from retail sales in their jurisdiction. At the same time, the central government began taking steps to debureaucratize its operation, and to improve the accessibility of, and communications with, each of its organs. Most of the planning and initial implementation of these efforts were initially carried out by the Commission on Navajo Government Development, an arm of the legislative branch, and its Office of Navajo Government Development. The Commission and the Office have had some able staff, and have been advised by traditional elders. With a weak economy, however, it was difficult for the nation to provide adequate resources for the immense and many facetted task. The Office received some assistance in providing forums for local chapter officials to work out methods for improving chapter governance through the Leadership Program at Dine College. However, the program has not had the resources to move very quickly in working with the large number of geographically dispersed chapters.

A similar, problem exists concerning the technical competence of the chapters to carry out programs effectively and to handle finances with accountability. Thus the nation's government established a process for chapters to be approved on their money managing competence, and thus be certified to operate their own programs under the decentralization statute. At first, very few chapters became involved in the certification program, as the paperwork involved was complex. In addition, many of the chapters were understaffed, overworked and inexperienced in the more complicated bookkeeping that the revenue sharing process of applying tribal funds locally would involve. As a result, Navajo nation developed methods to simplify accounting while maintaining accountability. The nation also developed affordable yet adequate ways to provide technical assistance to chapters on finance and other matters. This began to increase chapter certification, but the process is still very slow. In October, 2004, the Sweetwater Chapter became the first to have its Local Governance Act Community Land Use Plan approved by the Navajo Nation Council's Transportation and Community Development Committee, having obtained assistance from the Shiprock Agency Local Government Support Center. This is one of several regional centers set up to assist chapter governments. By April of 2005, six additional chapters had land use plans approved. On December 24, 2008, the number reached 10 chapters achieving certification. By August 2012, 43 chapters had achieved certification, 7 chapters had been approved to run alternative governments and 100 chapters had had land use plans approved.

At the same time, public participation in Navajo Nation national government has been increased in several ways, including the institution of representative focus groups to obtain input on important issues and posting proposed legislation on the legislature’s web site. This was done while allowing time for public (and Navajo executive agency) comment before issues come to a vote. In 2004, the Navajo Nation's Supreme Court’s Chief Justice called for public commentary in the regular evaluation of judges. Also that year, the nation set up polling stations in tribal elections for its registered voters living off reservation in Albuquerque, Denver, Salt Lake City
The 2002-2009 Reform Initiatives

While the process of decentralization, initiated in 1998, began to move toward its desired ends, many Navajo found it too limited and too slow, bringing a call to reexamine the entire system of the Nation’s government. Thus, in 2002, a Navajo Nation Statutory Reform Convention was held with 256 representatives from the 110 chapters and 13 organizations. They proposed 26 amendments to Navajo law, two of which that President Joe Shirely wanted to put before the voters. Following that, the council established an independent Office of Navajo Government Development. The office, however, was unable to obtain approval by the council of any of the amendments. In 2007 the office’s independent mandate was revoked, and it returned to being an organ of the Office of the Speaker.

Political discussion of government reform resurfaced as a Navajo national issue, in 2008. However, it quickly became a political football between Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr. and Council Speaker Lawrence Morgan, and as of February 2010, there had been no real public or governmental discussion of the main issues. However, two proposals by the Navajo Nation President, eventually were approved by voters. On April 21, President Shirley announced in his annual State of the Navajo Nation Address that his administration was working, consistently with traditional Dine principles, to streamline government and bureaucracy, to reduce costs and improve service to tribal members. With the Navajo Nation beginning to feel the decline of the U.S. economy, on April 29, the President launched the first of two attempts to have Dine voters pass a constitutional amendment that would reduce the Council from 88 to 24 members and give the President a line item veto. Shirley stated that the two provisions would save money by cutting council expenses and allowing the President to eliminate unnecessary spending that he asserted was often added to budget bills in riders proposed by individual council members. He also asserted that the provisions would create a better balance between the executive and legislative branches, in part, because a smaller council would have less time to engage in expensive micromanaging of administration. In the initial attempt to pass them, however neither referendum achieved certification from the Navajo Election Commission as having been approved, though the first received about 70% of the votes cast. The Navajo Supreme Court later upheld the legitimacy of the measures, ordering that they be again be offered in a referendum. In December, 2009, both measures were approved by the people. The Council was then reduced to 24 member, following the complex issue of devising a redistricting to implement the smaller legislature.

Whatever the merits of the reforms initiated by President Shirley, beyond any impact they may have on making Dine government more responsible – which is a very important concern - they do not increase or speed decentralization, or directly increase the participation of individual Dine. Indeed, a smaller legislature is in one dimension less participatory, as the reduction in representatives lessens the voting power and influence of each citizen.

The Dine Policy Institute Proposals

Moving more directly on the question of returning traditional inclusive values into government, from the beginning, Speaker Morgan took a different view of reform, requesting the Dine Policy Institute to prepare a report of ways in which Dine government could be revised to make it more compatible with the nation’s traditions, with several options for possible action. While the Institute was working on the project, the President and the Speaker communicated about initiating reform, signing a memorandum of agreement, on August 13, to seek comprehensive reform, a reform convention, and ultimately a referendum of the people.

The Dine Policy Institute of Dine college issued the *Navajo Nation Constitutional Feasibility and Reform Project* report, September 2, 2008, which received a very short initial discussion by the Navajo Nation Council during its October 20-24 session. The executive summary stated the following findings about the existing, nationally power centered, three branch, national government, which mirrors the U.S. national government. “The
The concept of Nation-statism and constitutionalism is inappropriate and ineffective as applied to the Navajo Nation. Decentralization of government needs to be thoroughly examined. The current government originates from Western political history and carries a contrasting experience from that of the Diné. This has created a political system supporting a ‘strong man’ which is historically incongruous. The Diné must rethink their government to reflect cultural values and norms. The Diné need to utilize new terminology when communicating governance ideas. We have adopted Western concepts of government that do not reflect our cultural knowledge. The prevailing institutions (norms and values) need to be addressed, understood, and deconstructed when examining governance and its implementation. The separation of powers is a problematic system - one codified on the basis of mistrust - creates a multitude of limitations. An implicit, non-codified separation of powers, based in the Diné concept of trust, adequately reflects traditional concepts of cooperation and integration. Conversely, the current system only works within a model of mistrust and does not foster efficiency or confidence. Judicial review is an essential component to regulate government.”

The report acknowledges that the current western structure has had some advantages, the main one being stability, providing for community peace, and bringing a consistency that can foster economic development. But the report found that economic development, while desirable, must be balanced with other values, and that the national government, in Window Rock, AZ, at times acted contrary to traditional values, and to the will and needs of the people. This was found to be occurring partly from Window Rock’s isolation, and the alien western values built into its structure, and partly because of the inefficiency and unwieldiness of its bureaucracy.

One of the authors of the report stated, “The utilization of nation-statist political and economic development has perverted our former institutions, forcing us to make stretched analogies between traditional governance and contemporary governance… a nation-state is a framework in which to implement new and (for the Navajo) foreign institutions, such as a centralized system of governance and social services. These institutions are not historic to Navajo society, which had functions and/or roles that served similar purposes, but in a dramatically different context and at a much smaller level. Hierarchies within historic Diné institutions, such as the family, clan and naataani, extended no more than a few levels. Whereas contemporary institutions such as the Navajo Nation’s government, police force and departments of social services have rigid and deep bureaucracies, creating multiple layers of hierarchies. Ultimately, the main problems with nation-statism for the Navajo Nation is the centralization of political authority, the creation of hierarchies, over bureaucratization and the emergence of class. Centralization of authority differs from the function of our historic political institutions, which were localized. This has led to much animosity toward Window Rock from more distant communities. The creation of hierarchies is divergent from the more egalitarian, role-based Navajo society of historic times. That is to say political position had function, not scopes of authority. Creating hierarchies creates dissonance within Navajo society, where responsibility to family and clan relatives was prioritized, but now must be nullified to meet the needs of large institutions. Of course the most frequently identified aspect of Navajo governance preventing ‘economic development’ (i.e., the development of a service economy) is the bureaucratic nature of tribal divisions designed to assist Navajo entrepreneurs. Removing bureaucracies through increased emphasis on local rule seems a necessary first step in the process. Lastly, the emergence of class has become a serious issue on the Navajo Nation. At present, there seems to be two broad classes, with subtle subdivisions found in each of these. The dominating class is the technocratic class, administrators within government services in Window Rock. The second class is everyone else, including: pastoralist, unemployed, the seasonally employed, service-sector employees and low-rank government officials. Often, the dominating class looks downtrodden on the rest of Navajo society, especially more rural folk whom they view as backward and uneducated. This has manifested also in recent efforts at government reform, in which the executive branch has attacked the legislative branch in an attempt to remove from influence representatives from distant communities and further centralize power in Window Rock. Nation-statism has created a crisis in institutions, with the Navajo Nation trying to replicate foreign hierarchal establishments under the false assumptions that these are needed for modernization.”
After an examination of the current Navajo government structure, and the idea of having a formal constitution, the report proposes four “Alternative Governance Models,” to provide a range of options of how best to apply traditional values to the needs of the Twenty-First Century. The traditional values focus on living in beauty, or in balance. This includes concern for the economic, social, familial, and environmental well-being of the Navajo Nation. As the author of the third model states the first of four principles (p. 53), “Clearly safeguarded by historical DinÉ was an acknowledged ownership of goods and products of labor (however Lockian that appears to be). But more importantly was respect for others use of land and goods delineated by its use.” This involved reciprocity, and a responsibility of those with more to help those with less, as is indicated by the third principle, below. Hence all the proposed models express concern for distributive justice. “Second, a respect for the moral order, that is in extreme cases they were moments of punitive measures meted out, but the rationale for those measures rested on a notion of restoring a sense of harmony among kin. Third, is a respect for the needs of others, to ensure that all needs of others were met as best as they could be by those who have. Fourth was an assurance of reciprocal security - that is one is assured that neighbors, often family, would be ready to protect against any encroachment, physical or spiritual. These four concepts appear to be the motivations of the historical DinÉ in their survival. Therefore, the four aspects include: rights and protection of property; respect and assurance of civil order; freedom to wealth with responsibilities; and, security from physical and spiritual dangers. Thus a government structure must be able to protect and safeguard these particular traditions of DinÉ, while also balancing and fulfilling its basic core function.” Other balances also needed to be preserved and restored, according to tradition, most notably between male and female genders, a point directly addressed in two of the models. The report affirms the current functioning of the Navajo court system, with none of the proposals suggesting changing the judiciary. All of the models propose the need for education to decolonize the thinking of those in government and other institutions, and the people in general.

The report is also interesting in reflecting the general principles of Indigenous government, discussed above, that, for the most part, are shared across North America. One aspect of this is that, except for the first option, the proposals shine light on the impact that contact with Native people had on the political thinking of the Europeans who colonized what became the United States, as the second through fourth options, have a remarkable similarity to the first government the United States developed in the Articles of Confederations. The Articles granted all of the national government’s limited authority to its legislature, which elected a weak executive committee to see to implementation of legislation and administration, while many of the newly independent states at that time also functioned with strong legislatures and weak governors.

The Four Options for Revising Navajo Government

The four options put forth in the report range from adjusting the current system of government, to totally changing it to approach returning to historically locally based governance. The first is a status quo model that emphasizes little change, but alludes to efficiency in government. It would (p. 41) streamline bureaucracy, improving intergovernmental relationships. “These possible changes, not only should be within the system, but also as a social movement to deconstruct the existing cultural norms among the people and their reliance on the bureaucratic system.” This option calls for discussing whether (and if so how, and to what extent) privatization of collectively held land, as a means of promoting wealth generation, would be consistent with Navajo values. This approach asserts the need to move much further with decentralization, “Currently, and in all reality, the central Navajo government holds all real power with little emphasis placed on local governance (as seen with the dismal results of the Local Governance Act). Policy may be formulated which would emphasize local governance without sacrificing instability in the central government.”

The second is a bicameral parliamentary model stressing the integration and cooperation of a traditional and legislative body to form and execute laws, while decentralizing power by entrusting the Navajo people with the approval of all laws. The current model would be changed by eliminating the current executive branch, and replacing it with an executive headed by a prime minister selected by the Navajo Council. The executive would then appoint a cabinet approved by the Council. Elections for the Council would be undertaken with a runoff
election between the top two vote receivers in the initial voting. Terms would be for six years, with the possibility of running again for an immediate two year term. After the eight years, a council member would have to wait four years before running again, as would a person who was not elected to a second two year term, after her/his initial six years in office. To maintain male-female balance, half the elected delegates would be men, and half women, with a lottery determining which chapters would initially elect representatives of each gender. On completion of each six or eight year service, the gender of the chapter representative would switch. The second house would be a house of elders, appointed for life by the executive, whose function would be to advise the government to assist its acting consistently with Navajo values, and who would have no formal power. All laws passed by the Council would be taken to the local chapters for approval. Effective channels would need to be constructed between the chapters and the Council to maximize political stability. Education of the populace and those in government, and the bureaucracy would be necessary to decolonize thinking and debureaucratize administration. This model would be developed over 15 years.

The Third, Dialectical Option

Third is a “dialectical model based in Navajo political philosophy” stressing the complete integration of Dinë thinking as the premise behind all institutions in the governance system, and critically calling into question each aspect of politics, deconstructed and succeeded by Navajo reasoning. Underlying this approach are four principles (pp. 50-51). The theory of representation requires full participation, open to all, with “the peoples’ voice open to all aspects.” “The peoples’ will is a unified will that must be represented” in “a reciprocal arrangement that informs the relationship between representative and constituent.” Thus “a leader who represents perfectly the will of the people is established.” The theory of rights and duties, involving reciprocity and equity holds “there are certain rights, expectations, and duties that one can claim, demand and expect, while other things there is an obligation involved. Thus there is a theory of rights of access to the bounty of Nahasdzáan Nihíma and Nihiit’aa Yádilhił.” Notions of property begin with an implicit recognition or respect of the ownership of others, songs, prayers, stories, material goods, and so forth. Yet, the notion of property here is not one that implies exclusive ownership where one is free to do as she pleases. Rather this concept of property, while under the individual use of one person is recognized as that, but also understood that it can be understood as communal property if certain criteria are fulfilled, such as familial criteria.” The theory of the economic order “was that of constrained capitalism, where the onus of wealth was stressed. That is those who accumulated much were expected to be concerned and giving with their wealth to those who did not have much. This is a derivative of kíÉ, with the understanding that the knowledge and practice brings about both a spirit of constrained development, innovation, while having the struggles of the people at the fore front of any decision.”

“The core functions of government derived from the Dinë perspective include concern for the economic, social, familial, and environmental well-being of the Navajo Nation. Each of these areas corresponds to traditional notions of balance. (p. 53)” “The purposes of the Navajo Nation are the protection and development of the individual and respect for the dignity of the individual, the democratic exercise of the will of the people, the building of a just and peace-loving society, the furtherance of the prosperity and welfare of the people and guaranteeing of the Fulfillment of the principles, rights, and duties of the Navajo Nation. Education and work are the fundamental processes for guaranteeing these purposes. The purpose of the Navajo Nation is to establish hozhoo [beauty or balance]. Hozhoo takes many forms in its economic, social, governmental, economic, political, educational, and environmental functions. Therefore the government must be able to provide effective governmental services to the people and to meet their dynamic needs. (p. 55)” This requires a government based upon trust.

“To do so, there must a separation of powers based, not on the logic of distrust, but rather on the logic of trust, implicit trust of the institution and the people who occupy those institutions. This trust is extended so long as the people are able to give that trust status by upholding it through the continued practice of kíÉ. Thus the separation of powers must be an implicit shared power, not a legally bound separation of powers. (pp. 55-56)” “Supervisory committees are needed to supervise the agencies and regulatory bodies; these oversight committees
must be derived from the local levels. That is, a more democratic regime, than a republican regime. A single elected leader to serve as the voice of the nation, but not to retain much power, power to sign bills into law. Consistent with the Navajo Thinking, there must be a check of power, but not a codified separation of powers. (p. 56)"

“There should be a check on the powers of the leader - by the Council of Elders, who have veto authority over the leader and the Council of the People; however, the Courts of Nahata have check on the powers of the leader, the Council of Elders, and the Council of the People. The leader will have two assistants - a Hozhoojii and HashkejiiNataanii - these are appointed by the Council of Elders, with nomination from the leader, but confirmed by the Council of the People. The Council of Elders consist of 2 individuals from each agency - one Hozhoojii and one Hashkejii - these are appointed and approved by district, agency, and confirmed by the Leader. The Council of the People consists of elected officials from the various electoral districts of the Navajo Nation. The Council of the People has non-voting status for community groups and NGOs, which are appointed by the chapter, districts, and agencies. These people are popularly elected. The Council of the People’s acts are then checked by the chapters, the districts, and the agencies. (p. 56). Ultimately these reforms must be undertaken as a grassroots work, redesigning governance over 12 years, beginning at the chapter level and working up.

The Fourth, Decentralized Option

The fourth proposal is a decentralization model stressing national and community issues with greater empowerment to social subgroups and agencies. It outlines a government that reflects more fully traditional and customary laws and norms and replaces the President with an 11 member Executive Board. The Council remains nearly as-is, with the exception of adding 12 non-voting delegates specifically dedicated to certain social subgroups and non-profit organizations. The decentralization will address the gender issue by balancing the men, predominately in positions in the central government, with the women who are the preponderance of leaders in chapters and the growing numbers of nongovernmental organizations. “Our reasoning for this transition is based on Navajo history and current social behavior. The Navajo Nation historically resembled a parliamentary system and had decentralized political units. We believe that our proposed model would move us back in this direction…. Therefore, we have established four major steps to move our current system of governance from a presidential model to something more like the historic naachid. These steps are: 1) moderate the concentration of power in the executive branch; 2) restructure agency councils to balance power between legislative and chapter house members; 3) increase the power of the agency councils and 4) create new mechanisms through which nongovernmental organizations can influence formal governmental processes. (p. 63)"

“We would replace the Office of President and Vice President with an 11 person Executive Board, comprised of five female members, five male members, and the Navajo Nation Speaker who is the rotating chair. The members are elected, two from each of the five agencies, whereas the Speaker is a member of the Navajo Nation Council and therefore represents the interests of both the legislative branch and his or her particular community. Though the Speaker is a member of the 11 person Executive Board, he or she does not have ultimate authority over the rest of the council and therefore is a minor and not controlling member of it…. Secondly, the Agencies would gain more autonomy than what they have now. Each Agency addresses different concerns due to the surrounding topography. Therefore, the chapters would address their concerns at Agency Council, and the Agencies would have more autonomy and more representation since they have elected representatives on the Executive Board.

“Thirdly, the 88 Delegates would be elected in the same fashion as they are elected today... However, the major difference of the Legislative Branch would be the 12 Non-Voting Members of the Council. So, in total the Council would consist of 100 members. The Non-Voting Members would represent the non-profit sector on the Navajo Nation and the youth of the Nation. Since the youth population is growing at an astonishing rate and the role of women is needed, the implementation of the Non-Voting Members of Council will help eliminate some of the gender and age discrepancies. Lastly, with the removal of the entire Executive Branch, the Committees,
Commissions and Divisions would have to be restructured. Therefore, we put into place four Committees: the Social Committee, the Economic Committee, the Families Committee and the Environmental Committee. Under each Committee, we placed the appropriate Program or Division. For example, under the Environmental Committee, we place the Division of Natural Resources, the Navajo Environmental Protection Agency and the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission. Each Committee would consist of 12 members, which would include ten Delegates, and 2 Non-Voting Members of the Council. The Executive Board would appoint the Committee Members. (pp 65-66)” Implementation is recommended to take three years.

Outcome of the 2008-09 Navajo Government Reform Debate

The 2008-09 proposed reforms were made in the context of political wrangling between the Speaker of the Council and the President of Navajo, and the 4 options of the Dine Policy Institute’s 2008 recommendations were never seriously debated by the Council. As of February, 2010, the only attempt at reform, aside, from the two measures proposed by the President, since the end of 2008, a rather minor one, failed to attain the 59 vote supper majority necessary to amend the Tribal Code. The proposal, sponsored by Speaker Morgan, would have given the chief legislative counsel authority to write and release legal opinions, independent of the Attorney General, head of the Department of Justice. I also would have empowered the Office of Legislative Counsel to issue notices and subpoenas on behalf of the council and its committees.

However, in December 2009, the Navajo citizens voted to approve the President’s proposal, reducing the size of the Navajo Nation Council from eighty-eight Delegates to twenty-four. Subsequently, the Navajo Nation Supreme Court voided a provision that would have permitted the President of the Navajo Nation to develop and approve a standing committee and legislative branch reorganization plan if the Council failed to do so by August 15, 2009, holding that “reorganization is essentially a political and management decision that should be left to the legislative branch.” The Court ordered that “The 22nd Navajo Nation Council shall prioritize, develop and approve the reorganization plans as an initial order of business.”

The 2009-11 Navajo Nation Council Reorganization and Dine Policy Institute’s 2010 “Recommendations for Re-Structuring The Navajo Nation Council,” With Its Larger Implications

The pending reduction in the size of the Council from 88 to 24 members by the time of its pending meeting on January 11, 2011, led to the Dine Policy Institute developing a report, “Recommendations for Re-Structuring The Navajo Nation Council,” presenting the council with three options for restructuring its committee system “to accommodate the size of the reduced Council. This re-structuring requires not only a detailed assessment of the Committee-system, but also the impacts the reduced Council will have on the interactions between the Legislative and Executive Branch, as well as the impact on the chapters. Each of these committees has oversight authority over divisions, departments, programs, and commissions of the Navajo Nation Executive, Judicial and Legislative Branch (p 4).” The three options were: 1. Traditional Navajo Leadership, 2. Committee of the Whole, and 3. Consolidation Based on Policy Scope (p. 5). The report analyzed the proposed alternatives in terms of representation of the people, financial cost, and efficiency and quality of the legislative process.

The report found that the system of 12 committees under the 88 member council would no longer be viable in the new 24 member council, in part because the Fundamental Law required that required “Each delegate to the Navajo Nation Council shall be appointed to no more than one standing committee.....” , while statutory law requires that a quorum of five be present before a committee acts, and the Navajo Nation Code requires that at least one member of each committee “shall be from each of the five agencies,” requiring committees to be comprised of at least five Delegates (p. 10). Thus the council would have to either operate under a committee of the whole (option 2), or reduce the number of committees (option 3), which the report proposed could be accomplished efficiently by consolidating the 12 committees of the 84 member council into 4 new committees, placing old committees with related jurisdiction together in the new committees.
The reported noted that,

The traditional process of Naa Bik’í Yáti’ when dealing with the Naayéé’ (negative forces) addresses five principles of good governance, namely: (1) Voice and Legitimization; a process of carrying out popular will, that encourages and allows participation and promotes consensus decision making. Legitimacy is dependent on leadership serving the people, if this relationship is not fulfilled, the people can utilize their voice to de-legitimize the leadership.

(2) Nahat’á; a strategic vision to address the Naayéé’, with the long-term development of the Navajo People in mind. Good Navajo governance can keep Naayéé’, such as hunger and poverty, under control with strategic planning.

(3) Performance; Good Navajo governance listens to the needs and desires of the people and responds with effectiveness and efficiency.

(4) Accountability; to the public and other governmental entities using transparent process that promotes the free flow of information. Good Navajo governance is responsible to the public by being fair, honest and open. Leadership should not mislead the public in their decisionmaking.

(5) Fairness; equity and equality for all and strict observance of the rule of law and the mandates of the Higher Law. Leaders, and anyone else for that matter, cannot satisfy their own personal sense of justice. Fairness, Equity, and Equality should be maintained through leadership (p. 8).

The report pointed out that the Fundamental Laws of the Dine enacted by the Council follow the traditional principles of good government:

It is the right and freedom of the Diné to choose leaders of their choice; leaders who will communicate with the people for guidance; leaders who will use their experience and wisdom to always act in the best interest of the people; and leaders who will ensure the rights and freedoms of the generations yet to come; and

All leaders chosen by the Diné are to carry out their duties and responsibilities in a moral and legal manner in representing the people and the government; the people’s trust and confidence in the leaders and the continued status of a leader are dependent upon adherence to the values and principles of Diné bi beenahazáanii[sic]; and,

The leader(s) of the Legislative Branch…shall enact policies and laws to address the immediate and future needs… of the people (p. 10).

Recommendation 1, The Traditional Leadership Model

The report showed that, while some Dine today question whether traditional Dine governance principles are applicable in the current era, the traditional principles of good Dine government can be attained quite practically in the first alternative, the Traditional Leadership proposal (pp. 22-26), by having legislators go back and forth between local meetings with constituents and formal, western style, council meetings. Analysis of the workload found that the council could operate effectively meeting once a month in a five day session, “limited to enacting statutes, appropriating funds, and doing strictly legislative business (p. 22).” The rest of the time committee members could engage in a variety of meetings with constituents carrying out the traditional practice of the Naa Bik’í Yáti’ session, providing the people the opportunity to “talk things out” with their leaders in a dialogue. “good Navajo governance. The most important responsibilities of a Delegate are to make time and to listen. To make government participation meaningful the voice of the public is given priority. Through Naa Bik’í Yáti’ Delegates
develop a strategic vision and perspective on long-term goals. If there is anywhere in the government process for genuine responsiveness, it is through Naa Bik’í Yáti’. The concerns of the people are then carried to the committees. This gives a true sense of the peoples’ concerns to the Delegates. This way, the Delegates can legislate accordingly. Delegates now must do their homework. The issues of THE PEOPLE can be taken forward onto the formal committee and council floor (23).”

With the council operating under either a committee of the whole, or a smaller number of committees, after initially meeting with the people to develop an understanding of general policy needs, the delegates would return to the council to work out detailed legislative proposals, that would then be carried back to the people at local meetings before being voted on by the council. As the back and forth process would be on going, if the people were unhappy with the legislation that was produced by the council, or experience or changing circumstances brought people to want the legislation revised, the continual dialoging process would provide ongoing public input for amendment statutes as needed.

Under any of the three proposals, the reduced size of the council would require that there be an increase in legislative support staff if the volume and quality of council work were to be maintained, perhaps adding 53 additional staffers, thus the financial savings achieved by reducing the number of council members would be substantially reduced.

The three proposals are not mutually exclusive. As indicated, the traditional recommendation can be carried out with either a committee of the whole system or a smaller committee system, and continuing the previous non-traditional system can operate with either committee system. By comparison, the committee of the whole system is more evenly representative of the people, but has less specialization and member expertise than the multiple committee system. But a mix is possible, with a committee of the whole with sub committees (or the council sometimes meeting in committee of the whole and some times in specialized committees, or some similar arrangement). In 2011 the Navajo Nation Council opted to continue operating non-traditionally, adopting a modified committee of the whole system. That is not necessarily final, and indeed proposals for reform continued to be discussed at Navajo Nation including within its government, ranging from less participatory ideas – such as returning to the chairman form of government more or less as existed under MacDonald, to a range of more traditionally democratic suggestions along the lines of proposals in the two Dine Policy Institute reports discussed in this paper.

Feasibility of the Traditional Leadership Proposal

The Institute’s analysis of the feasibility of an arrangement along the lines of the Traditional Leadership Recommendation is supported by comparative examination of similar arrangements. Historically, as shown above, the Naachid, though informal, was able to facilitate inter-band agreements among the Navajo, and the large Huron, as well as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Muscogee confederacies all functioned quite well under similar arrangements with inclusive participatory discussion within and between the various levels of their nations. In current times, on a much smaller scale, many Native Alaska and British Columbia villages seem to do reasonably well with having adapted the participatory Baha’i “consultation” method of decision making. On a larger scale, the use of ILIS by the Comanche, with participatory strategic planning on the local community and tribal levels, though different in form, was similar in principle to the Dine Traditional Leadership Recommendation, and functioned quite successfully so long as it was used by the tribe.

It should be noted that upon moving to a participatory form of government and economy, beginning around 1950 until the step by step demise of its liberal period starting in the mid-1970s, Yugoslavia operated its government and all but the smallest businesses using similar participatory principles, requiring legislators at every level to discuss annual budgets and major proposals with voters at meetings across their districts between the time of proposal and final voting, while economic enterprises functioned as cooperatives under worker self-management. While the system was less democratic in practice than in theory as one moved upward from the local
to the national level, because as one move further and further beyond the local level the leadership of the oligarchic (but not totalitarian) League of Communists increasingly was also the leadership of other major organizations, and – unlike that of the Dine – most of the cultures of Yugoslavia did not have democratic traditions, for a number of years it was able to function quite well on a considerably larger scale, and in a much more diverse and complex socio-economic-political system, than that of any American Indian nation.\textsuperscript{15}

The 2016 Council Consideration and Dine Policy Institute Reports

In early 2016, the Navajo Nation Council acted over concerns that the chapters, and the move to devolve functions to them, had not been proceeding well. The council passed, but the President vetoed, a bill that would combine the 110 Navajo Nation local government chapters into 24 regional governments, coterminous with the 24 Navajo Nation Council districts. The Dine College, Dine Policy Institute (DPI) produced a pair of public reports critiquing the proposed move of Navajo local government from chapter government to regional government ("regionalization"), analyzing the problems of the 110 chapters, and proposing solutions to the problems while maintaining the existing chapters. The following are excerpts from the first report by Andrew Curley, M.S., and Michael Parrish, B.A., "Local governance and reform: a conceptual critique of regionalization and the Title 26 Taskforce," May 2016, http://www.dinecollege.edu/institutes/DPI/Docs/DPI_v2LocalGovernance_Title26.pdf.

I. Intro

Since before the Navajo Nation tribal system was put into place in 1937, Navajo people have relied on local authority to determine our own affairs. Reliance on local authority is not just a political ideal, but also a cultural staple. For 96 years we have had chapter houses. They are a part of how we think about government today. But they are failing. Many in our community have left the reservation and work in cities far from the reservations. This is a larger systemic problem. In many ways these people are economic refugees, unable to find meaningful work in the reservation. The Local Governance Act (LGA) was legislation designed to reverse the decline of local governance and empower communities to make their own decisions. But it is failing. LGA has been poorly implemented since its passage in 1998. Not nearly enough chapters have gained 'chapter certification' and even those that are certified struggle to manage their own affairs. Many of the problems that chapter houses face are rooted in the conduct of the central tribal government and not the chapter houses themselves. The fact that land title is so unclear creates a huge problem for local communities. But some problems are found in the governance of chapters, including corruption and infighting, in a word, politics. We should not pretend that these problems would instantly be solved through regionalization.\textsuperscript{1} It is the stuff of the 'local' and deeply rooted in the community.

We can work on areas where the central government might allow for more meaningful local control. In the end we find the proposed regionalization elusive in meaning and too dramatic of a change without justification. Our surveys among random Navajo people show most people do not understand it and oppose it. What we might do instead is consider how different types of chapters can have different kinds of authorities redistributed to them based on their unique characteristics. We already have an example of this in the Kayenta Township model and many of its features can be replicated in areas with large populations and many small businesses, large communities with a sales tax base in other words. For the rest of the Navajo Nation, we should think about land reform before we initiate widespread regionalization. Few of the goals of regionalization can be accomplished if land remains stagnant and with contested or unclear boundaries. Considering the successes and failures of Title 26 is important. But let us not adopt poorly considered reforms. This report is a preliminary analysis and critique of regionalization as it has been proposed and presented to the Navajo people.
IV. Regionalization: a critique

It is hard to properly critique the regionalization proposal as it is still lacking critical details. But from all available information there is a general idea of concentrating the work and authorities of Chapter Houses into regional centers. How this is supposed to be accomplished is left vague. There are no concrete plans of where the regional centers will be located, how they will be staffed, what will be the central government’s authority over them vis-à-vis the authority of local governments, etc. Nevertheless, the Diné Policy Institute (DPI) intends to consider the proposal in earnest. Here we speculate (again, lacking critical details) about the plan’s potential benefits and shortfalls.

Benefits
1. Utilities-of-scale

The main benefit of the regionalization effort is the scale at which the tribe can allocate resources intended for tribal residences. As tribal residences receive access to resources from the Navajo Nation through their chapter and agency affiliation, any change in the chapter system will inevitably impact all residences and the allocation of all tribal services (e.g., scholarships, power lines, bathroom extensions, water lines, road grading, electrical wiring for the house, etc.). Members of the Title 26 Taskforce argue that regionalization will improve these services in that it will concentrate more monies into regional centers allowing these regional centers to hire better qualified peoples with professional and technical training.

2. Coherence in policy implementation

In concentrating resources in regional centers instead of chapter houses, there will be better coherence in the implementation of tribal policy. At present, the only policy the Title 26 Taskforce has identified is land-use policy (i.e., regional land planning.) The Navajo Nation will only coordinate with 22 regional governments instead of 110 sub-political units. In theory, this will improve the coordination of development and planning between regional centers and Window Rock.

3. Regional Foci

Regionalization allows for something unprecedented in recent Navajo history, the possibility for coordinated regional planning. To be clear, a region is a larger geographical area than a chapter house and includes diversity of peoples, resources, and issues. In practice there are regional governments in the agency councils comprised of elected chapter house officials and council delegates. But these agency councils lack any real political authority in Window Rock and are only used for board nominations and supporting or opposing resolutions of the Navajo Nation Council. Regionalization distributes real political and legal power to regional governing authorities, i.e., regional centers that in turn use this authority for real policy and development projects that reflect the unique conditions of their region. For example, a regional unit near Kayenta might build upon the existing taxing authority of the Kayenta Township and expand taxes onto large industries like Peabody Coal. With regionalization, projects that involve large amounts of land can be better coordinated. Areas that are good for wind power or solar power development might avoid the type of conflicts between local and national authority that killed the proposed Cameron wind power initiative for example. Different regions might be identified for very kinds of development across the reservation.

4. Balancing large and small communities

Regionalization will allow for a regional center to distribute the wealth of a region more evenly across communities. Currently, the LGA allows for all taxed revenues to stay at the local chapter. This
has the potential of creating disparities between large communities and smaller communities, or communities located in areas with a lot of business development such as Tuba City, Kayenta, Dilkon, Chinle, Shiprock, Window Rock, and Crownpoint and smaller, more isolated communities. Currently the Navajo Nation distributes funds to chapters based on a standard dollar amount that is equal for all chapters and a second allocation of monies based on the chapter house’s size. Regionalization has the potential to more equitably distribute these monies across a region, alleviating differences between poorer and richer, larger and smaller chapters. For example, in one proposed region, St. Michael’s tax base and resources would be better allocated with smaller chapters such as neighboring Oak Springs.

Shortcomings

1. Lack of planning

The lack of a clear set of recommendations for the Navajo people to consider with an issue this important is disappointing in 2016 when we have many capable and qualified Navajo people who can put together a clear and coherent recommendations. We do not know specifically how the Title 26 Task Force plans on removing the authority of chapter house governments and placing them in regional centers, what these regional centers will look like, and how soon they will be staffed once they are created. After 18 years of LGA, we need a clearer vision of how this transition will be implemented.

2. Loss of democracy

Regionalization will result in the loss of local democracy. In the elimination of chapter officials for one at-large representative, community members will lose the chapter meeting as a forum to discuss and decide on local affairs. Although imperfect, chapter house meetings are a cultural staple of the Navajo political process and one that cannot be replaced in technocratic governance represented in the regional centers. It is a species of politics unique to the Navajo Nation. Even the reforms in Title 26, the recommended ‘Council of Nahata’ in which community meetings are replaced with elected councils, is regularly criticized.

3. Limited access

Aside from the lack of political access, the new regional centers will make it more difficult for community members to access tribal resources. They will have to travel many more miles to fill-out paperwork, attend meetings, or pick-up benefits and resources. This problem will become more acute during periods of bad weather when roads are more difficult to transverse. There is also an inequity in geography in regionalization. Communities who house regional centers nearby will have easier and more frequent interactions with their government than more remote communities. This may impact the political priorities of districts.

4. No plan for chapter house facilities

This repeats the lack of planning in the proposed regionalization, but there is nothing published about what happens to chapter houses after regionalization. How does this local infrastructure continue to play a role in Navajo social and political life? When asked about this, advocates of regionalization claim that the chapter houses will still exist and function, but something akin to a community center rather than site of politics. How will funds continue to be allocated to keep these facilities operating after Title 26 is repealed? Will there be an administrative staff in these chapter houses, or will these positions disappear? In a worse case scenario, these chapter house buildings will remain unused and fall apart.
On power point slides and in official presentations, members of the Title 26 Taskforce will emphasize: a) a community’s expanded tax base, the regionalization of budgets, improve delivery of services, regional land use planning, regional infrastructure projects, and a reduction in the misuse of funds. But without clear details and plans on how land reform and taxing will be done, this is at best wishful thinking. It is a ‘if you build it they will come’ understanding of government reform that offsets critical issues, such as the status of the land and local powers to tax, for some future decision makers to decide upon. The problem with this approach is unless you actually offer solutions to these issues little will change. Without land reform or a clear understanding of what local authorities are, we cannot honestly claim any of the benefits of regionalization that the Title 26 Taskforce has promotes.

VII. Conclusion

The issue of local authority for communities in the Navajo Nation is of special importance moving into the 21st Century. Change is needed. The Title 26 Taskforce has shown that the Local Governance Act has not worked out as it was intended. They show that in its 18-year history, only 43 chapters have successfully become “certified” chapters. But rather than look at the law, the Title 26 Taskforce broadened the question to consider the culture of chapter governance, demographics, and regional planning. These in themselves are exciting topics of conversation, but do not relate directly to the question of ‘why is Title 26 not working’ based on the simple observation that only 43 out of 110 chapters are certified. But if we put the issue another way, we can say, 40% of Navajo chapter houses operate successfully under Title 26 and these proposed reforms would upend that system.

What would work is a sensible investigation of the Navajo Nation Chapter House system. We need more research to identify the problems, including in-depth interviews with chapter house employees, community members, and elected officials. This report examined the work and proposals, as we understand them, of the Title 26 Taskforce and pointed out possible benefits and shortcomings of the proposed reform. We also surveyed a total of 110 members of the Navajo Nation and asked them how much they knew about the proposed Title 26 reforms and whether or not they supported these changes. Our research showed unambiguously that most people are not aware of the research and that they generally disagree with regionalization. This does not mean it is a bad idea in itself, but at this point in time most people are opposed to it. Although our sample was limited, we believe that our respondent’s represented a general attitude that would be found across the Navajo Nation.

In the end we recommended the expansion of the Kayenta Township model as an immediate policy solution for larger Navajo communities such as Chinle, Shiprock, Ft. Defiance, Crownpoint, etc. We see that the township model has over thirty years of practice and has effectively decentralized important authorities to the local community while protecting the larger Navajo Nation’s responsibility of oversight. In Table 1 we identified core differences between the three different models for “local governance,” the township model to the proposed regionalization. Second, more research has to be done on land reform in the Navajo Nation before any meaningful action on local governance can be implemented. This is research the Diné Policy Institute has already initiated in order to gain more meaningful insight into how both our local and national governments can be reformed to better serve the Navajo people.

End Note:
‘Regionalization’ is the central proposal to emerge from the Title 26 Taskforce, and ad hoc organization among members of different entities in the tribal government, such as the Navajo Nation Land Department and the Office of Navajo Government Development. Their central task is to critically examine the Local Governance Act of 1998 (LGA) and offer recommendations to improve its effectiveness.

Work Cited:
Wilkins, David E. 2013. The Navajo political experience.
Yazzie, Robert, Moroni Benally, Andrew Curley. 2008. 'Navajo Nation Constitutional Feasibility and Government Reform Project'.
Young, Robert W. 1978. A political history of the Navajo tribe (Navajo Community College Press)."


The report's analysis and conclusions are as follows:

5. Discussion

Development” is a central goal of the tribal government today. This is understood as creating jobs and business in the reservation that would lift most of our communities out of poverty. As we learned in our archival research, the Local Governance Act of 1998 (LGA) passed with the idea of creating the political conditions for business development in the local community. As we wrote in our last report on regionalization, this law was part of a larger milieu of government reforms during the 1990s and early 2000s that neoliberalized tribal governance and engendered an auditing culture in how we spend money in the reservation (Curley and Parrish 2016).

But our research has identified structural flaws in the LGA. It does not adequately reform the 164-process for local communities. Without improving how the central government distributes power downward, any reform will likely replicate the same problems. The proposed 'regionalization' (proposal a generous description) does not identify how it would improve the 164-process for local governing authorities. Rather, the referendum language that is floated through the Navajo Nation Council simply gives the Navajo Nation Council a mandate to eliminate chapter house governments and replace them with regional centers. If the 164-process is not currently part of the conversation, how will we guarantee
it will be addressed in the future? A proposal giving the Navajo Nation authority to remedy the problem is both redundant and distracting. Rather than talk about the problems inherent in how are laws are set up concerning local governments, we are talking about a referendum about whether or not to give the council authority to fix unidentified problems in local governance, authority that the Navajo Nation Council already has but apparently is unsure to use.

We also identified a problem with human capital in local governance, or the skill sets, commitment, and institutional knowledge employees bring to the community. The FMS is highly technical and cumbersome. The 164-process and hiring rules and regulations by the Department of Personnel Management is also a particular knowledge set Community Service Coordinators, elected officials, and Account Maintenance Specialists should know. With low pay, demanding work environments, and regular scrutiny, it is hard for communities to maintain qualified people in these positions. This is another rational for regionalization. It is argued that regional centers will improve the administration of local governance by raising salaries and removing employees from direct community oversight. This effect is likely in our estimation. But it will increase the costs of local government, make it less accountable to the community, and ultimately diminish local democracy by centralizing local authority into regional centers.

But we found that some chapter governments had circumvented Navajo Nation law to create manageable organizations to carry out projects and proposals of the community. These alternative organizations are not-for-profits and many chapter governments currently use them. Not-for-profits have limitations, but it proves that some communities are more comfortable with the laws that administer not-for-profits than the ones that oversee chapter governments. It is not hard to imagine the appeal. With not-for-profits, you are given the burden of doubt to organize and spend money lawfully without three months of auditing before you could exercise the powers of a not-for-profit. But not-for-profits are not guaranteed a source of money as chapter house are, and the reason for the extensive auditing has to do with the amount of money at stake in distributing power to the local communities. But we know from experience that the LGA auditing structure is cumbersome and now heavily criticized. We can amend these laws and address the concerns of the

Our surveys found that most chapter officials and administrators are women. Government reform since 1990 is patriarchal, done by men and benefiting men in the reservation. Since council reduction in 2009, the number of women delegates has declined from a few to a single female delegate on the entire council over the past eight years. Regionalization might have the same impact on women’s participation in Navajo governance. Our randomized surveys found that nearly 80% of elected and non-elected chapter officials and administrators are women. Regional centers might proportionally hire as many women per the positions available, but the total number of positions available will inevitably decline and many women leaders in our communities will no longer have a formal role in Navajo politics.

Additionally, chapter house work is a form of work in the reservation. Women have fewer choices in skilled labor than men. Coalmines, construction, and agricultural – the development priorities of the Navajo Nation – have become the purview of the Navajo male workforce. Women are often encouraged to work in the service economy, such as gas stations and food centers, or in education as teachers and administrators. Chapter governance is a good source of work for skilled women leaders who live in the community and are trying to improve it.

We also found that most of the chapter labor force has some college education. This shows that chapter government and management is more educated than we sometimes assume. It is also part of a larger trend of Navajo people becoming more educated. Indigenous women are more likely to obtain a college degree than men. With woman comprising 80% of chapter governance, it is not surprising that 70% of the chapter workforce has college education. Regionalization might not improve this statistic.
We are unsure because we do not have a proposal we can look at that outlined the kind of positions and qualifications that regional centers will offer. In any event, there is nothing preventing the Navajo Nation Council from amending Title 26 to address the qualifications of chapter managers and officials. You do not need a regional center to discuss the qualifications of local leaders and administrators. Instead, we are told that we need to pass a referendum giving the Navajo Nation Council permission to eliminate chapter houses in order to talk about what kind of positions we want in the local community to oversee the distribution of money and resources.

Finally, we found that the central priority of chapter officials is economic development. As stated earlier, this is understandable. Communities are no longer reliant on subsistent agriculture and livestock. We are incorporated into a cash economy. We need sources of jobs and revenues. Communities are feeling the pinch of poverty. But underdevelopment might not be something chapter house governments can control. We know from the history of chapter houses that they were started as agricultural cooperatives and meant to assist an entirely different kind of economy in the reservation. Perhaps intuitively the Title 26 Taskforce has a point. Maybe the sense is that chapter houses are outdated. This might be why Title 26 was passed in the first place, to transform the role of chapter houses from community governing structures over land and livestock to business development. More research needs to be done on the local impacts on development Title 26 has impacted. But we know the certification process is cumbersome and frustrating. And communities do not feel that the current laws empower them enough. It is for these reasons we offer the following recommendations.

6. Recommendations

In these areas, the relationship between the chapter house and the Navajo Nation central government might be improved. Amartya Sen made a distinction between economic growth and development (Wilber 1988). The Navajo Nation’s pursuit of economic development focused heavily on business development and the means of creating jobs, increasing income, and bringing in revenue. But for Sen’s Conception, development should be about building the capacity of individuals within the economy. Navajo economic development’s end goal would be to increase the capacity of the individuals within the tribe.

Yet, business growth was the focus of the Navajo Nation’s economic development agenda, this overshadowed other necessary steps for development. The core of LGA was to increase political authority of chapter house governments. But the LGA certification process is long and tedious which hinders chapter houses from developing their political authority; only 45 chapters are certified out of 110. This shows that LGA does not fit with the current capacity of tribal governments although this capacity is always increasing. It is not a failure of chapter house officials and administrators to implement LGA, but a failure in the design of the law. Rather than work with the law, our elected lawmakers propose a referendum on eliminating chapter house governments entirely with consequences and problems they refuse to even consider at this time.

Rather than propose eliminating chapter houses entirely, the Navajo Nation should do the following: 1) Lawmakers should amend the SAS-164 process or rework the law entirely to allow chapter house governments the same kind of local spending and fundraising authorities the state and federal governments allow them in not-for-profit organizations. It is contradictory to say chapter governments have the power to enter into contracts with outside organizations yet still require them to get approval from a cascade of bureaucratic oversight in Window Rock. 2) The hiring of Community Service Coordinators (CSCs) should be delegated to chapter house leadership. CSCs should be treated as political appointees and not subject to the review process of the Department of Personal Management. This would allow chapters to have more control over who they hire and fire in these positions. It would also tie the CSCs oversight directly to the chapter for which they work and not Window Rock. 3) The Division of Community Development should provide specialize support toward LGA-certified chapters
to help them develop ordinances related to tax and business site leasing that conform to Navajo Nation laws.

LGA was supposed to empower local communities but it focused too narrowly on laws relating to business development and failed to consider how Navajo Nation institutions might help to build the of chapter houses as each community negotiates a transition from a livestock based economy to a wage-labor one. Chapter houses provide a closer reflection of traditional forms of Navajo governance based in the local, but they are also vulnerable to complete subordination to the central government or to serve as a beachhead for the neoliberalization of the Navajo Nation economy.

Increased powers means increased responsibility. For this reason the Navajo Nation central government has been fearful of chapters. They fear corruption, mismanagement, or poor decision making that puts the entire Navajo Nation at risk at the site of the local. But all of these problems and more exist in the power of the central government and yet we do not call for more federal oversight. At core, we cannot reform laws enough to get the results we want. We need commitment and dedication from people on the ground and in the central government. At the end of the day our institutions are comprised of members of a small, tightly woven community. We might be from different parts of the reservation, but we are tied to the entirety of the land. Capacity building is key. We need to invest in ourselves, not rearrange deck chairs on a ship that is off course. 4) The Navajo people needs to reject all proposed referendums that give the power of government reform to a few actors in Window Rock, i.e., 'regionalization.'

The executive summary of the report (http://www.dinecollege.edu/institutes/DPI/Docs/2016-09%20LGA_FINAL.pdf) stated:

Local Governance Act was meant to empower chapterhouse governments with legal authority to pursue business development. 20 years later, we have found that chapter houses are not thriving as well as the progenitors thought; only 45 of 110 are certified. With the proposal of regionalization, Dine Policy Institute researched Title 26 to better understand the reality of chapter house governance.

Our findings suggest that chapter houses need support with reaching and after obtaining certification. Certain rules and procedures need to be reworked to provide support chapters in achieving community goals.

Our findings show that a large amount of chapter officials are female. Regionalization will affect the number of female workers by limiting the number of workers in governance. Contrary to popular belief, education ranges among chapter officials. The surveys reveal the list of priorities within chapters with 'economic development' leading the priority list that lends more support to the true foundation of Title 26.

Our recommendations stem from our findings. Reworking laws to accommodate chapters is pertinent for development and achieving community goals. Navajo lawmakers need to support chapters by accommodating chapters in the development of their capacities.

Findings

Gender of chapter officials: 76% are female and 24% are male.

Education of Chapter Officials: 4%NA, 26% high school Education, 26% A.A./A.S., 22% B.A./B.S., 22% M.A./ M.S, and 0% Ph.C. /Ph.D.
'Economic development' is listed as the community’s top priority followed by 'more housing', 'improved land use planning', 'improved farming', and 'improved chapter management'.

Signature-Approval-System (SAS-164)

- Both non-certified and certified chapters are required to obtain approval from overseeing departments. This process might discourage chapter officials from applying for external funds for local projects.

Human Capital

- Several chapters lack a Community Service Coordinators (CSC) with Account Maintenance Specialists (AMS) doing the work of CSCs.

- Workforce is temporary.

- Chapters do not have powers to hire their workers; that is left to the Department of Personal Management (DPM).

Not-for-Profit Method

- Some chapters create a not-for-profit to achieve community goals. These non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are quicker than the tribal government with its central management.

- Chapter officials believe that proper decentralization of administrative authority, spending and hiring authorities, and land-use planning will help them accomplish more.

Recommendations:

Lawmakers should amend the SAS-164 processor rework the law entirely to allow chapter governments the same kind of local spending and fundraising authorities the state and federal governments allow them in not-for-profit organization.

The hiring of Community Service Coordinators (CSCs) should be delegated to chapter house leadership. CSCs should be treated as political appointees and not subject to the review process of the Department of Personal Management.

The Division of Community Development should specialize support toward LGA-certified chapters to help them develop ordinances related to tax and business site leasing that conform to Navajo Nation laws.

The Navajo people needs to reject all proposed referendums that give the power of government reform to a few actors in Window Rock, i.e., 'regionalization'.

As the Dine discussion of reform continues, it will be very interesting to see how far, and in what ways, Navajo nation goes in reforming its government. The process of bringing back traditional values to fit present and future needs has been an extended one, that has been unfolding in a series of expanding stages. What the Navajos develop, may also provide lessons and guidance for other nations struggling with inappropriate governmental systems.
Maximizing Inclusiveness

The above examples and proposals provide a range of ways in which communities can regain inclusiveness. Some of these, including the Comanche experience with ILIS, involve developing inclusive participatory discussion within the community on important community issues. This is probably the most important step that can be taken in regaining inclusiveness. This can be used as a way of providing input into tribal government or urban community organization decision making. This was the case with the Comanches. But well working participatory process can also be applied generally in all kinds of community discussions and decision making. The Southern Utes did this in developing policy coordination of tribal services with the input of everyone concerned. Similarly, on the non-governmental question of who would run the annual Sun Dance, and in what way, everyone concerned was invited to participate in settling the issues. A key factor in making participatory inclusiveness effective is to have good participatory process, as exemplified by the Comanche case. As the various applications of the ILIS system have also modeled, it is also essential to make sure that the process applied is undertaken appropriately for the culture and situation of the people involved.

To be maximally effective in harmonizing communities, inclusive dialoguing can be applied to all community questions, and to all organizations and group interactions. The organizational democracy movement that has been very successful in mainstream America, and world wide, provides good models that can be adapted to Indian administration, businesses and organizations. Indeed, organization or work place democracy, also known as team process, has some major American Indian roots, and is simply an application of traditional Indigenous participation in other settings. There is very strong evidence that organizations that function with well working, appropriate participatory democracy function better by every measure than those that operate differently.

Active Community Building and Reconciliation

Sometimes a process of active community building and/or reconciliation is needed either as a prelude to launching formal inclusive processes, or to empower them in the community. The Comanches included community building and reconciliation in their ILIS process, by beginning the opening and some later meetings with a session in which participants discussed their relationships to each other. In other settings Pipe ceremonies or other appropriate ritual could be used to achieve a sense of connection and unity for the process. In some instances, it may be advisable for a group in the community to undertake an active process of bringing the various parties in the community together. This may include some kind of reconciliation process, which can be supported by outside facilitators and elders. In some cases, it may be good to start with bringing together a small number of the members of a community, and expanding the dialogue as support for community harmonizing is advanced.

The Need for an Appropriate, Effective and Independent Dispute Resolution Process

To make inclusiveness viable and appropriate, effective and independent dispute resolution processes are also necessary. Numerous Indian nations have been experiencing major difficulties because either they do not have one or more tribal courts, or the tribal judges are not independent of the tribal council. Lack of independence can be caused either by having the tribal council the highest court of appeals, or by the council having the ability to fire (and perhaps hire) the judges. Lack of an independent court can mean that there is no just and representative way to resolve issues when the tribal government or its actions come into question.

For tribal courts to operate to enhance inclusiveness and to overcome the divisiveness in the community, they need to function as much a possible according to tribal culture. With the federal Indian policy of self-determination, Indian nations can now write or amend their own constitutions, and make laws on many matters. Moreover, even where tribal courts have to act under United States law or procedure, the U.S. common law tradition allows them significant space to interpret law according to tribal custom. Many Indian nations have been taking advantage of these opportunities. This often includes undertaking alternative sentencing in criminal cases that are more in keeping with tribal tradition, and more likely to rehabilitate an offender.
Beyond the regular court processes, though sometimes including them, is the need to decide disputes satisfactorily. Usually the best ways to do that are within the tradition of the community. Traditional Indigenous dispute resolution, in its various forms, is particularly helpful because it aims at returning the concerned parties to harmonious relationships. That is precisely what is needed in many Native communities. Good examples are the Navajo Peace Making Courts which work to facilitate a return to harmony among all those concerned. Similarly the Hawaiian problem solving process of *Ho‘oponopono* and other forms of restorative justice derived from Indigenous practice are also useful.\(^{18}\)

But one cannot just take a good process that works well in one setting, and simply apply it to another. As was done with the ILIS system, it was first developed to generally fit Indigenous values and ways. Then it was adapted to fit specifically into the culture situation of the Comanche, where it functioned extremely well. The same approach was undertaken in its applications elsewhere. By contrast, Miller reports that the attempt to apply the Maori family group counseling model, favored by the Canadian government for sentencing diversion programs for First Nations, to the Sto:lo nation in British Columbia, functioned rather poorly, with much community resistance, because it did not fit the traditions and situation of the community. This led to developing revised approach, beginning with discussions with people in the Sto:lo community.\(^{19}\)

Most important, even an appropriate inclusion practice needs to be applied inclusively. Miller reported that one of the major reasons for the failure of the South Island Justice Project, a diversionary sentencing project among Salish communities in British Columbia, was failure to consult with the people of the communities. They agreed with the principles of the project, but found the top down approach of developing and implementing it caused it not to meet the needs of the community.\(^{20}\) This may mean introducing a new or renewed inclusion or other process slowly, over time. The Comanche first ran a successful ILIS participatory strategic planning process at the tribal level, before expanding it to the local communities.

There are numerous instances of work place participation processes initially applied in a single work group that was interested in experimenting with it. When the process functioned well and its participants were happy with it, other work groups requested its application to their group. Eventually, as word spread that this was a more efficient and more enjoyable way to function, participation spread to the entire organization. Similarly, functioning in a participatory process requires skills, knowledge and attitudes that need to develop over time. Thus employee empowerment in an electronics factory in Iowa City in the 1980s was developed in stages. As team members learned more and more how to participate well, their team leaders moved step by step from being teachers and partial decision makers, to being facilitators. Team members began making suggestions, and only a few decisions. Their authority was increased as they learned and warmed to the process, until the teams functioned with full participatory democracy. Many American Indians have participatory values. But after generations of being forced into top down processes, they often have to learn the ways of participation. Leadership, particularly from elders, has an important role to play in adapting to participation. But the most important teacher, is the experience of participation.

**II: The Healing of Tribal Members\(^{21}\)**

The second major area of concern, is facilitating the healing of tribal members from unresolved historical trauma and destructive behaviors, following generation of physical and cultural genocide. Many of these resulted from abusive treatment in boarding schools. This requires culturally and personally appropriate assistance, often supported by ceremony. It is largely a process of empowerment, returning people to internal harmony. It is a process of participation, in which to be meaningful the individual needs to own the process of their becoming. But, this is usually best achieved with mutual support and reinforcement, as one gains the ability to interact more harmoniously with others.
Often, the necessary healing requires expert assistance. Thus, it is important for tribal and Native community organizations to provide a wide range of services. All services, whether they deal with mental or behavioral health, or other issues, need to be applied culturally and personally appropriately for the person or persons receiving the service. One example of this is a New Mexico Pueblo having one of its mental health counselors a tribal member who is a medicine person, while all of the clinical staff were educated in relevant Indian ways and world view in general, and the pueblo’s traditions in particular. Similarly, the Indiana American Indian Center in Indianapolis established its own health clinic staffed by a nurse who was Indian, with negotiated relationships with a hospital to allow for culturally appropriate care. With members of many Indian nations in its service area, the clinic would bring in the available medicine person who best fit the patient. Similarly, to meet extensive substance abuse problems, a great many Indian tribes and organizations have substance abuse programs which have Indianized the 12 step program used by Alcoholics Anonymous, or have otherwise used culturally specific approaches. A good deal of useful work has now been done in developing American Indian approaches to psychology, including the work of Edwardo Duran. In working with Native people clinically, it is important to remember that individual Natives to various degrees have been acculturated to outside society, and/or have heritage from more than one Native tradition. Thus, as is especially the case in a multicultural society, it is extremely important to work in ways that are suitable for the person in question.

Very frequently, good healing includes participation in proper ceremony. Many nations have traditional ceremonies that focus on returning tribal members to harmony and balance, or are useful for that purpose. Almost all of the large number of Dine ceremonies have that purpose. The problem of what ceremony to use is more complex with tribal people who have lost that part of their tradition. There are several ways Indigenous people have been dealing with this problem. One is to adopt ceremonies, or aspects of them that fit from other tribes. Some tribal people, for instance, with good results, have adopted Lakota sweat lodge songs, when they no longer know the songs for that ritual from their own tradition. Others, whether or not they are knowledgeable in the traditions of their own heritage, have received great healing, transforming their lives, by participating in Lakota Sun Dances, many of which have become pan-Indian ceremonies. As with other ceremonies, they are only healing to the extent that they are part of a larger effort by the individual to undergo transformation. Undertake many ceremonies, including the Sun Dance, involves a commitment to work at living well the year round.

Some Indian groups have turned to anthropological and historical writings to recreate ceremonies they no longer know. This can be effective to the extent that those undertaking this approach sufficiently understand the ceremony. The key here is, that with any ceremony, to be effective, it has to be meaningful to the person or persons involved, in relation to her or his needs. Other groups have undertaken the traditional approach of going on vision quest to seek guidance in developing appropriate new or renewed ceremonies. In urban or other locations where Native people from a number of traditions come together, it is necessary to decide which ceremonies to use, perhaps rotating at least some of them among the traditions coming together. The alternative is either to adapt a ceremony from one tradition, adapting it to fit people from multiple heritages, or to create a new ceremony that fits the people and the purpose.

III: Preserving and Renewing Traditional Knowledge and Linking It to Education

Preserving and renewing traditional culture, to which traditional language and knowledge are central, is extremely important for many reasons. It is essential for tribal people to know who they are, and to have a strong sense of identity and value to enable them, and their community to be successful in their ventures, following centuries of physical and cultural genocide, and continuing, though lessened, discrimination, which must be overcome for personal and community advancement. And this preservation and revitalization is a key element in the process of that overcoming. Moreover, it is an essential vehicle for transcending the divisiveness and disharmony that colonialism has brought to many Indigenous communities, by providing a sense of unity and common identity and purpose. Moreover, since traditional culture, carried by its language, and composed of the specifics of traditional knowledge, provided values and methods for inclusive participation and respectful support for all community members, cultural revitalization provides means for returning communities to harmony and wellbeing.
In addition, many pieces of traditional knowledge remain valid and important in the contemporary world, which in many instances does not offer the same or equivalent understandings. Thus, there is much that traditional Native knowledge can contribute to the world, even as having a thorough understanding of one's own culture, history and location, provides a basis for appropriately learning from and applying at home the learnings and knowings of other communities. The idea here, is not to return to specific ways of living of the past, which cannot be brought back in greatly changed conditions, but to apply traditional values and wisdom appropriately for current conditions, with a concern for future needs and developments. Further, having tribal members culturally fluent, not only gives them a firm basis for living and acting well at home, but provides the strength of identity necessary to act in what is, ever more increasingly, a multicultural world.

There is considerable evidence that renewing traditional ways of functioning can be exceedingly beneficial to Indigenous communities and their members. A good example is the concerted effort to restore tradition at the Lac Seul First Nation community in Ontario. Canadian first nations have a similar history of cultural genocide to those in the United States. The Lac Seul First Nation's traditional restoration program has been accompanied by a rise in graduation rates and drops in substance abuse and suicide rates, not experienced in near by communities with similar demographics, which had not undertaken such an effort. The Lac Seul experience has shown that grounding young people in their past gives them the confidence to build their future, as a Canadian national commission had already concluded in the 1990s was an important approach for First Nations to take. Having a firm grounding in tradition provides a strong sense of identity, and psychologists have found that identity is a proven bulwark for indigenous mental health.

The Lac Seul cultural renewal effort began as a result of several tribal members, who previously knew little of their culture and had felt adrift, successfully recovering from substance abuse in programs that included traditional ceremonies, while learning the band's language and traditional hunting skills. They reported that this increased their self-esteem. One of those who had recovered in this way built a log cabin out in the woods for young people to spend time away from video games and social media. The tribe arranged sessions for the young people there with elders to pass on teachings. The popularity of the program catalyzed the establishing of a second cabin for adult use, from recovering alcoholics to families wishing a weekend holiday.

Lac Seul went on to establish an annual summer culture week along with year round activities, including snowshoeing and under ice trapping. The community's elementary school initiated including tribal history in the curriculum, and having students connect with the land by collecting traditional medicines. The combined result of these efforts has been a great reduction in negative behaviors by tribal members, especially youth, and an increase in positive achievements, as tribal members have felt better about themselves, and more firmly rooted in the community.

In the United States, a great deal of work has been going on by Indian nations and others preserving traditional knowledge, including language. There are also ongoing significant efforts to educate tribal members and others in and about tribal traditions and history. This has been undertaken through many means in schools, colleges and universities, and in life long learning. This work needs to be supported and expanded. It is essential for tribal people. It is helpful for non-Native people to learn about Indians, in order to promote mutual understanding, overcoming prejudice and racism, and promoting good, mutually supportive, relations.

Overcoming Problems in Preserving Traditional Knowledge

The impacts of colonialism, including cultural genocide, continue to present major problems that most Indian nations are struggling to overcome. The ongoing loss of elders knowledgeable in traditional ways, combined with a considerable group of younger elders not having much knowledge of, or interest in, traditional ways because of past government, religious organization and societal pressures is a major problem. If assistance from younger elders is limited, then it would seem wise to go directly to young people, who are most open to learning, and very much need to be reached, in any case.
Also, because of the various impacts of cultural genocide, including the fracturing of many relations in numerous Native communities, and the historical trauma that many suffer, some care needs to be taken in involving "elders." The first is to work with elders who have the traditional knowledge that is of concern. Second, is making an appropriate connection and providing a proper context for doing that. Some elders believe that traditional knowledge, as oral tradition, is only to be passed on orally, and do not believe it proper to write it or record it. Moreover, there are instances where certain information or stories are only to be spoken of in certain contexts, and/or at certain times or places (e.g. For some peoples, certain stories are only to be told during the cold moons when the snakes are asleep, or certain things are only spoken of to specific society members in the Kiva). Thus it is important to collaborate respectfully with elders to proceed properly, often either assisting in creating the appropriate context, or in encouraging the elder(s) or their society or association to do this themselves. It often needs to be remembered that the aim is to enhance the continence of the flow of traditional knowledge appropriately in the community in ways that are appropriate, and that one ought not to be caught up in trying to do that only in a particular way, or in a particular context, when others are possible, and perhaps more proper.

In addition, because of the colonial history, there are some instances where certain elders with important traditional understandings will complain that things are not being done properly, but are reluctant to say how it is traditionally proper to do them, when asked. In such cases some patient, careful diplomacy, at times through family members, friends, or society members, may be helpful in facilitating their involvement.

It needs to be noted that retaining traditional knowledge and values - which cannot be understood without sufficient knowledge of the history and traditional culture of the people - is not an objection to change in communities. One of the traditional values of Indigenous peoples has been to adapt to changing conditions, as each place, including each circumstance, is unique and must be dealt with appropriately. The problem is to apply traditional values in current circumstances with an eye to the future, and that cannot be accomplished adequately without traditional knowledge, the core of which is also important to be widely known by the people for their personal and tribal identity, and personal and community harmony.

Thoughts on Teaching Traditions in Todays Circumstances

In the old days, when the tradition was all around one, hearing the stories and other knowledge continually in a cultural context was quite effective. Now, that after a great deal of cultural genocide, often the traditional context is not there, and many Native people no longer live in, or are brought up on the reservation or home community. I believe more explanation frequently is needed, as without the broader context it is difficult to have a proper understanding of many traditional stories and individual items of knowledge. Moreover, it is important to make people aware of changes in understandings that have occurred, that otherwise may well be quite misleading. I have found two books that provide good models for doing that, Jean Chauduhri and Joyotpaul Chauduhri, A Sacred Path: The Way of the Muscogee Creeks, and Albert White Hat Sr., Life’s Journey- Zuya: Oral Teachings from Rosebud.

Returning to A Sacred Path

The first volume is Jean Chauduhri and Joyotpaul Chauduhri, A Sacred Path: The Way of the Muscogee Creeks. Jean Chauduhri was a traditional Muscogee story teller-historian, and her husband Joy Chauduhri, a political scientist who taught for many years at Arizona State University, in Tempe, AZ, came from India in the 1940s to study - work with American Indians. They interviewed very old elders, one over 100 who had been on their trail of tears, to find out what the old traditions were, before intermarriage began to cause confusion.

Their volume begins by describing the Muscogee Stomp Dance, which they tell us is an enactment of the creation myth. Then they set forth the main creation story and the related stories showing how these stories described the way traditional Muscogee society functioned, following the web of interrelated relations and values, to provide a holistic understanding. As the introduction to this short but significant volume states,
This work, which has involved many decades of experience, participation, and research, attempts to close the significant gap in the literature and tries to share a credible and coherent understanding of the internal world of Creek values. The phrase, the creek mind, signifies the world of values based on Creeks' understanding of nature and their culture; no disputations in social science jargon regarding the meaning of the mind is intended. Creeks often called, and traditional even now call, this world of values the sacred path. As in the case of any discussion of values of a large tribe or community, there are regional differences and differing shades of perceptions in different individuals. Many Creek Stories have yet to be told. What is attempted in this work is to illustrate the coherence of main pathways of the Creek world.  

Without that coherence - understanding of the over arching web of values and ways of seeing - individual stories and bits of knowledge are only partially understandable, and sometime incoherent. Where the greater cultural context has been lost or altered, it needs to be provided, and that is the beauty of this volume for Muscogee-Creek ways. It should be noted, that having set out that coherence in a short work, Joy Chaudhuri's more recent work has been preparing the numerous other Muscogee stories Jean Chauduhri and he collected into a coherent work.

The Chauduhris also include a chapter in A Sacred Path correcting some errors and misconceptions in the usual Muscogee histories, and cultural descriptions, in a preface to a proper Creek history. It "provides a Creek perspective and links discussion of Creek ways to the tribe's historical experience." Since traditional Creek beliefs relating to history and time are non-linear, this discussion takes a non-linear approach encompassing the nation's origin, confederacy and experiences with Europeans and European Americans, as recovered from oral tradition.

Renewing Life's Journey- Zuya

In Life's Journey- Zuya, Albert White Hat Senior illustrates what some of the problem is in terms of loss of community knowledge as a result of cultural genocide, as well as discussing some of his own participation in the restoration of traditional knowledge. Albert White Hat was born on the Rosebud Reservation, and except for a brief time in his twenties, has lived there since. He taught in the Lakota Studies Department at Sinte Gleska University for 34 years, before retiring in 2009. He also has been the intercessor for a Sun Dance on the Rosebud for a number of years. In the 1970s he was asked by the University to translate for Rosebud medicine men speaking about traditional ways in a class in the nursing program, Lakota Teachings and Health, and after ten years was asked to take over teaching the class. He relates that,

When our medicine men began to teach this material, probably 90 percent of our people were deathly afraid of it. For nearly 100 years we had been taught to believe our traditional ways were evil, that we worshiped the devil and were pagans. This was the message we received in our education, and it became the predominant feeling among our people. It was also the reason the medicine men agreed to teach. They were not public people, and most had never spoken openly about themselves and their visions. They held extensive discussions about whether to teach or not, finally deciding to do so. One of them expressed their reasoning when he said, "If we do this, we want people to understand what Lakota spirituality is and what the ceremonies are about. We want them to understand who our spirits are. If they understand all this, they won't be afraid. There is nothing to be afraid of in Lakota Philosophy and rituals."

White Hat goes on to say, "My goal is that at the end of this book, you'll have a better understanding of Lakota philosophy and of our rituals and traditions." He does that extremely well, in a straight forward, yet holistic manner, proceeding primarily from oral tradition and personal experience. First, he sets out his own experience in growing up and living on the Rosebud under colonialism, followed by giving an overview of who the traditional Lakota were, and what happened to the people during the reservation period, to show what the struggle has been to
renew the Lakota tradition. Against that background, he begins with the Lakota creation myth, making sense of things that I, at least, as a student of Lakota ways, and long time supporter of their ceremonies, had previously found confusing. In the course of that discussion, White Hat shows changes that had taken place on the Rosebud in the meaning of key words and concepts, and in misconceptions that had arisen. Some of these changes and misunderstandings had come from non-Indian scholars, who had not lived the tradition.

For example,

You may have heard the terms red road and black road. I saw an article once on some of Black Elk's teachings, and right in the middle of it was a note on the red road to heaven and the black road to hell. That's very common thinking in our culture today, but I'd like to eliminate it. I think the term red road comes from the church. I grew up speaking our language in a time all our ceremonies were illegal. People would go back in the canyons for a sweat ceremony and when it was over would dismantle the lodge and hide it. They knew they would be punished if caught and were trying to protect themselves. After each sweat they'd all get together to eat and share stories. I would be at these meals and never once heard the term chankuluta or chankusapa, "red road" or "black road."

In our research on these terms we found that Black Elk was a catechist in the Catholic Church. In his time the church had a chart that was very common on our reservation. I knew about this because my father was also a catechist... Hanging on the wall [in Father Buechel's office at St. Francis Mission, where I would go] was a chart showing the red road to heaven and the black road to hell. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, this chart was used in the training of Lakota catechists. I've seen a document that said Black Elk used that chart a lot in his teachings, so when Neihardt interviewed him, I think Black Elk might have said, "Its like the red road and the black road of the church." Then Neihardt put that statement in Black Elk Speaks, as Black Elk saying that if you walk the red road you believe in one God and go to heaven, and if you walk the black road you go to hell. Black Elk Speaks gives a feeling of heaven and hell in our philosophy, and many other books do as well. Many of these books also portray our rituals as history; the implication is that they no longer exist.30

White Hat goes on to show similar misunderstandings or portrayals that are very much at odds with traditional Lakota ways of seeing. Then he proceeds to Lakota ceremonies relating them to the nation's creation story and the whole of the traditional culture, often drawing upon the traditional meaning of key Lakota words. In the course of all of that, including a discussion of the Tiospaye, or extended family, system of relations, he shows how traditional Lakota culture and society functioned, based upon the whole of its understandings, beginning with the creation story. On the ongoing process of restoring Lakota culture at Rosebud, which before colonialism functioned extremely well, White Hat comments,

As many of our traditions are returning, and our rituals coming back, we are fortunate that the tiospaye system is still intact. It is a very effective system, and, as I mentioned, it's based on our creation story when Inyan drained its blood to make every creation. All of the love, honor and respect in a family stems from our creation story. I think that with patience, by my great-grandchildren's' time, much of our traditional culture will be back in place. It's a challenge. Many of us alive to day are so conditioned by the (recent) past that it's difficult to let it go. Some of us have been able to let go of that, and some haven't. I think it takes at least two or three generations for a culture to change direction.31

Similar Helpful Approaches in Fiction

Novels and other fiction can also be useful in passing on traditional knowledge, much of which was traditionally done through story telling, with the teller shaping the telling to be appropriate for the occasion, especially for the needs and understandings of the listeners. This is an advantage that oral literature has over all but the most artful written or recorded literature, which tends to say the same thing to everyone, unless it is unfolded
Seven Arrows was written as a teaching book. It begins with a background chapter focusing on the basic principles of the medicine wheel, and some other major elements of traditional Plains culture. This gives a holistic background and starting place for the unfolding of the stories that follow. The major device of the rest of the book is a story with changing lead characters, with two themes, as they travel from one Plains Indian camp to another. One theme is the numerous traditional stories the lead characters tell within the main story, serving as teachers to young people who do not yet know much. Thus, the teachers need to explain much about the stories as they discuss them with the listeners after the telling. This device provides a natural way within the flow of the novel to provide needed information to readers, which together with the overarching setting of the introductory chapter, puts all the stories and related events into the context of the whole meaning, which surrounds and is within each piece of the first theme of the novel. This approach, by itself, is somewhat experiential for the reader - which is an important aspect of traditional education and understanding. This is reinforced and carried further, as the work is made more experiential, by its being made multi-dimensional through the inclusion of numerous photographs, drawings and paintings to illustrate and further major points.

The second theme is the disruption of traditional society by the U.S. government, unfolded in the story as the changing lead characters travel and hear of destroyed camps and massacres. But, the book ends in the present day, with some brief critique of western society; the people are still here, and the message, bringing the story back to its beginnings and first principles, now further unfolded, is, “There is an entire world and everything in it that can teach you much, much more.... Everything upon the earth and in the heavens is a mirror for the people. It is a total gift. Jump up! And you will see the "Medicine Wheel."33

Using Contemporary Media as Vehicles for Learning Traditional Values and Knowledge

To successfully stimulate learning, including of traditional knowledge, the learning process needs to be attractive and interesting to the learner. One way of doing this, especially for young people, is to appropriately apply contemporary media. One example of doing this has been the development of a video game for teaching traditional ways of relating to the land and surviving, through participating in the acting out of traditional stories. The Cook Inlet Tribal Council of Alaska, with the help of external technical experts, launched Upper One Games, which developed Never Alone, a learning video game teaching the value of cooperation along with aspects of traditional knowledge in the course of the player or players participating in unfolding a traditional story in the form of a game.34 Tribal elders were involved in initially developing the game, and then in improving it on reviewing the completed product.

Learning About the Huge Impact of Indians on Western Ways35

It is also important that both Indigenous and mainstream Americans learn about the tremendous historical and continuing impact of American Indians upon the United States, the west, and, as a result, the world. Native people have continually been put down as being backward, and their cultures have been disrespected by many non-Indians. Both Indians and non-Indians need to come to see that this view is false. In fact, there is a huge amount in many areas that Indigenous Americans have taught, and continue to teach the world.

For the relatively few Europeans coming in the first century of contact to what was for them “a new world,” that ecologically was for them a new place, in which they were in the midst of a large number of Indigenous people with whom they regularly interacted, and who attempted to educate the newcomers to Native ways until European numbers became too large, living in their new location was a profound experience. The effects of contact with Indigenous people on coming to America had a wide range of effects in a virtually every area of the immigrants living, that had wide impacts on Europe and the rest of the world as well, over time. This included finding a wide variety of, for them, new plants, that Native people showed them the use of, leading to a
culinary and medical revolution, as these plants spread from the Americas, so that today a very large portion of the world’s vegetable food is of “New World” origin, while a great deal of the medication in use around the planet sprang from the Americas. In addition, the exportation of huge amounts of resources from the colonies to its west to the old countries, together with the Europeanization of some Indian ideas, is widely credited with greatly assisting the rise of the un-Native American rise of capitalism.

Far more important are the changes in western thinking and practice concerning politics and society that have occurred because of close contact with Indigenous Americans. For example, prior to contact, Europeans valued rights, but believed it was up to each regime to determine what rights were proper for its people. It was only after contact, that John Locke wrote that rights were inalienable. Lock read numerous reports about Indians, and spoke with some who came to England. His writing is full of direct references to Indians. He was and remains the most important political thinker for all of the major political philosophies in the United States. His Indian influenced words, that people have the right to "life, liberty and estate," were only slightly altered by Jefferson in writing in the Declaration of Independence of the inalienable rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Many of the framers of the U.S. Constitution and numerous other politically and socially important people at the time of the founding regularly dealt with Indians and learned a great deal from them. Indeed, Indian ideas, symbols and motifs were common throughout the colonies and the United States until close to the middle of the Nineteenth Century. During that period, it was widely accepted that American culture was an amalgam of the Indian and the European. Given that many practices from the New England town meeting to federalism were adopted from Indians, it is quite correct to say that we have as much democracy as we do in the United States because of Native Americans.

The influence of Indians is extremely widespread in western political philosophy. Rousseau was even more enamored of Indians than Locke, and it is clear from reading his works that his thinking encompasses a great deal learned from Indians. Through Rousseau, Indians have had a significant influence on western thought in general, and the French revolution and what in the U.S. may be called New Deal liberalism, in particular. The socialist and anarchist traditions in the west have similar strong Native American roots. This is not to say that there are not also European and other influences in western thought. Each person is creative in how they respond to the various thoughts that come to them, in terms of their own experience. One set of the important organic strands of thought that run through western, and indeed world, thought is American Indian.

This can be seen in many other areas as well. For example, the American philosophy of pragmatism has clear Native roots. Further, as Betty." Donohue demonstrates, “When Massachusetts Natives met English settlers in 1620, literary events took place. The American Indian oral tradition confronted English-speaking immigrants and changed their discursive propensities. As the English-speaking immigrants wrote, they produced a new literature that would eventually be designated American, and ... American literature is different from the continental British. It is a literature that reveals an American Indian presence, a characteristic that British literature does not have. American Indian words, characters and actions entered America’s written work at contact, and these words, characters and actions have become part of a continuing European American literary tradition. Remove the Indians, and the literature is no longer American.”

Moreover, western thinking, for more than a century, has been becoming increasingly closer to Indigenous thinking in a broad spectrum of concerns. This is most evident concerning the environment, where climate change and other environmental crises are demonstrating the need to adopt Indigenous thinking: to see that everything is related and needs to be taken into account. Similarly, educators are finding that though powerful, reductionist western thinking that fractures fields of knowledge causes serious theoretical, practical, and psychological problems. Hence, increasingly specialization is being seen as needing to be balanced by holistic thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration, which are hallmarks of Native thinking. Even in the sciences, which are at the heart of western culture, there has been a move toward Indian ways of seeing. Since the 19th Century, western science, and especially physics has moved from a mechanical model of the universe to seeing reality more as a thought. Increasingly in recent years, western science, as well as western culture as a whole, is coming closer
to viewing reality as American Indians traditionally have perceived it. The development of Einstein's theory or relativity, Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, chaos or complexity theory, and the Gaya theory in cutting edge biology are a few of the indicators of this shift.

Among the many moves toward more Indigenous approaches in political and social spheres, the Native view of honoring diversity has been becoming more central in the west. For example, the move to enhance equality has shifted over the years from a melting pot to a tossed salad approach. Instead of seeking to have everyone become assimilated into a fairly uniform middle class society and culture, the aim has become to integrate diverse cultures and life styles into a varied society of mutual respect, with equality of opportunity. The moves toward gender and sexual orientation equality are related to this. Similarly, there are moves away from hierarchy and competition toward more equalitarian and collaborative relations, as seen in the movement for organizational democracy. There, the institution of such vehicles as participatory work teams is a contemporary example of traditional Indigenous inclusive participatory decision making. Many of these recreations of Indigenous ways, need to be brought back to Indian country for the renewal of communities.

Indigenizing Education

Many of the contemporary applications of traditional Indian approaches to Education that have been working well with contemporary Native people, also have been quite successful for Non-Indians. With mainstream education in the United States experiencing serious problems, the native compatible (and often Native rooted) approaches need to be more widely applied. A good example is the experiential democratic education long fostered by John Dewey. A proven strength of Dewey's Native rooted progressive education is that it sees each student as a unique individual with her or his own qualities to develop, according to his or her own learning style. This approach tends to produce competent, deeply thinking, caring, socially conscious people by involving students in as wide a variety of positive experiences as practicable, getting them to examine issues from multiple perspectives, having them study important social questions, and involving them in running the school as a collaborative community. This participation involves both a voice in governing the school, and taking part in the physical work of operating it. There difference is honored as a source of learning from each other. Thus students from different backgrounds are made to feel comfortable in the classroom, and in who they are and where they come from. Certainly, these kinds of traditional approaches ought to be applied appropriately for local circumstances in Indian schools. But as the majority of Native students attend non-Indian schools, improving those schools with such approaches will help Indigenous students, as well as everyone else, to be competent, feel good about themselves and their backgrounds, and relate well with others. This should be a helpful vehicle for overcoming divisiveness.

One effective example of this approach, is in the Americans for Indian Opportunity's (AIO) Ambassadors Program. This is equivalent to a two year masters program in leadership development. Early on in the program, new participants are asked to examine and state in discussion with the whole class what their own medicine is. This is very helpful in their getting to know more deeply who they are. In addition, Ambassadors join regularly in participatory inclusive decision making, largely through the ILIS process. Alumni of the program remain in its network and continue to be invited to participate in its consensus decision making on important AIO and Indian Country issues. Ambassadors generally function very well as internally strong, collaborative people.

IV: Supportive Tribal Development

Sufficient successful tribal development is needed to provide the jobs, income and services needed to promote member development and healing, and community healing. To the extent that tribes are successful, economically, socially and politically, that tends to make their members feel better about them, and themselves. Moreover, tribal success also tends to build external respect and overcome racism. However, tribal success can also produce external envy and can be seen as a threat to external interests. Hence Indian nation need to, and usually do, respectfully manage their relations with neighbors.
A critical aspect of tribal development, is economic development. Indian nations need to develop the ability to provide jobs and income, while Indian organizations need to provide income (and sometimes jobs). What is important to see income as jobs as a means, and not an ends. Most Indian communities have treated income and jobs as vehicles for community and member development.\textsuperscript{42} This is a better model than the usual western approach for development. It should be noted, that one of the difficulties Navajo Nation has suffered in developing its decentralization of functions from its central government to chapters has been a lack of funds for chapter education and technical assistance. While money alone cannot solve problems, and with creative thinking much can be done to overcome shortages of it,\textsuperscript{43} poor tribes are hampered in all the aspects of overcoming community fracturing by lack of funding.

The economic success of many tribes generally has improved their community relations through several actions. First, the tribe's economic success has usually contributed to the community economy. In numerous cases tribes have become major job creators for non-members in the area as well as for members. Tribes have also taken on many economic development and community service provision projects cooperatively with neighboring communities, and tribes contribute significantly to surrounding community charitable and government projects. Further, the tribal development that has accompanied economic development has made tribes and their members more competent, better partners with neighbors, and increased their political power as well as improving their image for many.

\textbf{V: Providing Sufficient and Appropriate Communication}

Success in all of the four areas above requires good communications. It is a matter of both having the infrastructure and the proper content. In many cases the infrastructure needs to be created, expanded, or if available utilized. Some of this is a matter of people to people connections. It is a matter of finding ways to link to folks who normally are not directly connected. Too often decisions in Indian country are made without people concerned about them even knowing about them. This can be done either by reaching out directly or indirectly through family members or friends of disconnected people. Some diplomacy may be needed, and traditional ways of making connections may be useful. For Lakotas coming with a Pipe may be appropriate. The Comanche in starting ILIS had people state their family relationships.

In other cases new infrastructure needs to be created. Getting everyone in the community on the internet or having a phone, cell or landline, may be extremely helpful. So may having a community newspaper, radio or TV station, or getting regular time or space on an outside one. Some times it is just a matter of taking advantage of available ways to communicate, from the U.S. mail and putting up posters, to using existing print or electronic media.

To bring and keep the community together and involved means providing many channels and opportunities for people to have input. As we have seen in the discussion of reinstating traditional inclusiveness, above, many vehicles can be used for people to participate. This can include open general meetings, public hearings on issues, participation in consensus decision making either to directly decide issues or to come to consensus on proposals to the community or tribal government, and voting on issues or for office holders. It can involve surveys, focus groups or other opportunities to express or enquire about opinion. It can be very important for leaders to regularly sound out constituents on what they perceive as issues and how they think about them; and for leaders to pass on what they are hearing.

The channels of communication need to be numerous and wide spread, as equal as possible across the community. Everyone concerned about a matter ought to be informed about it and have input concerning it. It may be good if the entire community is made aware that all concerned with even a narrow issue, are involved its resolution. With the Comanche, what caused an uproar against the tribal chair, once ILIS had been established, was his failing to communicate with the community about what he was doing about two issues he thought needed to be acted upon quickly. It is important to be sure to keep inviting in the most alienated in the community, giving them
a positive role in affairs. Today, this is often youth, who when alienated become involved in gangs. Actively involving youth, perhaps even giving them direct and/or indirect representation in community decision making might be advisable, with their own community forum. Also, having appropriate student participation in school affairs, might be a good starting place. Inclusiveness is best learned early, and reinforced and expanded over time.

Being inclusive means being open, as well as inviting people to participate meaningfully. What is happening needs to be transparently communicated. This can be accomplished by means from putting up announcements and minutes of meetings on Navajo chapter or tribal offices bulletin boards, to broadcasting announcements of meetings and their results, or even broadcasting some events themselves.

The content of communication is critical. Necessary information is essential to be put out in a timely and accessible way. To be inclusive, the messages in words and acts need to be inclusive. Where people are alienated from each other this may take some patience. Many times, there may need to be an ongoing openness or invitation to be involved.

The form of communication is also essential. To invite people to be involved, what is communicated must be clear and understandable. It needs to be in a form or style that conveys what needs to be transmitted in an inviting way. Moreover, to promote and maintain inclusiveness, traditional communication skills need to be used. People need to listen respectfully, accurately and supportively. They need to express themselves respectfully: acknowledging and encouraging the input of others. And when discussions bog down, or become overly hot, facilitation is needed to return the discussion to harmony. Elders traditionally have this role, as the Comanche demonstrated in the ILIS process. But it is helpful if everyone learns facilitation skills and can facilitate when needed.

Using Contemporary Media at Southern Ute

The Southern Ute Tribe of Colorado has undertaken an excellent example of using contemporary media to increase communication, and thereby participation, in inclusive tribal discussion and decision making. In order to reach as many tribal members as possible for the tribal educational meeting on April 10, 2017, to discuss the issues raised in a member proposed referendum on how to allocate $45,515,000 remaining of the Sisseton Settlement Funds received by the tribe, the tribal council arranged for membership only live streaming of the meeting on the internet. Members could log in via the web sites of the tribe or its newspaper, the Southern Ute Drum, or via tribal Facebook. The referendum and the meeting about it were announced in all of those media.

The council had not previously taken any action on what to do with the funds in question. On reviewing the petition for a referendum on the matter, following the advice of tribal attorneys, the council had found that the petition was defective, and canceled the referendum, which had been scheduled, on February 14, by the tribal election board to take place March 17. As this was an issue of considerable concern to many members, the council set up the educational meeting on the matter with live streaming. At its April 4, 2017 meeting (which was proceeded by some protests by some tribal members that the referendum had been canceled), the Southern Ute Tribal Council authorized a referendum for May 4, 2017 for tribal members to vote on whether or not to distribute the remaining Sisseton Settlement Funds directly to tribal members.

Meanwhile, in February 2017, the Southern Ute Tribal Council began producing a half hour biweekly radio program, "Council Connect," on the tribal station, KSUT. The program has been featuring the agenda of the upcoming council meeting and updates on the council's calendar, along with information on tribal and community events. The council has been using the show to discuss tribal business, including new initiatives and membership meetings. Particular council members and guests have participated in the show to develop the topics the council has been discussing. The program's upcoming agenda has been posted on the tribal website and on its Facebook page.
In Conclusion

The process of returning American Indian communities is complex, and many faceted. To be successful, action needs to be taken holistically, over time. Often patience is needed. The essence of what is necessary is to act inclusively and supportively, to return communities to being mutually supporting and harmonious in all their relationships.

End Notes


9. July 15 1990 letter of LaDonna Harris to participants in the ILIS (TIMS) process.

10. Demosophia, or "wisdom of the people" was used as a term for the ILIS (TIMS) process because one of the designers and facilitators of the ILIS process, Alexander Christakis, is Greek. The use of the Greek term is an example of Comanche inclusiveness.

that, according to Dine legend, the people lived in independent, self-sufficient camps, in which, like other band societies, discussed below, decisions were made by the community by consensus. Headman (Hozhooli Naat’aah) only acted as advisors. He usually was proficient in leading at least one ceremony, governed by persuasion, “expounded on moral and ethical subjects, admonishing the people to live in peace and harmony. With his assistants he planned and organized the workday life of his community, gave instruction in the arts of farming and stock raising and supervised the planting, cultivating and harvesting of the crops. As an aspect of his community relations function, it was his responsibility to arbitrate disputes, resolve family difficulties, try to reform wrong doers and represent his group in its relations with other communities, tribes and governments. He had no functions whatsoever relating to war because the conduct of hostilities was the province of War Chiefs. “A headman was a man of high prestige, chosen for his good qualities and only remained a leader “so long as his leadership enlisted public confidence or resulted in public benefit.” Also discussing traditional Navajo governance is David E. Wilkins, The Navajo Political Experience, Revised Edition (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2003), pp. 67-72.

The quote is from Kluckhohn and Leighton, The Navajo, p. 118. The Naachid is discussed by Wilkins, The Navajo Political Experience, pp. 70-71, and pp. 71-73 discuss the general continuance of traditional Navajo governance during the Spanish/Mexican period, 1700 – 1846, despite the occasional attempt of the colonials to designate heads of the Navajo Nation.


14. Harris, Sachs and Morris, Recreating the Circle, Ch. 1, Section 1.


16. Appropriate dispute resolution and judicial process is discussed in more detail, with examples and numerous references, in Harris, Sachs and Morris, Recreating the Circle, Ch. 4, Section 2. Unless otherwise indicated, what is discussed on this topic is from Ch. 4, Section 2.


20. Miller, *The Problem of Justice*, pp. 194-199; and Sachs, "Expanding the Circle."

21. Harris, Sachs and Morris, *Recreating the Circle*, Ch. 2 and Ch. 5, Section 3, discusses at greater length, with numerous references, the problems for tribal members resulting from physical and cultural genocide, with the latter section focusing on the process of healing. Except where otherwise indicated, these are the references for Section II of this paper.

22. The Pueblo example is from an October 2016 discussion between Stephen Sachs and a counselor at the Pueblo. The Indiana health clinic example is from the experience of Stephen Sachs as an advisory member of the Board of the Indiana American Indian Center.


24. The approaches discussed here of people who have lost their ceremonies finding new or recreating old ones, or taking part in the ceremonies of others, have been related by people involved to, or observed by, Stephen Sachs. It should be noted that there is a long tradition of ceremonies of one people being adopted by others. Two examples


28. Chauduhri and Chauduhri, *A Sacred Path*, Chapter 12, Culture and continuity: A Preface to Creek History. The quote is from p. 133.


32. Hyemeyohsts Storm, *Seven Arrows* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972). Storm's writing has been criticized by some as too New Age, and not sufficiently true to Cheyenne tradition. I believe that critique may properly apply to his novels following this one, including *Lightning Bolt* and *The Song of Heyoehkah*, but not to *Seven Arrows*. When I read it some years ago, I knew a lot less than I do now, and I still can not speak for its accuracy in terms of the details of traditional Cheyenne stories. I did find it an excellent teaching book for its approach, and very much enjoyed the reading, finding only one passage that bothered me, as being un-Cheyenne, and that was explained as being a divergence from tradition, as a result of the trauma of the ongoing genocide in progress in the mid to late 19th century when the story was taking place. Moreover, I could see a deeper reason for writing the passage the way storm did. However, even if there are problems with the content I am not aware of, I believe that the approach to writing it is an appropriate one to adapt in the process of renewing traditional knowledge and culture.

There is some discussion of the controversy concerning Storm at: [http://sixa.wisearch.com/sixa/Hyemeyohsts_Storm.html](http://sixa.wisearch.com/sixa/Hyemeyohsts_Storm.html) (accessed October 1, 2014), where it sets forth that he says of himself, "I was born in 1935 on the Northern Cheyenne reservation and raised on the Cheyenne and Crow reservations, which exist side by side in Southeastern Montana. I am an enrolled Indian on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation; my enrollment name is Arthur Storm Jr. Hyemeyohsts is my Cheyenne name; given to me by Frank Waters of Busby when I was born." "As a mixed blood Native American youth, (called a "Breed" on the reservation), I was confronted with racism from both Indians and Whites alike. Certain Indians taunted breeds for
not being "full-blood" and the whites called Breeds and Indians "prairie niggers." But powerful and educated elders of different tribes saw that my "mixed blooded-ness" could be a strength -- especially with my curiosity and love of the old stories and knowledge. They recognized that I could become a bridge between them and the world beyond the reservation. Slowly certain elders began to quietly teach me." Also, see http://www.ipl.org/div/natam/bin/browse.pl/A94, which (on October 1, 2014), stated, "Hyemeyohsts Storm was born in Lame Deer, Montana and was raised on the Cheyenne and Crow reservations. Storm attended Eastern Montana College in Billings. His first publication of Seven Arrows stirred a widespread controversy regarding the accuracy in Native American fiction and the rights of Native American authors to represent and interpret tribal religion without tribal authorization." These are important issues, but not the focus of the discussion of the book in this paper, which is the value of Storm's approach of the author for appropriate us by others in using fiction in the revival of American Indian traditional values and the preservation of traditional knowledge.

33. Storm, Seven Arrows, p. 371.


35. The huge and continuing impact of American Indians upon colonial people who came from Europe, on the mainstream of the United States, on Europe, and eventually the world, is discussed in more detail in Stephen M. Sachs, "Honoring the Circle: Impact of American Indian Tradition on Western Political Thought and Society," Proceedings of the 2013 Western Social Science Association American Indian Studies Section, in Indigenous Policy, Vol. XXIV, No. 2, Fall 2013, http://www.indigenouspolicy.org). Except where otherwise indicated the references for what is presented in this section are in that writing. This paper is only a summary of an absolutely vast American Indian impact, which can be further glimpsed through the references sited in the paper.


37. This is discussed in Harris, Sachs and Morris, Recreating the Circle, Ch. 1, Section 2. Moreover, the continuing relevance of American Indian ways for contemporary society as a whole is a secondary theme of the entire book. It is shown, for example, that the Native approaches to such things as education and economic development have much to offer to U.S., western and world society.

38. Reflecting indigenous views more broadly, it can be said that contemporary physics is coming closer to traditional views from culturally outside the west, as exemplified by the relationship of the developing western physics and traditional eastern thought set forth in Fritjof Capra, The Tao of Physics (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984). As to American Indian views, themselves -- as indicated in the discussion of place-- they are in principle, and in fact, quite varied. But there is an underlying, generally agreed on set of values, way of seeing and doing. This is indicted, for example, in A. Timas and R. Reedy, “Implementation of cultural-specific intervention for a Native American Community,” Journal of Clinical Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1998, pp. 382-393; James A. Moran, “Preventing Alcohol Use Among Urban American Youth: The Seventh Generation Program” in Hillary and Weaver, Voices of First Nation People: Human Service Considerations (New York: Haworth Press, 1999), pp. 51-68; and Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, “Oyate Ptayela: Rebuilding the Lakota Nation Through Addressing Historical Trauma Among Lakota Parents” in Hillary N. Weaver Ed., Voices of First Nations People, pp. 106-126. That there is generally a set of common values in indigenous world views around the world, referred to in relation to Capra’s writing, above, showed specifically in the collaboration of Americans for Indian Opportunity (AIO) of the United States with Advancement for Maori Opportunity (founded with collaboration from AIO) of New Zealand, based on a common set of principles, as can be seen by looking at the AMO web site.


42. Economic development as tribal development, and as a better way to consider economic development than has been usual in the west, is considered more fully in Harris, Sachs and Morris, Recreating the Circle, Ch. 5, Section 1, with numerous references. It is the reference for the development discussion in this paper, except where otherwise indicated. Note, that the Dine Policy Institute, in its discussion of problems in the Navajo Nation's devolution of government functions to the nation's 110 chapters, quoted above, states that one of the problems relating to the devolution was that the Navajo Nation had taken the narrower neoliberal economic approach, including making jobs and income ends rather than means.

43. Note the successes in education by both the relatively wealthy Southern Ute and poor Northern Ute tribes (in Harris, Sachs and Morris, Recreating the Circle, Ch. 5, Section 2). A good example of improving organization or community capacity while building better human relations was the invention of time dollars by Edgar Cahn. See, Edgar Cahn, No More Throw-Away People: The Co-Production Imperative (Washington, DC: Essential Books, 2000); and Time Dollar Institute, 2012, http://www.aecf.org/MajorInitiatives/MoreCaseyInitiatives/ProgramProfiles/TimeDollarIntro.aspx.

44. Lindsay Box, "Council Affairs: Membership can livestream educational meeting, Southern Ute Drum, March 31, 2017.


REVIEWS

REVIEW OF LOUELLYN WHITE, FREE TO BE MOHAWK

Dianne E Bechtel, MFA, University of New Mexico

Free to be Mohawk: Indigenous Education at the Akwesasne Freedom School by Louellyn White, Assistant Professor, School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. Published in 2015 by the University of Oklahoma Press with six chapters, extensive notes, and references. ISBN: 978-0-8061-4865-6
Louellyn White’s book, *Free to be Mohawk: Indigenous Education at the Akwesasne Freedom School*, describes the ongoing issue of educational self-determination for the Mohawk community. White’s book shows the possibility of educational reform, self-sufficiency, and future improvements that can be made through the restoration of language and culture. Education through language immersion necessarily requires a strong alternative to the traditional curriculum dictated by dominant culture. The dominant culture’s ideological style of pedagogy, as White describes, has led to existential crisis and educational debilitation for the Mohawks and other indigenous groups. In addition to this historical problem, the Mohawk experience of education, its administration, and reform has been much more complicated than it has been for other tribes, setting up a key factor in White’s research narrative.

The Mohawks’ Akwesasne territory straddles the United States and Canada, and they have had to deal with both governments in establishing their independence from educational paradigms that have not served their needs. This political impediment is described at length in order to show the blocks to educational self-determination that the Akwesasne Freedom School (AFS) has had to endure to survive. Politics set the stage for understanding the profound difficulties the Mohawks have encountered, and thus their remarkable story of persistence. White gets to the most interesting and important part of her book for all educators in Chapter 3, where she describes the indigenous model of holistic education, which must include the life and educational experiences of the whole person: the spiritual, emotional, intellectual and physical

Ph.D. Dissertations from Universities Around the World on Topics Relating to Indians in the Americas,
Compiled from *Dissertation Abstracts*

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*IPJ* hosts a regularly updated data base of American Indian related Ph.D. from 2006 – the present. The dissertation coverage includes all languages and is international in scope as far as *Dissertation Abstracts* covers. This includes most European universities, South African universities, and a few in the Far East. They do not cover all the universities in the world, but do a pretty good job covering first world universities. There is no coverage of Latin American universities’ dissertations. The data base is updated in each Winter and Summer issue of *IPJ*, and sometimes between issues. Since ProQuest, the proviser of the lists of dissertations from which Jonathan and Jay find Indigenous dissertations, no longer goes by months/years there will be titles from various years added in the updates.


Useful Web Sites

**Environmental Web Sites**

UN NGO Climate Change Caucus, with numerous task forces, is at: http://climatecaucus.net.


Greenpeace engages on many environmental concerns, at: greenpeace.org/usa/ and greenpeace.org/.

Friends of the Earth is involved worldwide in environmental advocacy, at: foei.org.

The Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) works on a variety of environmental, as well as other, issues, at: www.ucusa.org.

Environmental Action is active on numerous environmental issues, at: environmental-action.org.

Environment America works on environmental issues in the U.S. at: https://environmentamerica.webaction.org.

Food and Water Watch is active on a variety of issues relating to water and food, at: https://www.foodandwaterwatch.org and https://secure.foodandwaterwatch.org.

The Wilderness Society works on environmental issues, particularly concerning preserving "wild places." at: wilderness.org.

Ocean River Institute works on river and other water issues, at: oceanriver.org.

The National Wildlife Federation, at: nwf.org, and The National Wildlife Federation Action Fund, at: https://online.nwf.org/site/PageNavigator/ActionCenter, are concerned with environmental issues involving wildlife in the U.S.

The Nuclear Information and Resource Service includes in its work nuclear environmental issues, at: nirs.org.

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) includes in its concerns environmental issues relating to U.S. national parks, at: npca.org and https://secure.npca.org/

Earth Policy Institute, dedicated to building a sustainable future as well as providing a plan of how to get from here to there: www.earthpolicy.org.

Wiser Earth lists more than 10,700 environmental and environmental justice organizations at: http://www.wiserearth.org/organization/

Earthwatch, the world’s largest environmental volunteer organization, founded in 1971, works globally to help the people of the planet volunteer realize a sustainable environment: http://www.earthwatch.org/


The Environmental Defense Fund works on a variety of environmental issues and policy, including global warming induced climate change, primarily in the U.S.: http://edf.org.


SaveOurEnvironment.org, a coalition of environmental organizations acting politically in the U.S.: http://ga3.org/campaign/0908_endangered_species/xuninw84p7m8mxxm.

The National Resources Defense Council works on a variety of environmental issues in the U.S.: NRhttp://www.nrdconline.org/

Care 2 is concerned about a variety of issues, including the environment: http://www.care2.com/.

Rainmakers Oceania studies possibilities for restoring the natural environment and humanity's rightful place in it, at: http://rainmakers-oceania.com/0annexanchorc/about-rainmakers.html.

Green Ships, in fall 2008, was is asking Congress to act to speed the development of new energy efficient ships that can take thousands of trucks off Atlantic and Pacific Coast highways, moving freight up and down the costs with far less carbon emissions and more cheaply: http://www.greenships.org.


Planting Peace is, "A Resource Center for news and activities that seek to build a powerful coalition to bring about cooperation and synergy between the peace movement, the climate crisis movement, and the organic community." Their web site includes extensive links to organizations, articles, videos and books that make the connections, at: http://organicconsumers.org/plantingpeace/index.cfm, Planting Peace is sponsored by the Organic Consumers Association: http://organicconsumers.org/.

The Global Climate Change Campaign: http://www.globalclimatecampaign.org/.

The Audubon Society reports on and works on issues focused on birds, at: audubon.org.


American Indian and International Indigenous Web Sites

CELANEN: A Journal of Indigenous Governance is produced by the Indigenous Governance Program at the University of Victoria, at: http://web.uvic.ca/igov/research/journal/index.htm. CELANEN (pronounced CHEL-LANG-GEN) is a Saanich word for "our birthright, our ancestry, sovereignty" and sets the tone for this annual publication containing articles, poetry, and commentary.
Native Research Network is now at: www.nativeresearchnetwork.org. Its vision statement is: "A leadership community of American Indian, Alaska Native, Kanaka Maoli, and Canadian Aboriginal persons promoting integrity and excellence in research". Its mission is "To provide a pro-active network of American Indian, Alaska Native, Kanaka Maoli, and Canadian Aboriginal persons to promote and advocate for high quality research that is collaborative, supportive and builds capacity, and to promote an environment for research that operates on the principles of integrity, respect, trust, ethics, cooperation and open communication in multidisciplinary fields". The Native Research Network (NRN) provides networking and mentoring opportunities, a forum to share research expertise, sponsorship of research events, assistance to communities and tribes, and enhanced research communication. The NRN places a special emphasis on ensuring that research with Indigenous people is conducted in a culturally sensitive and respectful manner. Its Member List serve: NRN@lists.apa.org.

The American Journal of Indigenous Studies is a quarterly journal by the American Scholarly Research Association (ASRA), at: www.ASRAresearch.or.

The Enduring Legacies Native Cases Initiative began in 2006 as a partnership between The Evergreen State College, Northwest Indian College, Salish Kootenai College, and Grays Harbor College. Our goal is to develop and widely disseminate culturally relevant curriculum and teaching resources in the form of case studies on key issues in Indian Country: http://nativecases.evergreen.edu/about.html.

The National Indian Housing Council offers a number of reports at: http://www.naihc.indian.com/.


Some news sources that have been useful in putting the issues of Indigenous Policy together are:


Pechanga Net: http://www.pechanga.net/NativeNews.html

Survival International: http://www.survival-international.org/.


ArizonaNativeNet is a virtual university outreach and distance learning telecommunications center devoted to the higher educational needs of Native Nations in Arizona, the United States and the world through the utilization of the worldwide web and the knowledge-based and technical resources and expertise of the University of Arizona, providing resources for Native Nations nation-building, at: www.arizonanativenet.com.

The Forum for 'friends of Peoples close to Nature' is a movement of groups and individuals, concerned with the survival of Tribal peoples and their culture, in particular hunter-gatherers: http://ipwp.org/how.html.

Tebtebba (Indigenous Peoples' International Centre for Policy Research and Education), with lists of projects and publications, and reports of numerous Indigenous meetings: http://www.tebtebba.org/.

Andre Cramblit (andrekar@ncidc.org) has begun a new Native news blog continuing his former Native list serve to provide information pertinent to the American Indian community. The blog contains news of interest to Native Americans, Hawaiian Natives and Alaskan Natives. It is a briefing of items that he comes across that are of broad interest to American Indians. News and action requests are posted as are the occasional humorous entry. The newsletter is designed to inform you, make you think and keep a pipeline of information that is outside the mainstream media. ‘I try and post to it as often as my schedule permits I scan a wide range
of sources on the net to get a different perspective on Native issues and try not to post stuff that is already
posted on multiple sources such as websites or other lists”. To subscribe to go to: http://andrekaruk.posterous.com/.
Sacred Places Convention For Indigenous Peoples provides resources for protecting sacred places world
wide. Including, news, journals, books and publishing online Weekly News and providing an E-mail list serve,
as well as holding conferences. For information go to: http://www.indigenouspeoplesissues.com.
Mark Trahant Blog, Trahant Reports, is at: http://www.marktrahant.org/marktrahant.org/Makr_Trahant.html

UANativeNet, formerly Arizona NativeNet, is a resource of topics relevant to tribal nations and Indigenous
Peoples, particularly on matters of law and governance.

The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development offers a number of reports and its

The Seventh generation Fund online Media Center: www.7genfund.org

Native Earthworks Preservation, an organization committed to preserving American Indian sacred sites, is
at: http://nativeearthworkspreservation.org/.

Indianz.Com has posted Version 2.0 of the Federal Recognition Database, an online version of the
Acknowledgment Decision Compilation (ADC), a record of documents that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has
on file for dozens of groups that have made it through the federal recognition process. The ADC contains over
750 MB of documents -- up from over 600MB in version 1.2 -- that were scanned in and cataloged by the
agency's Office of Federal Acknowledgment. The new version includes has additional documents and is easier

Tribal Link has an online blog at: http://triballinknewsonline.blogspot.com.

The National Indian Education Association: http://www.niea.org/.

Climate Frontlines is a global forum for indigenous peoples, small islands and vulnerable communities,
running discussions, conferences and field projects: http://www.climatefrontlines.org/.

Cry of the Native Refugee web site, http://cryofthenativerefugee.com, is dedicated to “The True Native
American History.”

First Peoples World Wide, focuses "on funding local development projects in Indigenous communities all
over the world while creating bridges between our communities and corporations, governments, academics,
NGOs and investors in their regions. We facilitate the use of traditional Indigenous knowledge in solving
today’s challenges, including climate change, food security, medicine, governance and sustainable
development:" http://firstpeoples.org

The RaceProject has a Facebook Page that is a forum for the dissemination and discussion of contemporary
Race and Politics issues. It includes a continuing archive of news stories, editorial opinion, audio, video and
pointed exchanges between academics, graduate students and members of the lay-public. Those interested can
visit and sign up to the page at: http://www.facebook.com/RaceProject.

Rainmakers Oceania studies possibilities for restoring the natural environment and humanity's rightful place

Oxfam America’s interactive website: http://adapt.oxfamamerica.org shows how social vulnerability and
climate variability impact each county in the U.S. Southwest region. The methodology exposes how social vulnerability, not science, determines the human risk to climate change.


The Newberry Library received a grant in August, 2007, from the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund “Indians of the Midwest and Contemporary Issues.” The McNickle Center will construct this multimedia website designed to marry the Library’s rich collections on Native American history with state-of-the-art interactive web capabilities to reveal the cultural and historical roots of controversial issues involving Native Americans today. These include conflicts over gaming and casinos, fishing and hunting rights, the disposition of Indian artifacts and archeological sites, and the use of Indian images in the media. In addition to historical collections, the site will also feature interviews with contemporary Native Americans, interactive maps, links to tribal and other websites, and social networking. For more information contact Céline Swicegood, swicegoodc@newberry.org.

The site www.pressdisplay.com has scanned and searchable versions of thousands of newspapers daily from around the world. These are not truncated "online versions". You can view the actually pages of the paper published for that day. There are also 100’s of US papers included daily. The service also allows you to set search terms or search particular papers daily. The service will also translate papers into English.

Native Voice Network (NVN: www.NativeVoiceNetwork.org), is a national alliance of Organizations interested in collaborative advocacy on issues impacting Native people locally and nationally.

The Northern California Indian Development Council has a web-based archive of traditional images and sounds at: http://www.ncidc.org/

Tribal College Journal (TCJ) provides to news related to American Indian higher education: tribalcollegejournal.org.

American Indian Graduate Center: http://www.aigcs.org.

The Minneapolis American Indian Center's Native Path To Wellness Project of the Golden Eagle Program has developed a publication, *Intergenerational Activities from a Native American Perspective* that has been accepted by Penn State for their Intergenerational Web site: http://intergenerational.cas.psu.edu/Global.html.

The Indigenous Nations and Peoples Law, Legal Scholarship Journal has recently been created online by the Social Science Research Network, with sponsorship by the Center for Indigenous Law, Governance & Citizenship at Syracuse University College of Law. Subscription to the journal is free, by clicking on: http://hq.ssrn.com/.

The National Council Of Urban Indian Health is at: http://www.ncuih.org/.


**Lessons In Tribal Sovereignty**, at: http://sorrel.humboldt.edu/~go1/kellogg/intro.html, features Welcome to American Indian Issues: An Introductory and Curricular Guide for Educators. The contents were made possible by the American Indian Civics Project (AICP), a project initially funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Native American Higher Education Initiative, The primary goal of the AICP is to provide educators with the tools to educate secondary students - Indian and non-Native alike - about the historical and contemporary political, economic, and social characteristics of sovereign tribal nations throughout the United States.

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) has a blog as part of its Celilo Legacy project, serving as a clearinghouse for public discourse, information, events, activities, and memorials. The blog is accessible by going to www.critfc.org and clicking on the "Celilo Legacy blog" image, or by simply entering: www.critfc.org/celilo.

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Idaho has Rezkast, a Web site of Native affairs and culture at: www.rezkast.com.

A listing of the different Alaska Native groups' values and other traditional information is on the Alaska Native Knowledge website at: www.ankn.uaf.edu.


A list of Indigenous Language Conferences is kept at the Teaching Indigenous Languages web site at Northern Arizona University: http://www2.nau.edu/jar/Conf.html.


The Council of Elders, the governing authority of the Government Katalla-Chilkat Tlingit (provisional government): Kaliakh Nation (Region XVII) has initiated a web site in order to expose crimes against humanity committed upon the original inhabitants of Alaska, at: http://www.katalla-chilkat-tlingit.com/.
An interactive website, [www.cherokee.org/allotment](http://www.cherokee.org/allotment), focuses on the Allotment Era in Cherokee History during the period from 1887 to 1934, when Congress divided American Indian reservation lands into privately owned parcels that could be (and widely were) sold to non Indians, threatening tribal existence.

The Blue Lake Rancheria of California launched a web site, Fall 2007, featuring the nation’s history, philosophy, economic enterprise, community involvement, and other topics, with many-links. One purpose of the site is to make tribal operations transparent. It is at: [www.bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov](http://www.bluelakerancheria-nsn.gov).


Indigenous Rights Quarterly can be accessed at: [http://www.aitpn.org/irq.htm](http://www.aitpn.org/irq.htm).


The World Indigenous Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) and its Journal are online at: [http://www.win-hec.org/](http://www.win-hec.org/). (See the Ongoing Activities Section for more on WINHEC). The WINHEC site includes links to other Indigenous organizations and institutions.


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